

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

It has actually happened, and it is happening today, that men who have had the gospel entrusted to them and who ought to preach it and defend it are ashamed of it. In their shame, they are silent about the gospel and teach other things. Or, they go to work on the gospel to change it into something that they like better. For the gospel in its pure, unadulterated form is offensive to men.

See “Unashamed of the Gospel”

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THE STANDARD BEARER

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August.
Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.
Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

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

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

Advertising Policy: The Standard Bearer does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$3.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business Office and should be accompanied by the \$3.00 fee. Deadline for announcements is the 1st or the 15th of the month, previous to publication on the 15th or the 1st respectively.

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

MEDITATION

Totally Depraved

Rev. C. Hanko

Are we then so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of any good, and inclined to all wickedness?

Indeed we are, except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God. Lord's Day 3; Question 8.

So very corrupt.

Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? Not I, not as I am by nature. Not any of my relatives or acquaintances. Not any man, woman, or child that ever saw the light of day upon the earth.

We are so very corrupt, as our Catechism reminds us. This word "corrupt" is only one of the many terms that our fathers use to describe our sin and misery in these first three Lord's Days. Our Cate-

chism spoke of the fact that we are prone by nature to hate God and the neighbor, that we are wicked and perverse, that our nature is depraved, and that through the fall of Adam we are become so corrupt that we are conceived and born in sin. To all this is now added that we are wholly incapable of any good and inclined to all wickedness. The heavy burden of our guilt, daily increased by our sins, is bad enough. But the problem is aggravated by the fact that I am evil, corrupt, like an apple that appears goodly on the outside, but is rotten at the core, useless, good for

nothing, fit only to be cast away forever. My nature is perverse, my mind is darkened by sin, my will is obstinate, every inclination of my heart is only evil continually. Notice, I do not say, *I was*, as if that were something that belonged to my unconverted state. I *am*. I am what the fathers referred to in the Five Points of Calvinism as *totally depraved*. That word “totally” is a bit redundant, for what is depraved is rotten, no good whatever, but the “total” does stress the hopelessness, the horrible extent of my corruption.

This is our Christian experience drawn from the Word of God. This was Luther’s conviction when he wrote about the bondage of the will. This was in the hearts and minds of the composers of the Westminster Confession, chapter 6, paragraph 4, where they wrote, “From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.” This was in the soul of the fathers who composed the Three Forms of Unity. This is our confession. To deny this fact would be dishonesty with ourselves, a refusal to face a bitter reality. The believers throughout the ages have confessed this depravity. Every honest child of God must confess it. How can he avoid it if he knows himself as God sees him, as the Spirit of Christ speaks to him in his heart through the Word?

David cried out in Psalm 51:5, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” The prophet Jeremiah testifies under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?” Read Romans 3:10-18 with its condemning testimony concerning ourselves: “As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: they are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.” This is not true only of the worst of us; this describes you and me as we are by nature. This is not what might have been apart from some restraining influences; this is reality. We cannot deny it. Therefore we feel ourselves very much akin to the apostle Paul, that saintly servant of God, when he confesses in Romans 7, “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.”

Our Belgic Confession in article 14 states that man is “become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways.” This article continues by declaring that man lost all his excellent gifts which he had originally

received from God, retaining nothing but mere remnants of them, and these remnants are left to him only to hold him accountable to God for all that he does in his whole life. Our Canons, under the Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine, declares that man through his fall has “entailed on himself blindness of mind, horrible darkness, vanity and perverseness of judgment; became wicked, rebellious, and obdurate of heart and will, and impure of his affections.” Not an attractive picture, but no less true.

A Painful Doctrine

Our proud, sinful nature has always violently opposed this truth of total depravity. In various forms the same question is raised, “Are we then so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of any good and inclined to all wickedness?” Immediately after the fall Adam and Eve tried to cover their nakedness with fig leaves. We still imitate them. Cain took of the finest of the crops which his hands had produced, in order to try to give something to God. How often we do the same! Phariseeism is foreign to none of us. Pelagianism and Arminianism are terms that belong to this new dispensation, yet their proud error is as old as the depravity of man. The world today is steeped with the theory of Pelagius that man is innately good. The infant that rests in mother’s arms is a perfect picture of innocence. Who cares to say that this cute little mite is conceived and born in sin, subject to all miseries, yea, to condemnation itself? (See our Baptism Forms.) One may be willing to grant that as a child comes in contact with a bad environment, it picks up bad habits, such as hatred, immorality, stealing, and dishonesty. But a good influence can do wonders to improve his character. Even the worst derelict of skid-row may be bad, but under the proper guidance the good that is in him may be newly aroused.

One cannot ignore the great advancements made by the skills and ingenuity of mankind. Man probes the bowels of the earth and produces oil, coal, and precious jewels. He delves into the depths of the sea, he soars through the skies, he sends spaceships out to explore the outer space. Man creates for himself powerful earth movers, but also delicate instruments with amazing accuracy. He makes computers that work with greater speed, less effort, and greater accuracy than the human brain. Anything man imagines he is confident he can do, and often produces the seemingly impossible. Consider the advancements in the realm of the atom, in the realm of industry, and of medicine. Proud man makes great advancements in God’s creation.

The Good that Sinners Do.

This same man can discern between right and

wrong, good and evil. According to the Arminian, the sinner is not dead in sin, but sick; he is not depraved, but there is still much good in him. There are, indeed, sadists who take a keen delight in murder and other horrors, but these are the exception rather than the rule. There are the sex deviates, but there are also people who live respectable lives. Divorces and remarriages are becoming increasingly common, but there are still many husbands who care for their families, and there are many women who make good wives and mothers. There are school children who are aggressively opposed to learning, but there are also those who strive for good grades. Many men give every impression of plying an honest business. So, often the question is raised, But is this not good? Where then the depravity?

Some speak of total depravity as something that might have been our lot, if it were not for the restraining influences of God's common grace. They maintain that in Romans 3 the apostle is speaking about man as he would be, if God had not restrained sin in his heart. This restraint now enables him to produce good deeds in the sight of God. To the question, are we then so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of any good, and inclined to all wickedness? they would answer, "Indeed we are, except for the restraining influence of God's common grace in our lives." The distinction is made, although it never occurs in Scripture, between total depravity and absolute depravity. According to this distinction, there are some creatures, like the devil and calloused criminals, who lack entirely the restraining influence of common grace, so that they are hopelessly, absolutely depraved. But there are others, who have this restraining operation of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, whereby they produce good works that are pleasing to God, even though they remain unregenerated. The influence of common grace is said to be so powerful, that the natural man can even want to be saved and is receptive to an offer of the gospel.

Our Canons have something to say about this so-called good that sinners do. Under the Third and Fourth Head of Doctrine, article 4 states, "There remain, however, in man since the fall, the glimmerings of natural light, whereby he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things, and of the differences between good and evil, and discovers some regard for virtue, good order in society, and for maintaining an orderly external deportment." Man still possesses glimmerings of the light he once had in the state of righteousness. He knows that God is God, there is no doubt about that. He knows how to make use of God's creation, making great progress with his discoveries and inventions. He knows that murder, theft, immorality are wrong, and readily condemns that wrong in others. He knows that it is to his own

advantage to live a decent, respectable life with his family and in his community.

All this is so very true, our fathers inform us. Then they add, "But so far is this light of nature from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God and to true conversion, that he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil. Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted, and holds it in unrighteousness, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God." Notice, first, that this light of nature never makes a person receptive for the gospel. Second, man does not use his natural light aright in things natural and civil. Still worse, he pollutes it, using it in the service of sin. Scripture teaches us that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we must do it all to the glory of God. Natural man hates God, banishes Him from his thoughts. He seeks himself, his own advantage. A husband too often thinks first of self, and then of his wife and children. We always ask ourselves the utilitarian question, Does it pay? What advantage is it to me? "Taking care of number one," is the big catch phrase today. Proud man boasts that all things are of him, by him, and unto him, that to him may be the glory.

Our Catechism teaches us in question 91 that good works are only those "which proceed from a true faith, are performed according to the law of God, and to His glory: and not such as are founded on our imagination, or the institutions of men."

Why Talk About It?

First, this is the plain teaching of the Scriptures. We bow before the infallible testimony of God's Word even though it condemns us.

Second, we must know how great our sins and miseries are. Our Communion Form states under the section that refers to our self-examination in preparing ourselves for celebrating the Lord's Supper, "That every one consider by himself, his sins and the curse due to him for them, to the end that he may abhor and humble himself before God."

Third, we must realize that nothing less than a wonder has happened in our lives, the wonder of regeneration by the Spirit of Christ. God by a super-natural work, more wonderful than our first creation, has made us new creatures in Christ Jesus. All has become new.

Finally, being aware of our own emptiness and wretchedness, we seek all our salvation from God alone, prayerfully asking that we may live by faith, doing all things in love to God, seeking always only His glory.

"Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." II Corinthians 9:15.

Editor's Notes

Apology. We apologize for a couple of apparently "authorless" meditations recently. In the December 15 issue Rev. H. Veldman was the author of the meditation; in the January 15 issue Rev. M. Schipper furnished the meditation. In both instances our typesetter omitted the author's name.

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Directory. In this issue you will find an up-to-date directory of the clerks and treasurers of all our Protestant Reformed Churches. Since in many instances there are changes of officers around the first of the year, we are furnishing this up-dated information for your convenience. Will each clerk please check the information concerning his church for accuracy? In case of errors, please notify me promptly.

* * * * *

RFPA Book Club. Did you receive your letter inviting you to join the new RFPA Book Club? Did you also mail us your membership card? If not, do so promptly, so that you can take advantage of the attractive discount offered on all RFPA publications, and so that you will automatically receive all *new* RFPA publications.

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New Bible Manual and Workbook. *Suffer Little Children, Book Two* and its accompanying pupil *Workbook* have been off the press for several weeks now. This is a companion volume to Gertrude Hoeksema's Grade One level manual. Also this volume is designed primarily for grade school Bible teachers and pupils, but should be of interest and help to others, such as Sunday School and Catechism teachers and parents. The manual covers the Old Testament from the reign of David to the end. The price of the manual is \$5.95, and the workbook goes for \$2.00. The manual-workbook combination sells for \$6.95. Yes, Book Club

members can also obtain this book at 20% discount.

* * * * *

New Publications Planned. There are three new projects on the front burner for the RFPA this year. We hope that all three will be available this year. The first is a long-needed new edition of Rev. Herman Hoeksema's *God's Eternal Good Pleasure*, sermons on Romans 9-11. This was first printed in 1940 and has been long out of print. But it is as necessary and as up-to-date in today's theological climate as it was almost 40 years ago. By the way, the missing sermon on God's Raising Up Of Pharaoh will be added to the new edition. The second project is Rev. David Engelsma's series of articles on Hyper-Calvinism, which will make a fine and instructive volume. The third project is the first volume of my *Commentary on the Canons of Dordrecht*. This first volume will include a historical introduction and the commentary on the First Head of Doctrine. The manuscripts of the first two projects have been completed and will before long be on their way to the typesetter. The third manuscript will be finished in a few weeks and will likewise soon be in the hands of the printer. All of which means that you should hurry and join our Book Club. The RFPA needs your moral and financial support, and you as a good Reformed reader need our books!

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Reprints. Yes, there are more RFPA projects. The supply of three of our publications is exhausted, or nearly so. But it will soon be replenished with new paperback editions. Herman Hoeksema's *Believers And Their Seed* and his *Whosoever Will* (one of our best sellers, by the way) and David Engelsma's *Marriage, The Mystery of Christ and His Church* will all soon appear in new paperback editions, very reasonably priced at \$1.95. Three more reasons to join the RFPA Book Club!

EDITORIALS

Why Not Come Out With and For the Reformed Truth?

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

This is the question which arose in my soul when I read a recent editorial on "Sovereignty and Free

Choice" in the January 4, 1978 issue of *The Presbyterian Journal* by Dr. G. Aiken Taylor. The edi-

torial is introduced by the information that the editor had “received several requests in the mail for clarification of the Presbyterian (Reformed) doctrine of election.” Then a typical request is quoted as follows: “Please give us an editorial on election and human choice. Does man have the power to choose? All I have heard lately is that man has no choice; God saves those whom *He* chooses.”

Here, therefore, a golden opportunity presented itself for the editor to instruct his readers, many of whom belong to the young new Presbyterian Church in America and who have come from the apostate PCUS, or Southern Presbyterian Church. In fact, requests like this could well have become the occasion for a highly instructive *series* of editorials on the Reformed doctrine of election. From all appearances, this is highly necessary in the PCA. Arminianism and ignorance of Reformed distinctives seem to be rampant in the infant denomination, and the strongly and truly Reformed element appears to be a rather small minority. Some informants have claimed that the battle for the Reformed faith in the PCA is a hopeless one.

But what does Editor Taylor do?

At the most, there are two paragraphs in the editorial which are devoted to the subject of election and human choice, while the questioner asked for an *editorial* on the subject. There is no attempt whatsoever at a “clarification of the Presbyterian doctrine of election.” Instead there is a studied attempt to relegate Reformed distinctives to the realm of the unimportant and the troublesome. Here is how it is done, and it is all wrong. For a Presbyterian magazine should seek to build up Presbyterians in the Presbyterian faith.

First, the editorial speaks of a “knotty problem” with which Christians have wrestled: “If God is really in charge of all things, does He not also control the direction a person takes in his spiritual life?” Now this is not a knotty problem whatsoever; the answer is perfectly obvious, so obvious that a child can furnish it. Besides, that affirmative answer certainly belongs to the essence of the Reformed truth of sovereign grace. The somewhat “knotty” problem — though not so knotty as many have made it out to be — follows from this affirmative answer: what becomes, then, of human choice and human responsibility? But this problem, which I suspect was the problem of Dr. Taylor’s questioner, is neither stated nor explained.

Secondly, there is a poorly veiled poke at those who have been dubbed by some of the PCA as “TRs” — Truly Reformed. The editorial states — without proving — that “There is today a strong and welcome, *but not always judicious*, emphasis on Reformed distinctives in some preaching and teaching.” (italics

added) Now it is a riddle to me how such an emphasis can at the same time be truly strong and injudicious. When it comes to the Reformed truth, a strong emphasis is also both welcome and judicious: God knows how little emphasis it receives today! On the other hand, an injudicious emphasis, it seems to me, can be neither strong nor welcome. But one who has followed events in the PCA cannot fail to recognize that this comment is in the nature of a gloved-fist jab at TRs.

Thirdly, Taylor draws the totally illogical conclusion from the above that “the first part of the answer to the question, ‘What about election?’ is a reminder that much of the doctrinal distinctives which separate Reformed Christians from others belongs to the periphery of the practice of the presence of God rather than to the center of the fundamentals essential for salvation.” And he goes on to state: “In other words, much of so-called Reformed theology is not so much about the basic details of our immediate relationship to God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit as it is about associated or consequential questions. It deals with the natural curiosity of Christians who want to know *how* God works, and *when* and *with whom*.”

In plain language this means: 1) The distinctives of the Reformed faith are not important; they belong to the periphery of our religion and our relationship to God through Christ. 2) Much of Reformed theology is really of secondary importance, and is only the object of the “natural curiosity” of Christians. 3) How and when and with whom God works are not really questions vital to our faith, but only fit objects of a certain natural curiosity of Christians.

Now lest there be doubts as to what Dr. Taylor had in mind by “doctrinal distinctives” and “much of so-called Reformed theology,” let me point out that he himself points to three examples. The first is that of limited versus general atonement. The second is that of total versus partial depravity. The third is that of irresistible versus resistible grace. Taylor then goes on to suggest that “if a preacher bears down on man’s inability to reject God’s grace,” (in other words, stresses that grace is irresistible) “rather than the good news that man is saved by grace,” (and what kind of grace is good news except *irresistible* grace?) — then “Reformed theology can become a burden rather than a blessing to ordinary people in the pews.”

Finally, at the very end of his editorial, Dr. Taylor first presents a very garbled account of how much a Christian should know, leaving two Biblical truths of election and the necessity of faith and repentance simply side by side and in apparent inexplicable conflict. And then he gives this very brief answer, without further explanation, to the question which

occasioned his editorial: "Yes, man makes a free choice within the compass of God's sovereignty."

In reflection, we submit the following:

1. Instead of grasping the opportunity to explain the Reformed truth of election, Dr. Taylor does his utmost to belittle the importance of the doctrine of election and related truths, meanwhile utterly failing to help those who requested light of him.

2. The position of Dr. Taylor concerning the importance of these truths is certainly not that of the Westminster Confession of Faith; nor does Dr. Taylor in this editorial follow the example of our Reformed and Presbyterian forbears, who bled and died in many instances for their Reformed profession of faith. To a Reformed man election, for example, is not peripheral and a mere matter of "natural curiosity," but it is the *cor ecclesiae*, the heart of the church.

3. Writings such as these will not strengthen the PCA or any other conservative Presbyterians. On the

contrary, they can only serve to weaken the church, give aid and comfort to the Arminian enemy, and promote doctrinal indifference. If Dr. Taylor's position is correct, then why go to the trouble of forming a new denomination such as the PCA? Why not simply separate from the PCUS if necessary, and then join some fundamentalist group? After all, the "doctrinal distinctives which separate Reformed Christians from others" do not belong "to the center of the fundamentals essential for salvation."

4. For the instruction of those who sought instruction, the least Dr. Taylor might have done was to quote the beautiful third chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith. This chapter on God's eternal decree, if studied along with its proof texts, would furnish more help to these seeking souls in the PCA than a hundred editorials of non-answers.

Why not come out *with* the truth and *for* the truth?

TRANSLATED TREASURES

A Pamphlet on the Reformation of the Church

5. How God's Word governs the whole life of the church.

The normal form or figure and shape of the church on earth is fixed by the Word of God. By the Word, God gathers His elect, making this saving operation, through the Holy Spirit, work to regeneration. Aroused by this Spirit, the elect confess that Word over against Satan and the world, over against each other and themselves. They strive by the institution of preaching under the authority of this Word. They seek an administration of the sacraments in order to confirm faith in that Word. They attempt to bring the seed of the church to germination through that Word. They strive for this goal to incorporate into the church through the Word the heathen, the Jews, and those who fell away.

The ministry of reconciliation, of prayers and of singing praise before the Lord our God is no longer alongside that Word, but is, after Golgotha, locked up in the ministry of that Word. Before Christ died this was different. Hence, in the period of the genesis of the church in Israel when the only offering was not yet brought and the Intercessor did not yet pray at the throne of grace and the Spirit was not yet poured

out on all, (Joel 2:29) the service of ceremonies, in daily offerings, in priestly intercession, and levitical song prevailed. This ceremonial service however, did not pass over into the church after her birth for the world. Between the sinking away of the Israelite church and the rise of the world church the coming of the Mediator in the fulness of time intervened. That Mediator has brought in the one and sufficient sacrifice for the whole church of all ages. He afterward brought it up to heaven in order to bring the prayer for His people to God, a prayer which is in and for His church. He sent the Holy Spirit Who loosens every tongue that they may proclaim the great works of God and exalt the virtues of Him Who called out of darkness into His marvellous light.

It must not be said therefore, that only the church in Israel offered, had priestly intercession and spiritual praising, while the church now lacks these. But it must be confessed that in old times these three appeared in a defective way as shadows, while they are now worked gloriously in the church and come into existence through Christ and the Holy Spirit. Christ is now in the church, and even now, each day, He applies His own offering, lets His intercessory

prayer for us arise, and makes the Spirit operative to the glory of the Father. Rome's error does not lie in this that it keeps up these three holy activities in the church, but in this that it, although the Mediator Himself has performed these three works, wants to do them after Him or in His place; and it thus takes them out of His hand.

Looked at from a practical point of view, these three services now merge for what actually concerns the reformation of the churches in the one ministry of the Word (because the work of the Mediator cannot be subject to any deformation). The disciples of Christ are now pure through the Word which He spoke to them. (John 15:3) There is, however, no part in His sacrifice nor in His intercession, nor in His Spirit in any other way than through faith. And faith in the Word alone makes these holy things true for the soul. In the ministration of the Word the sacrifice of Christ as the substance itself is applied to us, as also His intercession and the work of the Spirit in the soul. Every sacrament, every prayer and every psalm in the church is therefore bound to the Word, must be grounded in the Word and must be taken up through that Word in the continuous mediatorial work of Christ our Lord.

Another ministry than that of the Word there is not in the visible church; and every manifestation of the life of the church flows forth from that one ministry of the Word. As often as the elect confess that Word of God among themselves, they walk in the way of penitence, self-examination, and conversion, and the confession of sin is present among them. If they confess, on the other hand, this Word over against each other, then admonition and punishment and all the glorious work of love comes to the fore. If they confess this Word over against the world, the work of mercy pertaining to life and soul comes to manifestation. If they confess this word over against Satan, the praise of hope arises and they experience martyrdom. And finally, if they confess this Word of God over against the Lord Himself and His holy angels, then prayer echoes and a psalm is used in jubilee. "Confession of the Word!" is all the expression of the life of the church.

6. How the ministry of the Word was different in ancient times from now.

This ministry of the Word is different in proportion as the particular revelation of God continues, is temporarily suspended, or expired.

If this particular revelation continues and is active, then this ministry proceeds directly from God through His seers and prophets. There is then no regulated setting forth of this service when the Spirit of God comes into the prophets. It is discontinued when the vision is darkened for the prophets. And it

is again taken up when God the Lord speaks again to His servants.

When therefore the prophecy of the Old Testament was silenced with Malachi and did not resume until John the Baptist, the regular ministry of the Word was carried on in the synagogue. This continued for those four centuries which lay between Malachi and John the Baptist. It was a service which retained its value only up to the return of particular revelation in the days of John the Baptist. With that the ministry of the synagogue was once again pushed into the background, and there appeared in its place the ministry of the Word of our highest Prophet. This was preceded by the "Be converted" of his herald and followed by the ministry of the apostolate.

The ministry through appointed shepherds and ministers first came to mature power when, with the death of this apostolate, particular revelation attained its end. There was indeed earlier instruction of the Word through the priesthood and through the father in his household, but the separate office of shepherds and ministers did not exist before the dispersion from Babel. It appeared in the synagogue only as preformation. And it first became the normal way after the ascension into heaven of Him Who set some to be apostles, afterwards appointed some to be evangelists, and since that time, through all ages, has appointed and still appoints some to be pastors and overseers.

The preformation in the rabbinate of the synagogue could first arise when the Scriptures of the Old Testament were completed. And in the same way, the formation of this office could, after the death of the apostolate, first grow and blossom when the whole of the written revelation of the Old and New Testament had been completed. As long as this written Word of God could not yet work, God Himself worked in the souls of the prophets so that they spoke His Word. But also that speech had to come to an end when the written Word of God was ready. Also after that, the operation of the Holy Spirit with respect to the Word worked through it, but in a different way. Now the Spirit elucidates just as earlier He revealed.

Each trend which loses sight of this definite relation has no appreciation for the distinction between the ministry of the Word before and after the completion of Holy Scripture. And still more, having departed from a revealing operation of the Spirit, in some sense it pulls down the ordinances of God in a Montanist or Anabaptistic way. Or still worse, it makes "the revelation of God through His prophets and apostles" common, as various ethicists teach, by distinguishing the revealing operation of the Spirit in the apostles and prophets only slightly from His enlightening work in the elect.

STUDIES IN ISAIAH

The Virgin-Born Immanuel

Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

Isaiah 7:14

"On that account, the Lord, He will give to you a sign — Behold! the virgin: pregnant! and bringing forth a son! and she calls His name Immanuel" (v. 14, Heb.). For the meaning of words in the original languages, we, naturally, must turn to the lexicons. This means, however, that we are largely dependent upon the word of a modern, rationalistic, destructive critic. For the best lexicons have been produced by such. One lexicon is by Gesenius, translated by Robinson of Union Theological Seminary. This means the production of a work doubly unitarian. Another edition of Gesenius, translated by Tregelles, a *biblical* scholar, has notes by the translator at every point refuting the neology of Gesenius. According to this lexicon, *almah* (vrgin) means, "A girl, a maiden, a young woman (of marriageable age). The primary idea of this word is not that of unspotted virginity, for which the Hebrews have the special word *bethulah*."

Now there are three things glaringly wrong with this assertion. First, the denial that *almah* means primarily unspotted virginity. This denial flies in the face of the facts. It is a lie. For the word does denote unspotted virginity. Second, the Hebrew has a special word for girl, or young woman, and it is not "*almah*," but "*naarah*," a word which suggests nothing as to chastity or virginity. Third, *bethulah* is not the special, unmistakable word for unspotted virginity. For this word could mean "a girl, a virgin betrothed to a man" (Deut. 22:23ff), and therefore a woman practically married, as engagements in Israel were as binding as marriage. Then read the Deuteronomy context and you will find that "*bethulah*" does not connote a pure virgin. The word could also mean "a young widow," and so one who had known a man (Joel 1:18).

This being so, the rationalism of Gesenius appears in his not only incorrect, but dishonest statement that in the Septuagint (LXX) of Isaiah 7:14 *almah* is incorrectly *parthenos*, "virgin." For the Greek LXX at this point is absolutely correct and accurate, being confirmed by the text of Matt. 1:23, where the Isaianic "*almah*," virgin, is translated "*parthenos*," pure virgin. For in 2 Cor. 11:2, the word "*par-*

thenos," virgin, means one who has never had sexual intercourse.

Is this meaning borne out in the Old Testament? In the seven times that *almah* is used in Scripture, we shall see that it is. It appears in Gen. 24:43; Ex. 2:8; Prov. 30:19; Ps. 68:25; Song 1:3, 6:8; and Isa. 7:14, the culminating passage. In our beloved KJV, where *almah* appears in these verses, we have "virgin," "maid," (twice), "damsels," "virgins," and "virgin," respectively. In the ASV we have "maiden" (three times consecutively), "damsels," "virgins" (twice), and "virgin." The RSV has "young woman," "girl," "maiden," then "maidens" (three times), and finally, where it really counts (and hurts), "young woman." The RSV claims for itself that "critics agree that it is more accurate than any previous translation." The above shows that the opposite is the case with respect to the translations of "*almah*." The KJV is the most accurate, the ASV less accurate, and RSV is the least accurate of the three. In fact, it is definitely inaccurate, as *almah* never means a married woman, but always a true virgin, a virtuous woman, a pure, attractive girl.

According to Gen. 24:16, Rebekah was not only a "*naarah*" (girl, or young woman), but a "*bethulah*," a virgin. To make it perfectly plain that Rebekah was an unmarried, pure virgin, it is immediately added after the words *girl* and *virgin* that "neither had any man known her." This last clause definitely affirms her virginity, as the term *bethulah* does not have sufficient definiteness by itself to do that. Neither "*naarah*" (girl) nor "*bethulah*" (virgin) unquestionably indicate unspotted virginity, so that the words "neither had any man known her" were necessarily added, and are no mere redundancy. It is clear, then, that Moses, the writer of this passage, did not intend the broad sense of "*bethulah*," which includes betrothed maidens and widows, but rather the narrow sense originally limited to the term *virgin*. Thus the noun *bethulah* in this passage is so qualified as to mean *virgin* in the strictest sense of the word. This is further confirmed by the fact that in 24:43, Rebekah is called *ha-almah*, the virgin!

In Ex. 2:8 it is plain that "*almah*" means a young, single girl of the babysitting, or perhaps even mar-

riageable, age. So the word certainly means a virgin.

Appeal is made to Prov. 38:18f in support of the idea that "almah" may mean a married woman. "There are three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four, which I know not: the way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid (virgin)." The way of an eagle in the air — what a magnificent privilege to see the glorious sight (as we have in Texas and over the Georgia Strait)! But who can foretell the movements or direction of the eagle? or change his course? The serpent on a rock is just as free to turn in any direction. No man can know the precise path it shall take. The same thought continues in the ship in the midst of the sea. The ship leaves a wake, the exact lines of which are not to be foreknown by man. Carrying out this parallel thought, it applies also to the way of a man with a maiden (almah). What is the way of a man with a virgin? Sometimes in an immoral or sinful relation. In such a case, "almah" would not mean a married woman, neither to this man nor to any other. For it may be said of a woman associated with her husband, or even with a man not her husband, that we know what she in either case would probably do. No, nor can we regard this woman as a harlot; for everyone knows how such a woman would act. But who can foretell whether a young virgin in her relations with a man will keep her virginity? Many a strong, principled maiden has succumbed to the more dominating male personality. The point then is that *almah* means only a *virgin*.

In Ps. 68:25, the damsels (virgins) went in the religious procession playing the timbrels. If they were married women, then a different word, not "almah," would have been used.

In the Song of Songs, the word *virgins* refers to young unmarried women who become friends of the bride and groom. That they are truly unmarried virgins is plain from the fact that they stand in contrast to concubines and to queens married to kings.

Therefore, when we read in Isa. 7:14, "Behold, the virgin . . ." the word is indeed virgin, and not "young woman." This is conclusive when we understand that in this word is the sign God gave, not to wicked King Ahaz, but to *faith*, to believing Judah. For what sign would it be in a young woman conceiving? But for a virgin to conceive a son without the normal, natural instrumentality of a man, and a Son Who is really Immanuel, God With Us in the flesh — that is a stupendous sign!

But modernistic ration-alism and most of the new Bible translations deliberately ignore and fly in the face of all the biblical evidence herein presented.

They mistranslate Scripture, they mutilate God's Word, they destroy the sign, they deliberately discard the virgin-birth of Christ and they despise and reject the incarnation of the eternal God.

The neologists (neo-orthodox or neo-modernists, but still the old rationalists) interpret this text in such a way as to sink it in the then present, thus destroying, as they intend, its prophetic character. But that talmudical interpretation will not stand. The text has not a verb, "shall conceive," but an adjective, "pregnant," and then, not another verb, "and bear" a son, but a feminine present participle, "bringing forth" a son. Yet the plain grammatical structure puts the whole wonderful event into the future. "Behold" in Isaiah indicates something future, and "the Lord, He *will* give you a sign" is the clear statement of promise in the future. Only, the future is so vivid in prophecy that the present tense is often woven with the future. So we have "and *she* calls His name Immanuel." But the whole sign is future, as "the Lord, *He will*" bring it to pass. From Isaiah's point of view, future it is, and nothing else. What is here predicted can in no way be fitted into Isaiah's present. The whole Bible is laid out in prophecy, fact, and interpretation of fact. The Old Testament prophets give us prophecy; the New Testament gospels give us fact; and the epistles give us the interpretation of the facts.

At this point a word must be said about the significance of Immanuel. For the essential point of this passage is not merely that a virgin is bringing forth a son, but that the Messiah (ha-Moshiach) is *Immanuel*. What does this name mean? Names in the Bible are significant. They express the working of God in providence and in grace, especially in reflecting a spiritual hope reaching into the future. So, Isaiah means *Salvation of Jehovah*; Jeremiah, *Established of Jehovah*; Zephaniah, *Whom Jehovah hid*; Zechariah, *Remembered of Jehovah*; Ezekiel, *Whom God will strengthen*; Daniel, *My judge is God*; Joel, *Jehovah is God*; and Immanuel, *God with us*. The people bearing these names did exemplify to a degree and by God's grace the qualities denominated. But who thinks "my judge is God" means that Daniel was the judging God? Or who believes that Joel means he was divine? Then does Immanuel mean that the person with that name is actually God dwelling with His people to aid and deliver them? Or does it merely mean that the parents giving this name thus express their faith in God? In the case of this prophecy, Immanuel is the one not conceived by natural generation, but supernaturally, miraculously, and born of a virgin. He was not, as ordinarily, born of a man and a woman. He was "made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). So, when He would come into the world, God foretold His own name. As Bible names do, it reveals His true

character, and not just, as with mere human beings, what He wanted to be. God gave all these names, and the names He gives attach to the actual, the literal and the real. The inference of Scripture (not neology) then is that this son is what His name claims, *God* with us.

In chap. 8, the land of Israel is called Immanuel's land. What in the world could *that* mean if the name Immanuel referred to a person born in Isaiah's day? In 9:6, this son is given to Israel, and very specially, from *God*, through physical birth ("for unto us a child is born"), and who is himself "the mighty God." There is no Wonderful, nor Prince of Peace

born in the reigns of Judah's and Israel's kings. The idea is pitifully absurd. What the name Immanuel reveals is that *God* came to earth through the womb of the virgin in the form of an infant born.

So the sign is supernatural, the virgin's conception supernatural, the word *almah* signifies nothing less than the miracle of the incarnation of God, God in the form of man and in association with men. Isaiah, a true rabbi, furnishes us with a divinely inspired exposition of the original mother-promise of the Redeemer of God's elect, the Savior of the world (Gn. 3:15). What else so fills the hearts of men in any and every age with holy delight?

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

Unashamed of the Gospel

Rev. David Engelsma

Ours is a day of departure from the Reformed faith, on the one hand, and ignorance of it, on the other hand. Under the conviction that it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness (although it may be necessary to curse the darkness), I intend to present a series of brief, one-article explanations of some of the fundamental doctrines of the Reformed faith.

The explanations will be simple. Young people, even children, will be able to understand them; parents might want to see to it that their children do so. Your next-door neighbor, even though not Reformed or only nominally Reformed, should not find them incomprehensible; you might want to offer them to him. And, who knows, they may even refresh some of us.

* * * * *

The man who has his eyes opened and his ears attuned to what is going on in the world has to be aware that there is bad news everywhere. There is murder and violence on every hand. The basic elements of human society, marriage, home, labor, and government, are dissolving. In the background, always, is the threat of world war, as the great powers, armed to the teeth with the most destructive of weapons, lurch into confrontation with each other. Night after night, week in and week out, year after year, the gist of the evening news is: Bad news tonight!

If a man could somehow avoid all of this, could refuse to think about war and rumors of war, could banish from his mind every thought concerning the

violence in his own society, could ignore all the suffering and grief of broken homes, there is one great and dreadful fact that he cannot escape. That fact is death. There is death in the world. From it, no man escapes. Although a man is not stricken with cancer, or some other disease; although he does not perish on a far-off battlefield; although he is not the victim of some murderer on a dark street; although he never becomes one of the grim statistics of highway fatalities; although he may live 70 or 80 years; he will die. This is bad news — of the worst kind.

Is it all darkness? Is it all bad news? Is there no light? Is there no good news? Well may man ask these questions, and he does. Many men come to the conclusion that there is no light in the darkness and no hope in a world where death reigns supreme. This is evident from the fear and despair that grip many people. Because of this fear and this hopelessness, many turn to drunkenness or drugs; and many immerse themselves in various kinds of pleasures. None of these things gives hope, but they do temporarily push the fear and despair to the background.

There is good news in this world of death. This good news is the gospel. The word, *gospel*, simply means 'good news,' or 'glad tidings.' This is what the angel joyfully announced that night long ago, when Jesus was born: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." (Luke 2:10) "Fear not," he said, "for I bring you good news."

This good news is news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God Who came into our world as a man. The angel went on: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." It is the news of what He did: He died for the sins of His people on a cross, and He rose from the dead in His body. It is the news of what this risen Jesus, possessor of all power in heaven and on earth, does for them: He gives them eternal life, peace, joy, and hope. It is the news, the gospel is, of what Jesus will do: He will come again to destroy His enemies; to raise His people from the dead; to teach the nations peace; and to renew the world, so that it is a creation in which righteousness shall dwell.

The gospel presents this great, this astounding salvation as God's free gift to men who are sinful and unworthy. The way in which He gives it, and in which we enjoy it, is not the way of our works, but the way of faith — and this faith itself is His gift to us. The gospel is the good news of grace, God's free favor to the undeserving.

There is no news like it. The goodness of the news of the gospel surpasses anything man might dare to imagine.

But how do you know this, someone asks; where do you find this? The gospel is given in the Bible, Holy Scripture, which is from beginning to end the inspired Word of God. The gospel is not an invention of men. It is not another human theory, that probably offers some temporary relief to mankind groaning under its burdens — an opiate administered to wretched man by a crafty, or misguided, priesthood. It is the gospel of God. This is what Paul, a great preacher of the gospel, calls it in Romans 1:1: "the gospel of God." God is the One Who conceived and counselled the salvation proclaimed in the gospel; God is the One Who worked it out in our world and history — sending His own Son; God is the One Who announces the good news. It is God's gospel.

We are privileged to preach the gospel (by "we" I mean the Church). We are not ashamed of the gospel. We are ready to preach it to anyone and to everyone. This is what Paul said of himself in the same first chapter of the book of Romans. In verses 15, 16, he said: "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

This implies that there are reasons why one might be tempted to be ashamed of the gospel. It has actually happened, and it is happening today, that men who have had the gospel entrusted to them and who ought to preach it and defend it are ashamed of it. In their shame, they are silent about the gospel and teach other things. Or, they go to work on the gospel to change it into something that they like better. For the gospel in its pure, unadulterated form is offensive

to men. Do not be too quick to deny this. For one thing, the gospel contradicts the wisdom of men in every age. The first chapters of the Bible, e.g., teach that man and the universe originated by being created by God in six days, each of which was limited by an evening and a morning. Each of the various creatures came into being by the power of the Almighty Word of God. At once, the gospel opposes the wisdom of the world in the theory of evolution. The gospel calls this bit of human wisdom a fraud, a lie.

Above all, men are tempted to be ashamed of the gospel because it begins by passing a devastating judgment upon man, upon every man. It declares that men are sinners and that men's sin is the cause of all their misery. It finds men guilty before God and, therefore, worthy of the death that a righteous God inflicts upon them. The gospel exposes every man as totally depraved and all his deeds as only evil. It destroys all man's pretensions of his own goodness and worth. It dashes all his fond hopes of delivering himself from his miseries.

The gospel points out one way of salvation for men, and that one way is the way of the cross of Jesus. But this also is a truth that one is tempted to be ashamed of. As the same Paul wrote in I Corinthians 1:23: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." The truth of salvation by way of the crucifixion of a Man once upon a time is contrary to the ideas of religious people and nonsense to the learned heathen. So, one is inclined to be ashamed of the gospel; to water it down; to change it; to smooth its rough edges; to make it palatable to men; to revise and update it for modern, 20th century men and women.

But we are not ashamed of the gospel. Why not? "Because," as Paul goes on to say in Romans 1:16, "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." When the good news of Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead is preached, the Almighty power of God Himself operates, through the gospel, to save men. There is power in the gospel. This power is the glorious power of salvation. Through the gospel, God delivers those who believe from sin and death — our terrible misery. God takes away their guilt, which exposes them to the wrath of God and makes them fearful and ashamed, and declares them righteous. He changes their hearts, so that they no longer practise wickedness, but obey His law. He gives them eternal life, the end of which will be life and glory in the new creation, body and soul. Shall we be ashamed of the gospel, then? God forbid. We glory in it and in the cross that it proclaims. We are ready to preach it everywhere and to anyone.

There is another reason why we are not ashamed of the gospel, nor allow ourselves to be silenced by the opposition and the ridicule of those who find the

gospel offensive. This is the dreadful fact that, apart from the gospel, there is on earth only the most disgusting, ruinous wickedness of men and, burning over all, the wrath of God revealed from heaven. Apart from the gospel of Christ, outside of the sphere of salvation enjoyed by believing the gospel of Christ, there is the spiritual death of immorality and the eternal death of God's terrible wrath. This is our experience. This has been man's experience throughout history: read any good history book. This is the testimony of all the bad news that our world is full of. This is what Paul goes on to say in Romans 1: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." (vs. 18) Then, he exposes the wicked behavior of mankind. It reads like a description of our society: sexual filth, particularly homosexuality; covetousness; murder; deceit; backbiting; hatred of God; pride; disobedience to parents; and, at the very end, the wickedness of people who take pleasure in other people who do these things, that is, the wickedness of loving to watch these things, read these things, and listen to these things for entertainment and of making folk heroes of the vilest sinners.

Who can challenge this indictment of the world? of our society? This is the life of men apart from the gospel.

But matters are still worse. For this corruption,

although it comes out of man's own evil nature, is a judgment of God upon man. God's wrath falls upon men because they have changed the truth of God into a lie and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, Paul writes in verse 25. In His wrath, God gives men over to sin; "God gave them up unto vile affections," according to verse 26. Our troubles and woes and wars and even our astounding increase of sin are our just punishments from God for our ungodliness, our refusal to glorify and thank God, and our denial of the truth of Him. The end of it all is death, physical death and everlasting death in hell.

This is man's life (death, rather!) apart from the gospel. From this, the gospel, and only the gospel, saves those who believe. Therefore, we are not ashamed of the gospel.

The Church must preach the gospel. This is her one, great task. Our great need, as sinful men, is to hear the gospel, to heed it by a true and living faith, and to be saved by the power of God.

When this Word of God is proclaimed, there are some who believe and receive the Word with gladness unto the saving of their souls, in distinction from others who put it from them and judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life, even contradicting and blaspheming. This is due solely to God's gracious, eternal ordination of them to eternal life. (Acts 13:44-48) The gospel is the gospel of grace.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Then Shall the End Come

Rev. J. Slopsema

The title of this article is taken from the words of Christ spoken in Matt. 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world unto all nations; and then shall the end come." This was in response to the question of His disciples, "Tell us . . . what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" One of the signs of Christ's coming is the preaching of the gospel to all the nations.

And of all the signs of Christ's coming mentioned by the Scriptures, this sign of the preaching is the chief and most important. For *first* the gospel must be preached in all the world unto all nations; and *then* shall the end come. The second coming of Christ and the end of all things wait for and are dependent upon the spread of the gospel. The end cannot come until the gospel has been preached to all the nations.

But once that has been accomplished, then the end comes.

To understand this we must see that Christ cannot come at just any time. All things must be ready. The time must be ripe. In the first place, all the elect must be gathered and brought to salvation. And in this present dispensation God has His people in every tribe, tongue, and nation. They must all be gathered before Christ can come again. But in the second place, the cup of iniquity must be filled so that the world becomes ripe for judgment. Sin must grow and develop until the sin of man's wicked heart manifests itself in the worst possible way. This in turn means the rise and culmination of the Antichrist. For when Antichrist shall come and establish his universal kingdom of darkness, sin will have been manifest as

sin. The terrible wickedness of man's heart and his enmity against God will have been fully revealed. And man will be ripe for final judgment. Upon these two things, therefore, the day of Christ depends — the full ingathering of the church and the filling of the cup of iniquity by the world. When these two come to pass — and they will be accomplished simultaneously — then the end comes: not before, not afterwards, but *then*.

And the preaching of the gospel to all the nations is the chief means Christ uses to accomplish this. It is through the preaching of the gospel that Christ, first of all, gathers His church from among the nations. This is symbolized in Rev. 6:2 by the drive of the white horse. "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." As the white horse runs its course through the nations and as its rider shoots his arrows of the Word into the hearts of God's elect, they are brought to faith and conversion and salvation in Christ. In like manner, the Apostle Paul teaches us in I Corinthians 1 that the preaching of the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Christ gathers His church from the nations by the preaching.

But in the second place, Christ also uses the preaching to bring about the development of sin in the world. The gospel not only has a positive effect; it also has a negative effect. It not only softens; it also hardens. It not only brings the elect to repentance; it also brings the reprobate to rebellion and defiance against God. The Word of God is a two-edged sword: it cuts two ways. It is a savour of life unto life and a savour of death unto death. And, therefore, it is through the preaching that the necessary development of sin in the world is also accomplished. Without the drive of the white horse the sin of natural man could not develop as it ought. The Antichrist would not come. The cup of iniquity would not be filled; and neither could the world be made ripe for judgment.

Clearly, then, the second coming of Christ depends upon the preaching. The end of all things must wait until the white horse has fully run its course and the gospel is proclaimed to all the nations, having its two-fold effect. Only then *can* the end come. And then *shall* the end come.

It is in this connection that we find a rather interesting article in the "Religion" department of the Jan. 9, 1978 issue of *Time* magazine. The article is entitled, "Beyond Babel." We quote the opening paragraphs:

"The tongues of men have proliferated considerably since the Tower of Babel helped explain how the sons of Noah came to converse in so many different languages. Today there are 3,000 languages in the

world, most of them oral only, which makes life difficult for Christian missionaries sworn to spread the word of God as widely as possible. Most Bible societies, in fact, concentrate mainly on getting adequate translations into major written languages. But the Summer Institute of Linguistics has a longer reach. For the past 42 years, following the teachings of its founder W. Cameron Townsend, S.I.L. teams have been seeking out tiny, isolated tribes in remote corners of the world. With a little help from tape recorders, phonetics and the science of linguistics they create written language out of the primitive spoken word; eventually they teach the tribesmen how to read primers written in the vocabulary they talk, and present them with a readable New Testament printed in their native tongue.

"As a labor of love and an example of global evangelism and literacy instruction, the overseas work of S.I.L. and its U.S. counterpart, known as the Wycliffe Bible Translators, cannot be matched. It has brought reading and Bible translations to 90 previously illiterate tribes, and is currently at work with 650 more."

What catches our attention here is, first of all, evidence of the running of the white horse of the book of Revelation. The gospel is being spread throughout the world. It is true, of course, that the emphasis in this article is upon Bible translating rather than preaching. Yet all this work of the S.I.L. presupposes and is in the context of the preaching. And it may also be true that from our Reformed perspective this work of the S.I.L. may not be all that we would like it to be, both from the viewpoint of its content and its method. Nevertheless, the fact remains that what we have here is further evidence of the running of the white horse.

But what catches our attention here, in the second place, is the evidence of how close we are to the end of time. The spread of the gospel is a fairly accurate gauge to determine how close we are to the end. For in the days of the Apostles the preaching of the gospel began in Jerusalem. From there it spread and has continued to do so throughout the New Dispensation. Never has the gospel stood still. Always the white horse has continued its victorious march in a westward direction. And, according to Christ Himself, when the gospel shall have been universally proclaimed so that all nations shall have received the witness of the gospel, then the end comes. By paying attention, therefore, to the spread of the gospel, we can get a fairly accurate picture of where we are in history.

And just how far has the gospel advanced today? It has advanced to the point where organizations such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics are turning to isolated tribes here and there, who have no written language, and are providing them with Bibles! And that speaks volumes. That tells us that the gospel has

been almost universally proclaimed. That tells us that the white horse of Revelation has about completed its drive. Missionaries, churches, Bible societies do not turn their attention to "isolated tribes in remote corners of the world" unless the gospel has already been proclaimed throughout the main and more accessible civilizations of humanity. And this assertion is born out by the facts. It is simply a fact that the Word has been proclaimed in every country of the world. It is simply a fact that indigenous churches have also been established in every land. The modern-day missionary has an almost impossible task to find a field where the gospel has not already preceded him.

And that indicates but one thing: the end is not, can not be, all that far off. For "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then the end shall come." We should not put the day of Christ's coming into the far and distant future. To do so is simply not to recognize one of the key signs of the times.

And what does this all mean practically speaking?

This means, first of all, that the church has cause for rejoicing. The day of the Lord is at hand! We can see Him coming, even through the spread of the gospel. All evidence points very clearly to the fact that before long we will see Him on the clouds of heaven with His holy angels. And that means deliverance from this present weary night of sin and death.

That means salvation and final glory in the perfected kingdom of our God. Do you look for that with eager expectation? Do you long for that? Then, rejoice! For the precious object of your hope is about to be realized.

But, in the second place, this means that we must for the meantime arm ourselves with the whole armor of God. For the days in which we live are evil. And they shall continue to increase in wickedness until the very end. Even now all things appear to be ripe for the coming of the Antichrist, whose coming shall mark the fulness of the development of sin in man. But this should not surprise us. This tremendous growth of sin in the world is merely the negative effect of the spread of the gospel into all the world. As the gospel is more and more proclaimed, even to the remote corners of the earth, we can expect sin to grow and develop by leaps and bounds. We must not be surprised by all these things. And neither must we be alarmed. For this is the work of our Lord, Who even now sits at the right hand of God. He it is Who sovereignly brings all these things to pass. He is preparing all things for His second coming. And He will certainly care for and preserve His church in the midst of them. But, nevertheless, it is our calling as the saints of God to fight even to the end and to be faithful. Let us, therefore, put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of the Book of Galatians

Rev. G. Lubbers

THE IRREPRESSIBLE QUESTION: WHY THEN THE LAW? — (Continued, Gal. 3:19)

The great inheritance which is ours in Christ Jesus cannot be ours "out of law." Such was not the specific term of the covenant ratified by God to Abraham by oath. It was by promise, pure and simple, which for its fulfilment was wholly to be a work of God in Christ Jesus. It was "graced" by God to us. That was its perpetual and unchangeable character. The verb in the Greek is "*kecharistai*," the perfect indicative deponent active, underscoring that this was the completed condition of the promise and covenant from the time of Abraham till the coming of Christ, which could not be changed by the presence and actuality of the centuries of the law. God had given it *by grace* to Abraham. That stands unchanged and unmoved!

Then the law cannot be a way of salvation! As we said in the former essay, the law was there for the transgressions' sake. Concerning this we must make a few more observations of an exegetical nature.

Bishop Trench in his *New Testament Synonyms* has a very interesting study of the term "transgression" (*parabasis*) in the writings of Paul. He insists, as do both Lightfoot and Greijdanus and others, that the words "for the transgressions' sake" do not mean to convey the thought that the law came in order to *prevent* transgressions on the part of the people of God, but rather the law came as the "power" of sin, that the great transgressions of the Old Testament saints might come to manifestation in all their horrible sinfulness, as these culminated in the crucifixion of the Son of God. That is the only way one can interpret the great and consummate sinfulness of

Israel. Such was, shocking as it may seem, the purpose of the law-giving at Sinai; therefore was it added to the promise. Writes Trench, among other things, "In the language of Paul this *parabasis* (transgression) of the commandment distinctly given, is more serious than *hamartia* (sin) (Confer Rom. 2:23; I Tim. 2:14; Hebrews 2:2; 9:15). "A bit later Trench writes, "He who, being under no expressed law, is, in Augustine's language a 'peccator'; he who, having such a law, is 'praevaricator'. . . . Before the law came men might be the former; after the law they could only be the latter. In the first there is *implicit*, in the second there is *explicit* disobedience" See *Trench's Synonyms*, page 229.

We believe that a careful study of such passages as James 2:9 and I Corinthians 15:57 will bear out that such is the intent of Paul here in this passage when he says "for the transgressions' sake."

Paul adds that this power of the law will obtain "until the Seed should come." After Christ (the Seed) has come, this law-dispensation will end because it then has served its God-intended purpose. When the promise is fulfilled the law falls away. Then it has served its pedagogical purpose of being a tutor to Christ. The law then is, in its pedagogical purpose, no longer needed. For the Seed is the One to "whom it was promised." This was promised to Christ when God confirmed the promise over and over to Abraham and to his "Seed," which is Christ. (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 17:7; 22:18) Such were the terms of the Covenant. And hence this word stands. That is why the apostle writes "the promise hath been made." He employs the perfect tense, impersonal passive. This emphasizes that this promise was thus in its *completed state* all along. It had never lost one iota of its validity throughout all the centuries that the law said "do this and thou shalt live." It was ever given to Abraham by the sovereign grace of God which excludes all works of merit. (Rom. 11:5, 6) And, according to Scripture, this promise is in Christ for the elect, the remnant according to election, the believers. Otherwise grace is no more grace and works is no more works!

When the Seed has "come," once and for all, in His lowly birth, suffering, death, and resurrection, then the dispensation of this "law" ends. We are crucified with Christ. Through law we died unto law! And what we now live we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and died for us. Hallelujah! (Gal. 2:20, 21) What we now live we live by the faith of the Son of God!

This law, therefore, had a good purpose. It showed the necessity of grace as the fulfilment of the promise in Jesus Christ, and by this law the saints, the believers, reached out and saw in hope that their salvation was in the Promised "Seed" alone. In the

keeping of the law no flesh was justified before God. (Psalm 143:2) They looked for another righteousness "without law." (Rom. 3:20, 28) For Christ is the end (telos) of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. (Rom. 10:4) Thus they understood Deuteronomy 30:11-14. And the law-giving must serve that exalted end of pointing beyond itself to the promise, to the Seed, Christ.

THE INFERIORITY OF THE LAW CLEARLY SET FORTH IN THE MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS ORDAINED. (Galatians 3:19, 20)

The apostle proceeds to state something more about this "law" which was only till the Seed should come. He points out that this law is inferior to the "promise" in the *very manner* in which Israel received this law. God did not give this law directly by Himself as He "gave" the promise, but He ordained it through two *creaturely agencies*! The angels are creatures, and Moses is a creature. That this law is "ordained" (*diatassein* = giving orders in detail) by angels shows that this was a work which was less glorious than that giving of the promise. This could be relegated to the "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. 1:14) To these angels God never said: "Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Heb. 1:4, 5, 13). This *lesser* matter in the economy of salvation can be performed by the "ministering spirits," be they Gabriel and Michael and all their hosts together. Concerning this inferior way of giving the "law" when compared with the giving of the "promise" we shall see more presently.

Now Moses, in the book of Exodus, does not inform us of the presence of angels at Sinai at the time of the law-giving. But that is no argument that they were not present there in that awful glory, which caused even Moses to say, "I exceedingly fear and quake." (Heb. 12:21) When Moses climbed the Mount of God to receive the law, the Lord was there with his "saints." Moses tells us in Deut. 33:2 "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with the *ten thousands of his saints*: from his hand went a fiery law unto them." It was a very spectacular and glorious sight. The whole mountain range was lit up by the brightness of the LORD'S presence. And the Lord was there with ten thousands of his saints. This was a very great Theophany, indeed! Good Bible scholars point out that the term "saints" in the Old Testament refers to the angels of God, while in the New Testament the term refers to the glorified children of God who will accompany their Lord Jesus, to judge the living and the dead. For the usage of the angels in the Old Testament see I Kings 22:19; Job. 1:6; Daniel 7:10. These surround the throne of God. They are the assembly of the

“Holy Ones” about God’s throne. (Psalm 80:6, 8; 68:17) The Chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the LORD is among them as in Sinai, in the holy places. In Acts 7:53 Stephen tells the Sanhedrin of their rebellious heart that they did not walk as such as had received “the law by the disposition of angels.” And the very great sin of not obeying the law is underscored by the writer to the Hebrews when he says, “For if the *word spoken by angels* was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience a just recompence of reward. . . .” (Hebrews 2:2)

From the foregoing it is quite evident that the law was given by angels. All the commandments were given by angels. This was a “fiery law” written in tables of stone, and there were many commandments both in the Levitical ordinances as well as in the civil laws of Israel. They were all given as the *law-prescriptions* for Israel. They were of such a nature that they could be given by such angelic emissaries from heaven. The promise could not be given to us by such in-between-agents. Yes, this *law* had a glory, but it had no glory compared with the glory of God in the *promise*. (II Cor. 3:6-10) And this inferiority, we are told, is seen even in the very law-giving itself!

There is one more fact of this law-giving which the text which we are considering underscores. It was placed in the “hand of a mediator”: Moses. John writes, “The law was *given* through Moses, but grace and truth became (*egento* from *ginomai*: *to become*) through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17) And so this “mediator” here does not refer to Christ, the Mediator of God and man (I Tim. 2:5, Heb. 12:24) but refers to Moses, the man of God who climbed up to Mount Sinai and who returned to Israel with the law. Here in the law-giving the order is: God-angels-Moses-Israel. See a similar order in Rev. 1:1 where it

is: God-Christ-the angel-John – the seven churches. Only in this latter case it is not the law-giving but the prophetic Word concerning the triumph of the Kingdom of God and of His Christ.

The point is that the law-giving, glorious as it was, was inferior to the giving of the Promise. That is pointed out when the apostle says “now a mediator is not of one, but God is one.” This phrase has given much difficulty to interpreters. We are told that there are between three and four hundred different interpretations. After much reflection and research we believe that Lightfoot and Greijdanus give the proper interpretation. The apostle, according to them, is here saying that “the *mediator*” in any given case among men is always an in-between-man. There are always two or more parties where he is needed. Such it is in human-relations here on earth. He is ever dealing with human and divine stipulations and conditions which must be met shall he mediate. But such is not the case with God in dealing with His people in His giving and fulfilling of the Promise. The very term in the Greek verb for “to promise” is always in the *middle* voice. In Greek this means that the action of the doer is somehow in relation to himself. God gives His promise and fulfils it. He does this all alone. He, therefore, gave the promise to Abraham and appeared to him in Ur of the Chaldees as the “God of glory” without any angels or men representing Him. The “Angel of the LORD” came to Abraham’s tent in announcing the birth of Isaac, telling him that nothing is impossible with God. (Gen. 18:9-15. See also Luke 1:37) When God gives and fulfils His promise He is one. He is the sole giver and fulfiller of His Word. Behold, then, the excellency of the promise over the law even in the manner in which the one was “ordained” and the other “given.”

STRENGTH OF YOUTH

Tomorrow

Rev. Rodney Miersma

Tomorrow . . .

Tomorrow what?

Why, tomorrow we will do this or that and we will go here and there.

In such a way we make our plans. We all plan, whether we are young or old. However, as youth in the church of Jesus Christ one has much for which to plan. “When I leave high school I will go to this or that college. At the college of my choice I will take

these subjects so that I can take up this or that vocation. And if I do not go to some institution of higher learning I will have plans for my immediate vocation.” So we go on, making plans for every sphere of our lives.

Good!

We must make plans for we must prepare and make provision for the future. One who does not is a fool.

But as covenant young people we must not divorce

our plans from the Lord our God who directs all things by His almighty will. James in his epistle has something to say on this matter.

Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

But now ye rejoice in your boasting: all such rejoicing is evil.

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

James 4:13-17

James has taken this picture of what was characteristic of a Jewish merchant. The Jews went all over trading in all of the cities of the world. Now here we have this merchant sitting at home with his family with a world map spread out over the table. He is explaining to his family how he will take a few trusted servants and will go to this or that city. Then he will do this and that. There is no doubt in his mind as to what is going to happen. He does not foresee anything wrong taking place. The voyage will be safe. He will make so much money and return exactly one year from today. There is no room for frustration — all is very definite.

What is wrong?

That he made plans?

No, but he divorces all his plans for the future from God. This is the heart of his sin. He ignores entirely the truth which he claims to believe — that God controls everything. His very certainty denies that God controls all. He is a member of the church, but from his practical life you would never know it. He denies that his life and calling is fundamentally that of a pilgrim.

This basic sin is characteristic in the church, a sin against which we must guard with our whole being. As children of God we must not only be listeners and hear the Word of God, but we must also be doers.

We must face reality. That, in the first place, means that we do not know what shall be on the morrow. God is in control and He does not reveal to us His purpose for the morrow. In fact it is a mercy that He does not reveal the future to us. If we knew what the morrow would be like we would not have the courage to go on. Christ knew with respect to His life, but that only added to His suffering. We must learn to live in conscious dependence on Him, bearing only the burdens of the moment.

This stands to reason, for what is our life? "It is

even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Yes, like a mist; you see it, then you do not. That is our life. We must realize that we are dependent creatures who receive our life from outside of ourselves.

Reality, in the second place, is that God controls all things by His counsel. This counsel is the living, active will of God which has power to carry itself out. No man is able to frustrate His purpose; His will is done on earth as it is done in heaven. Unless we hold to this truth it is absurd that we even say it. In addition to being efficacious the will of God is also all-comprehensive. Every minute detail which takes place in the course of history takes place only because God willed it. The Belgic Confession in Art. 13 explains this truth very beautifully.

"We believe that the same God, after he had created all things, did not forsake them, or give them up to fortune or chance, but that he rules and governs them according to his holy will, so that nothing happens in this world without his appointment: nevertheless, God neither is the author of, nor can be charged with, the sins which are committed. For his power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible, that he orders and executes his work in the most excellent and just manner, even then, when devils and wicked act unjustly. And, as to what he doth surpassing human understanding, we will not curiously inquire into, farther than our capacity will admit of; but with the greatest humility and reverence adore the righteous judgments of God, which are hid from us, contenting ourselves that we are disciples of Christ, to learn only those things which he has revealed to us in his Word, without transgressing these limits. This doctrine affords us unspeakable consolation, since we are taught thereby that nothing can befall us by chance, but by the direction of our most gracious and heavenly Father; who watches over us with a paternal care, keeping all creatures so under his power, that not a hair of our head (for they are all numbered), nor a sparrow, can fall to the ground without the will of our Father, in whom we do entirely trust; being persuaded, that he so restrains the devil and all our enemies, that without his will and permission, they cannot hurt us. And therefore we reject that damnable error of the Epicureans, who say that God regards nothing, but leaves all things to chance."

This counsel has as its very center Jesus Christ our Lord. In fact it has meaning and purpose only as it relates to Christ. God's purpose is to glorify Himself; but this glory is realized through Christ. Further, all God's counsel is realized through the salvation of the Church in Christ. Applying this to ourselves this means that our final blessedness in Christ is the ultimate goal of this infinitely wise, supremely blessed will of God.

Thus, all things serve the salvation of the elect of God. All that God determines to do is for the sake of

His people. This is the supreme truth of the gospel that shines undimmed and catches at our hearts with its astonishing blessedness. No wonder that Scripture constantly extols the greatness of God's will. And no wonder that the songs of the Church are eternally raised in praise to God for His glorious works. And again, no wonder that Scripture again and again tells us that all things are for our good, that nothing can be against us if God is for us, and that all things are ours even as we are Christ's and Christ is God's

However, in the face of this glorious truth, what do we do? We boast.

Yes, that is right, we boast!

By nature we are no different from the Jewish merchant. This is especially true of a young person. Apparently he has a long life ahead of him and he boldly makes plans accordingly. Very typical that is of a high school graduate. "Now I have acquired a diploma; the world lies before me, and I am going to become this or that and accomplish great things." However, when one makes such claims for himself he is boasting because he does not have the ability to determine the morrow. In reality this is rebellion against the will of God. Swagger and strut however you please, but it is all empty boasting. God alone determines all for both the elect and the reprobate.

All this kind of boasting is evil, rotten, morally unsound evil — an active, vicious evil that destroys. And, lest we forget, we must be reminded that this sin is a sin of commission, not omission. It is not merely a matter of forgetting to bear in mind "If the Lord wills. . . ." Rather, it is a willful exultation against God and an attempt to destroy Him. For when we talk as if we control the morrow, it is boasting which is evil.

But, youth, all this is not meant to discourage you.

I know, there are times when we wish we could control our lives. We are not satisfied with the will of God and we want badly for things to be different. But deep down we know that this is not good. For if we were given the direction of our own lives, we would surely never arrive in glory.

"If the Lord wills. . . ."

That is a confession that only the child of God can make, a confession that is worked by grace, implying a particular attitude of the heart. "Thou wilt guide me by Thy counsel." This portrays an attitude of humble dependence, of absolute reliance.

Moreover, this confession is a comfort to God's people. It is not a sigh of resignation, a simple acknowledgement of the fact. No, it is rather a testimony of the fact that we are led by our Father's hand. He seeks our good; He knows our place in glory; and He knows the best way to lead us there. Guided by His counsel we shall arrive safely on the shores of eternity. We say: "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

"If the Lord wills. . . ."

O, I know what you are thinking. "Must I include that phrase every time that I say something? I will appear as some pious fuddy-duddy."

I agree.

An over-emphasis will cause this truth to become trite and meaningless. However, we must always be conscious of this truth whether we express it verbally or not. The absence of this expression reveals a sinful nature whereas its presence reveals the inmost longing of our heart, namely, what God wills, for His will is realized in Christ unto the salvation of His people.

ALL AROUND US

Presbyterian Charismatics

Rev. G. Van Baren

The *Presbyterian Journal*, December 14, 1977, reports on the organization of a congregation of charismatics within the United Presbyterian Church USA. This appears to be the first congregation organized in this way. The article states:

A new congregation formed by Presbyterian charismatic leaders has been approved here as a mission fellowship of the United Presbyterian Church USA with the clear understanding that the new church is to be charismatic-oriented.

New Covenant Presbyterian Church is thought to

be the first congregation of any Presbyterian denomination openly formed expressly to be a charismatic congregation.

With upward of 300 persons in attendance from the first regular Sunday worship service, the New Covenant congregation had a charter membership class of some 147 persons, representing over 13 different denominational backgrounds.

The congregation has called the Rev. . . . In a letter to the chairman of South Florida presbytery's Committee of Missions, Strategy and Property, the Rev.

James I. McCord, president of Princeton Seminary, wrote of Mr. . . :

“(He) is a solid Presbyterian, Reformed in theology and polity, and he is a devoted and loyal churchman. He believes and has demonstrated that the charismatic dimension of the Christian life can be channeled into the Church, to the enrichment of the entire congregation.”

In its petition to the presbytery to be organized as a UPCUSA church, the steering committee of the new congregation stated: “It is our ardent desire that this new work be a prototype of how the United Pres-

byterian Church can incorporate into its historical framework new dimensions of Christian experience. . . .”

The same *Presbyterian Journal* contains a number of articles by ministers in support of the idea of the work of the Holy Spirit as seen in speaking with tongues and healings. It appears that this charismatic movement continues to infiltrate and affect the churches of our day — including those of various presbyterian denominations. We too ought to be on our guard against this error which has disturbed others. Remember: it is still around.

Another Bright Idea

The *Banner* of January 6, 1978 reports in the column by Dirk Buursma on the new campaign planned by Bill Bright:

Bill Bright, head of Campus Crusade for Christ International, is not a quitter. His much-ballyhooed effort to evangelize the United States called “Here’s Life, America” had about the impact of a limp noodle. Most observers feel that it made even less impact than Key ’73 and Evangelism Thrust, other nationwide efforts to reach the masses with the Christian gospel.

Now, undaunted by the failure of “Here’s Life, America,” Bright has announced a new plan which will cost one billion dollars. “It’s a goal that I have held dear for more than 30 years — to fulfill the great commission.”

In order to obtain financing for his plan, Bright has contacted a group of wealthy evangelicals, including such people as entertainers Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, Dallas oilman Nelson Bunker Hunt, and the co-founder of the Holiday Inns, Wallace A. Johnson. No doubt other affluent businessmen will hear the telephone ringing.

Bright intends to use television and radio in reaching foreign cities, and in a press conference announcing his ambitious program, he stressed that the crusade would not be political. Bright also indicated that

he hopes to raise his one billion dollars from “new sources not being channeled into other Christian organizations. . . .”

So, we’re in for another one of those tremendous, world-wide campaigns. There is to be much ado about evangelizing the world with a billion dollars of contributions — with what result? One would think that evangelism requires the power of billions and the influence of great names. But where is to be found the power of the cross? Only recently the report was given that more than 85% of those who make “commitments” to Christ, never enter into the door of a church after these “commitments.” Is it not an indication that the “evangelization” going on is not God-centered or Christ-centered, but rather, man-centered? The “Here’s life, America” campaign suggested itself the trouble. The bumper sticker used in that campaign proclaimed: “I found it.” It is questionable to what the “it” referred. But the greater problem was that “I found this.” It was not, “Christ found me.” Therein lies the explanation of the failure of this “Bright” campaign. And if, as it is highly likely, the new “Bright” campaign is conducted the same way, it will be indeed a billion dollar failure. The sad part is that this is such a waste of monies in the name of evangelism.

Diapers to Diplomas

Outlook of January 1978 quotes an interesting article from the Nov. 28, 1977 *Lutheran Christian News* worthy of our consideration too:

The Planned Parenthood Association has publicized alarming figures clearly designated to discourage childbearing. According to their highly suspect statistics it’s supposed to cost from \$70,000 to \$107,000 to raise a child from diapers to college diploma. The larger figure includes lost earning power of the mother sacrificing her career in order to be “just a housewife.”

Although such figures overlook young people working their way through college and in general are

patently absurd — a statement I make as the father of five who are being raised satisfactorily even though the Lord has not supplied the \$350,000 to \$535,000 the Zero Population Growth people maintain we need to rear them — many couples have swallowed the anti-child propaganda poison and are so intimidated that they feel even having one child would demand unbelievable financial sacrifices and interfere too much with their modern American materialistic and pleasure-mad lifestyle.

How sad to hear in premarital counseling even our Lutheran youth claiming they can’t afford to think of having children for several years and then to see them drive off in expensive cars to luxuriously appointed

apartments with color TV and stereo! Have we parents, pastors, and teachers perhaps become too mired in materialism ourselves that we can't convince our offspring that receiving children as precious gifts of God and bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is much more satisfying and God-pleasing than piling up property and possessions which so soon rot and rust away?

Wisconsin Synod couples, blessed with fertility, need not feel guilty about bringing children into a world allegedly threatened by the specter of overpopulation, not if they are truly Christian parents and give this sin-corrupted world what it needs most — youngsters properly trained to live their Christian faith, to talk about their Savior, to witness by word and deed to the Gospel of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus.

Christian parents, who seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, will surely receive, as Jesus promised (Matt. 6:33), the material things needed to adequately provide for their children from

diapers to (high school and/or college) diploma.

The above ought to serve as reminder of the calling of children of God in their marriage union. I fear that we too are being influenced more than we want to admit by all of the propaganda of the world. We see today in our churches sometimes a greater emphasis and desire to possess material things than to receive children of the Lord. Christian young people ought to ask themselves the question too before entering marriage: why do I desire this union? If it is that two may live together more profitably than one, with two working in order to earn for the "good life," and if the intent is then to refuse to have children or wait a long time to have such, then we have greatly confused our priorities. Covenant children involve time — but above all, eternity. Earthly possessions fade away and in the last day all about us shall be consumed with that fiery heat. But children of the Lord are part of the body of Christ who shall praise the Lord forevermore in glory. Where are our priorities?

More From Outlook

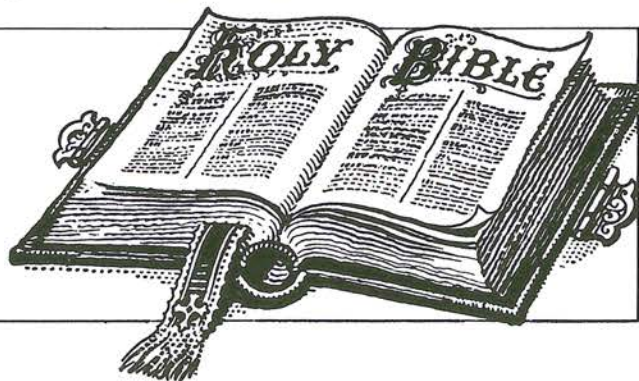
This same issue of *Outlook* contains several articles worthy of consideration. The subject matter also reflects what is of burning concern to this magazine and within the Christian Reformed Church. Not coincidentally, there are two articles which treat the subject of the dance. Two articles touch upon the idea of the infallibility of Scripture. A lengthy quotation from Geerhardus Vos is presented on the subject of reprobation. The articles are instructive, but also reflect the pathetic situation where these are not simply discussed as errors which confront the liberal churches of the day; rather, these are truths being denied within their own denomination.

The *Outlook* also reports that they have a new editor, or, as they put it, a "change of drivers." The Rev. J. Vander Ploeg served as editor for the last seven years. It was a position he took over after having served for many years as editor of the *Banner*. Through his editorial writings, the Rev. Vander Ploeg has correctly pinpointed many of the ills of his denomination. The diagnosis, however, seemed easier to present than the cure. Perhaps that is understandable. The closest to a "cure" that Rev. Vander Ploeg proposed was the formation of a "United Reformed

Church" consisting of conservatives of all of the Reformed churches of the land. But this remained only a "dream." Specific action, God-required action, was not presented. And so, many conservatives who looked to the *Outlook* for leadership, found that it accurately painted the troubles, but stopped short of providing the kind of leadership necessary for proper church reformation.

Now the Rev. Peter De Jong of the Dutton, Michigan Christian Reformed Church has been asked to serve as managing editor. Whether this involves also full editorial responsibilities, I do not know. We can only wish him God's rich blessings in what must be a very difficult position. And it would be our prayer too that he may provide the kind of leadership so essential for the many who are troubled by the apostasy within the churches. We as churches would also much like him, and others, to see what we have suggested for many years, that there is a clear-cut relationship also between current trends and that view of common grace adopted by the C.R.C. in 1924. At least we would hope that the idea is no longer rejected out-of-hand.

**The STANDARD BEARER
makes a thoughtful gift
for a shut-in.**



RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mens Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church extends its sympathy to one of its members, Mr. Tim R. Kooima, in the passing of his father, MR. SAM T. KOOIMA. May our covenant God comfort him with His Word and Spirit in the assurance that — "All things work together for good to them that love God." (Romans 8:28).

Rev. M. Hoeksema, Pres.

Mr. Alvin Kooiker, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of Faith Protestant Reformed Church extends to Mr. Paul Bruckbauer its deep sympathy in the recent loss of his mother, MRS. MARY BRUCKBAUER. May the Lord sustain this brother in this need.

Adult Bible Class

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of Faith Protestant Reformed Church expresses their heartfelt sympathy to its member, Mr. Bill Lafferty, in the loss of his mother MRS. DOROTHY LAFFERTY.

May he experience that the strength of the Lord is always sufficient.

Adult Bible Class

NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet on March 1, 1978, at South Holland, Illinois, at 8:30 A.M. Delegates in need of lodging should inform the Clerk of the South Holland Council of their need.

Rev. David Engelsma
Stated Clerk

NOTICE!!!!

The Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed School, Doon, Iowa, will be in need of three (3) teachers for the School term of 1978-79. Teachers needed are for the Lower Room — Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades, Middle Room — 3rd, 4th and 5th grades, Upper Room — 6th, 7th and 8th grades. Application can be made by writing to: — The Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed School, Doon, Iowa 51235 (c/o Mrs. Ed Van Egdom) or to: — Henry Bleyenburgh, 909 - 12th St., Rock Valley, Iowa 51247.

NOTICE!!!!

The Hull (Iowa) Protestant Reformed Christian School is in need of a teacher for grades 3, 4 and 5 for the 1978-79 school year. Please contact Mr. Alvin Kooiker, Boyden, Iowa 51234 or phone 712-725-2491.

NOTICE

Covenant Christian High School has an opening on its faculty next year (1978-1979) for a teacher certified in the area of business education. Applicants may address inquiries to Mr. Henry Boer, 7871 Emberly Drive, Jenison, Michigan 49428.

OFFICEBEARERS CONFERENCE

Any officebearers or former officebearers interested in the subject of Post-millennialism are invited to the all-day conference to be held, D.V., on Tuesday, February 28, at 9 A.M. at the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church. In the morning session Rev. Dale Kuiper will present a Critique of Post-millennialism. In the afternoon session Prof. H. Hanko will offer a Biblical-Exegetical Study of the Millennial Question. There will be a fellowship supper in the evening.

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STANDARD BEARER!

**News From Our Churches**

First Church in Grand Rapids extended a call to Rev. Meindert Joostens of our Faith Church in Jenison, Michigan. A special congregational meeting for the purpose of calling a minister from a duo of Rev. Joostens and Rev. James Slopsema was held after the evening service on Sunday, January 22.

Again this year the Mission Committee of our churches has sent emissaries to the island of Jamaica. Rev. Bernard Woudenberg, pastor of our church in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Elder Clare Prince and their wives left for the island on January 18. They plan to spend about four weeks visiting the churches with whom our churches have worked since the early

'60s, teaching, preaching, and evaluating the field. The emissaries will then return with a report to the Mission Committee and the 1978 Synod of our churches.

The address of Rev. Ronald Van Overloop and family is 100 Sparks Road, Christchurch 2, New Zealand. Rev. Van Overloop is spending about nine months preaching for and working with the Christchurch congregation. Rev. Van Overloop's address was found in the Hope Church bulletin of Redlands, California. Rev. Van Overloop is pastor of Hope Church in Walker, Michigan.

K.G.V.

Church Directory

Faith Church, Jenison, Mich.

Clerk: Mr. David Ondersma,
6761 Brookwood Drive,
Grandville, Michigan 49418

Treas.: Mr. Andrew Brummel,
2381 Oak Hollow Drive,
Jenison, Michigan 49428

First Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Clerk: Mr. T. Looyenga,
1125 Adams St., S.E.,
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507

Treas.: Mr. Donald Knoper,
1805 Edgewood, S.E.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

First Church, Holland, Michigan

Clerk: Terrence Elzinga,
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Zeeland, Michigan 49464
Phone: (616) 772-4036

Treas.: Roger Berends,
2780 North 112th Ave.,
Holland, Michigan 49423
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Hope Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Clerk: Jon Huiskens,
3324 Barrett
Grandville, Michigan 49418
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Treas.: Leon Garvelink,
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Hudsonville, Mich.

Clerk: Mr. Perlin Schut,
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Kalamazoo, Mich.

Clerk: Maurice Klop,
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Kalamazoo, Mich. 49009
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Treas.: Jeffery Steenholdt,
2724 Rolling Hills,
Portage, Mich. 49002
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Covenant, Prospect Park, N.J.

Clerk: Mr. Tom Nelson,
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Treas.: Mr. Clarence De Groot,
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Southeast, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Clerk: Dowie Vander Schaaf,
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Doon, Iowa

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Treas.: Ronald Brands,
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Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

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Hope, Isabel, S.D.

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Treas.: Mr. Milton Collmann,
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Loveland, Colorado

Clerk: Mr. Milton Alsum,
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Treas.: Mr. John W. Heys,
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Pella, Iowa

Clerk: Mr. Bernie Menninga,
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Lynden, Washington

Clerk: Frank De Boer,
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Treas.: Jack Regnerus,
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Hope, Redlands, Calif.

Clerk: Mr. Ed Gritters,
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Treas.: Mr. Bud Van Uffelen,
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South Holland, Illinois

Clerk: Mr. Louis R. Regnerus,
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Treas.: Mr. Gil Van Baren,
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Trinity, Houston, Texas

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Report of Classis East

Classis East met in regular session on January 11, 1978 at Southeast Church. Covenant was represented by one delegate, the other churches had two delegates each. This was the first meeting of the three scheduled for 1978 and the agenda reflected the fact that there would be no April meeting to consider those things directed at Synod. Rev. A. den Hartog presided.

The agenda also reflected increased activity on the part of local consistories. Four overtures to Synod were presented and treated. Two overtures were presented by Hope. The first requested that Synod rescind the actions taken in Article 77, 78, and 214 of the 1976 Synod which deal with the minister-on-loan arrangement with New Zealand. This overture was sent to Synod with the approval of Classis. Second, Hope requested the Synod of 1978 to instruct its Student Aid Committee to survey our seminary students to determine their financial need so that the churches, according to Article 19 of the Church Order, can provide more adequately for them. This overture was sent without comment to the Synod.

The two other overtures were from Southwest and Hudsonville. Southwest requested approval for the emeritation of their minister, Rev. H. Veldman. This request Classis granted and, if Synod approves, Rev. Veldman's emeritation will take place in June. Hudsonville's overture concerned changes in the Emeritus Committee constitution. Hudsonville proposes that the Emeritus Committee constitution be changed to reflect the obligation that the churches as a whole have in supporting our emeriti ministers rather than just the church the minister has last served. Classis approved the overture and forwarded it to Synod for consideration.

Hudsonville also requested payment of a sum of money to Rev. C. Hanko from the Emeritus Fund. This request was approved.

Kalamazoo, Hope, and First Churches requested classical appointments. The following schedule was approved: KALAMAZOO: January 22 – M. Schipper, February 5 – M. Joostens; HOPE: January 29 –

J.A. Heys, February 12 – H. Veldman, February 26 – G. Van Baren, March 12 – M. Schipper, March 19 – M. Joostens, April 9 – B. Woudenberg, April 23 – H. Veldman, May 7 – A. den Hartog; FIRST: January 29 – G. Van Baren, February 12 – M. Schipper, March 5 – J. A. Heys, March 19 – H. Veldman, April 2 – G. Van Baren, April 16 – J.A. Heys, April 23 – M. Joostens, May 7 – B. Woudenberg.

Subsidy requests were made by Kalamazoo in the amount of \$9000 and by Covenant in the amount of \$8500. Both requests were approved and forwarded to Synod.

Classis voted for synodical delegates with following results: MINISTERS: Primi – A. den Hartog, J.A. Heys, M. Joostens, G. Van Baren; Secundi – C. Hanko, M. Schipper, H. Veldman, B. Woudenberg; ELDERS: Primi – J. De Zeeuw, J.M. Faber, J. King, D. Ondersma; Secundi – J.B. Lubbers, G. Pipe, G. Scholten, H. Vander Kolk.

In other voting, Rev. Van Baren was elected to serve a three-year term on the Classical Committee, Rev. Heys was elected as a primus delegate ad examina, and Rev. Joostens was chosen as a secundus delegate ad examina. Rev. H. Veldman and Rev. J.A. Heys were chosen as church visitors with Rev. C. Hanko as alternate.

Classis was in executive session to consider requests from two consistories re discipline matters. After discussion, both requests were granted.

In other business, Covenant requested and was granted permission to contact the churches in Classis East for collections for their building program (a similar request will be made via the Synod to Classis West), the Finance Committee approved expenses of \$318.12. The questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and satisfactorily answered.

Classis will meet next on May 10 at Holland. Rev. Veldman closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon J. Huiskens
Stated Clerk