

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

We become rich, rich in Christ Jesus, as a reward of His poverty.... We who deserve everlasting hell in torments of wrath against our sins, become sons of God with the right to eternal life. Wondrous mercy! Boundless grace! For we are by nature uglier and more abominable than the cow barn in which He was born, yet He makes our hearts His dwelling place.

See "Grace Abounding"—page 122

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

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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Business Office: The Standard Bearer  
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P.O. Box 6064  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

New Zealand Business Office: The Standard Bearer  
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P.O. Box 2289  
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Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$9.00 per year. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order, and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

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

## MEDITATION

## Grace Abounding

Rev. C. Hanko

*"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."*

II Corinthians 8:9

Awe-inspiring word!

Stand in awe as you consider that name: Our Lord Jesus Christ!

He is Jesus, the Savior, the only Name under heaven whereby we can be saved.

He is Christ, the eternally anointed One, Who is ordained of God and qualified by the Holy Spirit to be Jesus, the Savior of His people.

He is Lord as He stands eternally before the face of God. See Him as He describes Himself to us in



Proverbs 8:30, "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." See Him as the disciples did when they beheld His mighty works and cried out, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Or as Thomas saw and worshipped the resurrected Lord, saying, "My Lord and my God!" But above all see Him with an eye of faith as exalted Lord to Whom is entrusted all power in heaven and on earth as Lord of lords and King of kings.

Then confess as you bow before Him in deepest humility and fear: "Our Lord Jesus Christ."

He became poor.

At this time of the year we celebrate our annual Christ Feast (how much better that sounds than Christmas), commemorating the birth of the Savior.

Let us go to Bethlehem in our imagination to visit the lowly home of Mary, the young woman who was engaged to be married to Joseph. One would hardly recognize in this maiden the royal blood of David that flows in her veins. The very fact that she lives in an insignificant city of despised Galilee is sufficient evidence that, along with the dying remnant of the royal house of David, the remembrance of David's throne lies buried in the dust. One would certainly not look for the most blessed among women so far removed from Judea, so far from the royal city and the temple. Indeed, the glory was departed from Israel. The hope of Israel's deliverance had all but faded away.

By the amazing providence of God a decree went forth from Caesar Augustus, to which Mary, with Joseph, responded by going to Bethlehem to be registered for taxation under the Roman law. There in the city of David Mary found no ready welcome, no reception of any kind, not even as much as a shelter in the hour of her great need. There was no hospital, no layette prepared for the Child, no royal bed, no robe. Jesus was born in abject poverty as the poorest of the poor. The shepherds found Him wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger in a cow barn. This was a plain indication of what His life would be. He never owned a parcel of ground or a roof over His head. His food and clothing and sandals were donated. He could say in all honesty, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." He experienced the day when these donated garments were roughly torn from Him and His naked body hung exposed on the cross. He watched while greedy soldiers gambled for His cloak. His last resting place was a borrowed grave. Consider our many possessions and even luxuries, for even the poorest among us has so much more than our Lord ever could claim as His own.

That is one aspect of His poverty. Another

aspect, which we have already anticipated, was that He came unto His own and His own received Him not. Israel's spiritual life was at a very low ebb. The priesthood was corrupted; the temple worship was for the most part a dead formality. The teachings of the scribes served only to deceive the unwary. Even the awakening caused by the preaching of John the Baptist had left most of the people coldly indifferent. The glad tidings which the masses were looking for was the announcement of a mighty hero who would crush the power of Caesar and restore the earthly kingdom of David. Therefore Jesus was hated before He ever saw the light of day. His parents had to flee for His life before He could care for Himself. Was it ever any different? He remained a stranger to His brethren and an alien in His mother's house. His own disciples failed to understand Him and were often offended by Him. He was despised, rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Every one hid his face from Him and gave Him over to His loneliness. He was taken prisoner, condemned as the worst of criminals, beaten, spit upon, crucified. Do not fail to note, that we did that to Him.

The divine reason for all this was that He came into the flesh to surrender Himself as friend-servant of God to the divine wrath of God against sin. Christ became like us in all the weakness of sinful flesh; only the element of sin was excluded. We confess with trembling, that He became *sin*, the very embodiment of the sin of His people. All their sins were charged to His account. All His life the curse of God rested on Him, the Righteous One in God's sight! None of us can imagine what that meant for our Savior, that all His life long and every step of the way He knew that the wrath of God would come upon Him in an ever-increasing measure until He entered into torments of hell on the cross. Every moment He deliberately and obediently walked the way that led to that final hour when, in the three hours of darkness, all the waves and billows of God's wrath would overwhelm His soul in anguish of isolation and separation from God's favor.

Whisper the confession: For our sakes! Shame floods our souls as our sins arise before our consciousness to testify against us. OUR sins, OUR guilt was laid upon Him. Our curse He bore. Our wrath swept over Him until He had borne it all away. The judgment that rested upon me and still stings in my conscience He took upon Himself to deliver me from it. What a marvel of love, of mercy and compassion, that He suffered for our sins even while we were still enemies. All eternity will not be too long to give praise to our God for that great sacrifice: He became poor for our sakes!



Our amazement only increases as our text reminds us, that *"though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor."* This does not mean, as is sometimes taught, that Jesus had been rich and laid off all those riches to become poor. Scripture does not say that. Nor is it true. *"Though he was rich,"* means that, even while He retained His riches, He became poor. He was rich, yet He was poor. That is the paradox. That is also the wonder of our salvation. Jesus is God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, eternally and inseparably one with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Who can describe those incomparable riches that Jesus possessed even when He was poor? Can we by searching find out God? Shall we venture to stammer a bit about those riches? The Son of God is Good. He is Light and Truth. Holy and Righteous. Love and Mercy, full of compassion and long-suffering. He is almighty, eternal, omnipresent, unchangeably perfect. He was all that even while He tabernacled in the flesh, ever dwelling in the bosom of the Father, in the intimate fellowship of eternal covenant life. Here is where the mystery of our salvation reaches its full dimension. Jesus never ceased at any time to be God. The Son of God formed His own nature, body and soul, in the womb of virgin Mary. God lay in swaddling clothes, drank at His mother's breast, grew up as a child among His brothers and sisters, and increased in wisdom and stature, obedient to His parents. God walked among us, talked with us, bore our weaknesses, and finally died our death and was among the dead of all ages in His grave. He preached and performed miracles. He allowed Himself to be hated and cast out. He surrendered Himself to His enemies, allowed Himself to be bound, led away like a criminal, tried with cruel injustice, condemned and crucified as one not worthy to live among the inhabitants of this world. Imagine that, with all its implications! He stretched out His arms to be nailed to the cross, He bore the reproach of His mockers, He committed Himself to torments of hell. He did all this for our sakes, for your transgressions and mine, that He might reconcile us to God and merit for us eternal fellowship with Him in glory!

"Ye know...."

Yes, we know our Lord Jesus Christ, and we also know His grace. We know Him intellectually, because it has been our privilege to be instructed from His holy Word at home, at school, and in the church from our earliest infancy. We know our Savior also experientially, for we know Him by a living faith which unites us in living fellowship with Him, whereby we confess: "Our Lord, Jesus, the Christ."

We know our Lord's grace, His adorable splendor as the eternal Son of God, Who dwells in the

bosom of the Father eternally. We know the Son as the revelation of the Godhead, as He tabernacled among us in the flesh and as He reveals the Father to us in the Holy Scriptures. In eager anticipation we look forward to the day when we shall see Him face to face as the full and complete revelation of God. Through Him we shall see the Father and have eternal fellowship with Him. That is sufficient to fill our hearts with eager longing.

We know His grace as God's favorable attitude toward us in love. God laid His Son upon the altar of the cross and plunged the knife of His wrath into His heart. The Son, likewise, willingly surrendered Himself to that divine wrath until He had borne it all away. He gave His life for those given to Him of the Father. Wonder of wonders, we are numbered among those for whom He bore His poverty even unto the isolation of hell! We stand at the cross with shame and contrition.

We know the gifts of His grace. We have a risen Savior, to Whom is entrusted all the affairs of history and of our daily lives, to direct all things to the coming of His kingdom and our salvation. We have an Intercessor with the Father, through Whom the Father bestows every blessing of salvation upon us. We become rich, rich in Christ Jesus, as a reward of His poverty. For it is *through* His poverty that we become rich. We who deserve everlasting hell in torments of wrath against our sins, become sons of God with the right to eternal life. Wondrous mercy! Boundless grace! For we are by nature uglier and more abominable than the cow barn in which He was born, yet He makes our hearts His dwelling place. He renews us as temples of the Holy Spirit, saints in Christ, preparing us for our own place in His glory.

Thanks be to God for His unspeakable Gift! May our Christ Feast be an expression of that thanks in love to God. We can best do that by extending a word of comfort to the weary, a hand of mercy to the distressed, a token of love to the lonely and aged. Our love to God expressed in love to His children finds a response of love in their hearts, whereby God is praised and glorified.

Grace abounding!

*The Standard Bearer  
makes a thoughtful gift  
on any occasion.*



## EDITORIALS

*Prof. H.C. Hoeksema*

### E.P.C. of Australia—Revisited (2)

We concluded our previous editorial on this subject by stating that a large part of our contacts in Tasmania were in Launceston. About this we shall tell you a little now.

Launceston is a rather pleasant city, built on hilly terrain; and with its population of approximately 65,000, it is the second largest city in Tasmania (Hobart, to the south, is the largest). But even in this moderately sized city, the little congregation of the E.P.C. hardly amounts to a handful of people. Fortunately, however, the church of Jesus Christ is not to be evaluated by the pound. The rather closely knit congregation has its own neat and useful church building, adequate and comfortable for their purposes, but undoubtedly not as lavish and not up to the standard of most of our buildings. The pastor of the Launceston flock is the Rev. Charles Rodman, respected and loved and looked up to as a leader throughout the churches. At the time of our visit, Mr. Rodman was up north. He is moderator of presbytery (classis) this year; and one of his duties is to visit all the congregations and preaching stations. It so happened that he had planned his tour of the churches before he knew of our plans to visit Launceston; and since his plans could not very well be changed, we missed meeting him in Launceston.

Pastor Rodman's absence from Launceston made my presence all the more welcome, however, since it solved the problem of pulpit supply for one Sunday. By the way, the Evangelical Presbyterian Churches in general know what it means to have a preacher-shortage; it is not unusual for them to be without their pastor on a Lord's Day, due to the fact that he is supplying another congregation or preaching station. But, to resume my story, I was invited to occupy the pulpit twice on our Sunday in Launceston. We felt much at home worshipping there. The order of worship is a bit different. For example, the elements of the vatum, the salutation, and the benediction are absent; neither do they have the reading of the Law and the recitation of the Apostles' Creed, as in our services. Besides, they are accustomed to having two Scripture readings in each service—one from the Old Testament and one from the New. But we found ourselves very much at home from the point of view of

the fact that the churches of the E.P.C. sing the Psalms exclusively in their church services. The Psalms are from the Scottish Psalter, and thus a bit different from our version; in fact, their versifications are much more literal than ours. Again, holding to "purity of worship," the E.P.C. have no organ or piano accompaniment. But especially in the larger congregations and where the precentor (*voorzinger*) gives good leadership (and doesn't start the congregation off on the wrong tune!) this unaccompanied singing can be enjoyable and beautiful. I must confess, however, that I worked in advance with the precentors to pick tunes which would be familiar to me and my family.

Purposely I chose passages for preaching which would afford me ample opportunity to stress Reformed specifics. At Launceston I preached from Isaiah 8:18 and from Deuteronomy 7:6-8. I had very attentive and receptive audiences at both the morning and the evening services; and, judging from remarks made by various people, they love Reformed and expository preaching.

A special treat for us at Launceston was the Sunday afternoon gathering, followed by a fellowship tea (supper) in the church basement. At this meeting I had been asked to speak (from our Protestant Reformed vantage point) on some of the doctrinal and practical implications of the erroneous doctrine of common grace. I spoke rather informally on this subject, using a good many concrete examples familiar to us here in the U.S. It should be kept in mind, of course, that, due to their peculiar history and development, the people of the E.P.C. are much more familiar with the subject of common grace in relation to the error of the "free offer" than with the subject of common grace in the Kuyperian sense of the word. It was about the latter, and that in connection with the Three Points, that I spoke. My talk was followed by an extensive and very interesting question period. This was followed by the potluck supper in the basement, at which we had much opportunity to renew acquaintances with people whom we had met so briefly five years ago.

All in all, that Sunday in Launceston was a blessed and profitable day. We shall not soon forget it.



If you would ask me whether there were any noteworthy changes during the five years between visits, I would answer affirmatively. We noticed a very definite growth and development in what I would call "covenant consciousness." And the concrete manifestation of this development is the determination to establish their own Christian school. This is not a mere undefined determination, but the Launceston people are hard at work to achieve the goal of having their own school. There are teachers in the congregation, and these are naturally deeply involved in this work. There are committees at work on various phases of the project. During our stay we were asked to meet with the Curriculum Committee, and we spent an entire evening with them, discussing various aspects and problems connected with covenantal education. After we returned home last summer, we sent a considerable amount of our Protestant Reformed educational materials to this Curriculum

Committee for their help and guidance. An interesting aspect of this project is that it is in the nature of a pilot project for the rest of the denomination, so that it is being followed with great interest in other churches.

We were also pleased to learn that our RFPA publications have been well received there and have been found helpful. More than once mention was made, for example, of the fact that *Believers And Their Seed* was helpful toward an understanding of the truth of the covenant.

You will understand, then, that when it came time to leave Launceston and continue our trip to other parts of Australia, it was not only with anticipation with respect to what was still coming, but also with no little regret that the time to take our leave had come so soon.

(to be continued)

## Kuyper's Prayer for the "Free"

The Dutch paper *Waarheid & Eenheid* (Oct. 31, 1980) contains an article by J.P. Wijsman in connection with this year's one hundredth anniversary of the Free University of Amsterdam. In this article Wijsman quotes at length from an article in the Dutch Christian newspaper, *Koers*, from the pen of Dr. M.J. Arntzen. Dr. Arntzen was at one time one of the "concerned" in the Gereformeerde Kerken and also a co-editor of *Waarheid & Eenheid*. Later he could no longer tolerate the situation in the GKN, and he left that denomination. For a time he was minister in the so-called Liberated Churches (*buiten verband*), a group which leads a separate existence from the original Liberated Churches. Still later Dr. Arntzen moved over to the Liberated Churches, sometimes referred to as the Free Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. In connection with the above-mentioned anniversary of the Free, the significant thing to remember about Dr. Arntzen is that he is an alumnus of the Free, and therefore speaks from firsthand knowledge.

He reminds his readers of the fact that in the years when he studied at the Free, and even as long as 15 or 20 years ago, God's Word was held in full reverence. This was also true in the area of exegesis, which was not for that reason less scientific. But now things have changed. All emphasis is laid on the human aspect of the Bible. The books of

the Bible come under historical criticism just as any other human writings, thus the theological faculty of the Free teaches. In the course of the same article he calls attention to the fact that the dogmatics taught by Kuyper and Bavinck in former years is now replaced by instruction that is often radically liberal. He would advise young men who wish to study theology not to go to the Free, lest they lose their faith. They could better go to the state universities of Utrecht or Leiden, or still better to Apeldoorn (of the Dutch Christian Reformed Churches) or Kampen-Broederweg (of the Liberated). He flatly states that the Free University, as a university faithful to Scripture, which purposes to practice science from the viewpoint of the Reformed confession, is a thing of the past. Kuyper and Rutgers would undoubtedly be astonished at the fabulous growth of the Free and would marvel at the fact that the Free can stand on even footing with other Dutch universities. But Kuyper would indeed be upset if he could observe modern developments at the Free, which has forsaken Kuyper's "holy principle."

Dr. Arntzen then reminds his readers of the last words of Abraham Kuyper's concluding prayer when the Free was opened: "And Thou Who provest the reins...break down the very walls of this Institution and blot it out of Thy sight, if ever it should purpose and desire anything else than to



glory in that sovereign, free grace which is in the cross of the Son of Thy tenderest love! Lord, Lord God, let all our help be in Thy Name, in Thy Name alone!"

If the Lord heard that prayer in the literal sense of the word, the walls of the Free would today be broken down. It has long since forsaken Kuyper's "holy principle."

## FROM HOLY WRIT

# The So-called Postmillennial Proof-texts in Holy Writ

Rev. G. Lubbers

It was the will and desire of the Editorial Staff of the *Standard Bearer* that the writer of the rubric "From Holy Writ" devote a bit of study and energy to the exegesis which is offered by current writers, who are the leading proponents of the Postmillennial position in the doctrine of the "last things." It was with some reluctance and fear that we took this assignment upon us, whereas we did not feel very competent in this field of endeavor. We have now given the issues involved a rather careful and prayerful study and feel that we can make a small contribution in this field of Scripture-study. Although we shall be critical of the Postmillennial position, we shall not be negative in these articles, analyzing and criticizing *ad infinitum* the position of certain writers, but we shall, with God's help and the petitioned guidance of His Spirit, try to teach in a constructive and thetical way what the Scriptures teach concerning the aspect of eschatology which touches upon the differences between the Amillennial and the Postmillennial position. In this way we can in one stroke deal critically in the healthy sense with both positions. We will, therefore, remain true as much as possible to the format of this rubric known as "From Holy Writ." And thus we now begin to write, looking to the LORD for guidance of the Spirit and the light of His perspicuous Word.

The reason why the Editorial Staff suggested that I write on this subject and carefully study the "proof-texts" of the current Postmillennial proponents is that our readers of the *Standard Bearer* may become a bit more enlightened as to the positive teaching of Scripture on Eschatology in general, and concerning the question whether the Amillennial position which we maintain is the correct and Biblical one—the one which we must keep as our confession at all costs, in days when there blow upon God's heritage winds of error, such as the higher critical school concerning the infallibility of

Scripture, the denial of double predestination and limited atonement, and when there is much that parades as being Reformed and in the Reformed tradition, which certainly must be branded as being heretical. We have in this connection but to think of the ecumenicity that would supplant the true catholicity of the church. In view of these troublesome times, when we see a resurgence of a teaching concerning the "universalism of the church on earth" which is not in accord with the Scriptural teaching, the Staff of the *Standard Bearer* elected me to attempt to write some constructive articles in which God's people will hear the Scriptures speak.

Now this is really some rather bold pretense it would seem; truly anyone who takes the pen in hand to teach others must be sure that he is himself teaching the truth, and that he will not be a workman who will be put to shame before the face of the Lord. We shall, therefore, need to study Scripture painstakingly, comparing Scripture with Scripture, interpreting the less clear passages in the light of the more clear passages! Thus we need not start with a wrong prejudgment, positing a mere position, and then attempt, rightly or wrongly, by many quotations to establish the mere plausibility of our position. A plausible explanation of the text often seems at first sight and first hearing to be correct and the proper meaning. It often looks fair, reasonable, and even valuable. But a second look and closer study often shows that a plausible explanation is untenable in light of the rest of the clear teaching of Scripture!

### OUR TASK

Our task is to examine the position of the Postmillennial teaching in the light of Holy Writ. That is our task from the very nature of this rubric which we have been editing these many years. We will not try to show what the Confessions teach in this



regard, for these latter say very little of this question. The Confessions, we are sure, stand four-square on the Amillennial position. Thus the Heidelberg Catechism in Question 52 speaks of Christ's return to judge the "quick and the dead." But it says nothing of the position of Postmillennialism. Question 54 speaks of the gathering of the Holy catholic church, but it has merely a reference to the gathering of the Church by the Son of God out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life. This is clearly the position of Amillennialism. Leading and representative writers of the Postmillennial position speak rather of the saving of the "human race" *itself*, here on earth, so that at the end of time prior to Christ's return the entire world will be Christianized, and after this Christ shall return in His final glory to judge the living and the dead.

We do best to let the spokesmen of Postmillennialism themselves tell us what they understand by Postmillennial teaching of the Bible.

We quote first of all from Dr. Loraine Boettner's *The Millennium*, page 4, where we read, "Postmillennialism is that view of the last things which holds the Kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the Gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit, that *the world will eventually be Christianized*, and that the return of Christ will occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace commonly called the *Millennium*" (we underscore, G.L.).

Dr. Boettner believes and avows that the Postmillennialism which he espouses must be carefully distinguished from what he calls "pseudo Postmillennialism." The latter he calls "that optimistic but false view of human betterment and progress, held by the Modernists and Liberals, which teaches that the Kingdom of God on earth will be achieved through a *natural* process by which mankind is improved and social institutions will be reformed and brought to a higher level of culture and efficiency."

We will not stop here to criticize this distinction of Dr. Boettner, but we believe that he is sincerely presenting what he believes to be the difference, the rather radical difference between the Postmillennialism which he teaches and that which is the teaching concerning the coming of the Kingdom of God as held by Modernists and Liberals. Our task is thus made easier for us, for now we can concentrate on the question whether the Postmillennialism, which view such men as Dr. Boettner, Dr. Kik, and others teach, is in accordance with the teaching of Scripture itself. Perhaps we shall then be in a position to see whether what Dr. Boettner calls the true view is principally different from the position of the liberals, even though they arrive

there by different roads, to wit, the one by the innate goodness of man and the other by the power of the Gospel in the betterment of a society, which is constituted of Christians.

Clearly our task is an *exegetical* one. We will need to weigh the exegesis and Scripture-quoting of the Postmillennialists of the past and present and see whether their teaching, which they elicit from these texts, is really in accord with the teaching of Holy Writ. Should this be found to be the case, then the Amillennial teaching concerning the coming of God's Kingdom in the world will not be in accordance with the teaching of the Bible. Both cannot very well be true, it would seem. The Bible will have our every thought subject to Christ (II Cor. 10:4). The weapons of our warfare, also in this regard, are not to be carnal human reasonings, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, and "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." This means, first of all, that our own minds must be in subjection to the Scriptures. We must by no means try to foist our own opinion upon the Scriptures, either by direct teaching or by implication. We must, therefore, pursue the study of the Scriptures by sound exegesis. This means that we do more than merely quote a great number of Scripture passages. We must give exegesis, clearly and concisely and relevantly.

#### THE PATTERN OF SOUND DOCTRINE

To speak of a "pattern of sound doctrine" is not of our own invention. The Bible speaks of such a "form" or "pattern" of sound doctrine. The Bible has many books, both in the Old and New Testaments. When we look for the central pattern and message of the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch, we are sure that we must see that the subject is none other than Jesus Christ, the crucified one. Thus Jesus instructs the recalcitrant Jews of His day, when He says, "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: *for he wrote of me*. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:45-47). It is quite clear from the Greek that Jesus is the subject. When the Greeks wrote a book, or a treatise, it was "concerning" something that they wrote. That was expressed by the preposition *peri*, i.e., concerning. And so, blazoned above the first five books of the Bible as well as all the other Old Testament Scriptures, is "Concerning Jesus Christ, God's Son." Such is the pattern of the sound words of God in the Old Testament Scriptures. We, therefore, do not invent a certain "form" of sound teaching and of rules of interpretation. Scripture does this itself.



It is a remarkable thing that Paul speaks of such a "form" of sound teaching. We find the form of sound *doctrine* in the Bible. We find such a form on many doctrinal points too. Paul speaks of such a "form" in connection with the teaching of justification and sanctification in Romans 6:17. In very beautiful language he refers to the teaching of the Christian's sanctification as a teaching which the Romans from "the heart have obeyed as a *form* of doctrine delivered you." Fact is, that in the original Greek the verb says that the believers "were delivered" (*paredotheete*) to a form of doctrine. This is very strong and beautiful. Concerning this phrase Dr. John Murray writes, "we might have expected the apostle to say that this form of teaching had been delivered, but, instead, he says that *they* were delivered to it—they were handed over to the gospel pattern. This indicates that their devotion to

the gospel was one of total commitment and that this commitment is not one of their option but is that to which they are subjected. This again underlines the *objectivity* (we underscore) of the pattern as well as our passivity in being committed to it, an objectivity and passivity which in no way militate against the wholehearted voluntariness of the result, namely, the commitment of obedience from the heart" (*The Epistle To The Romans*, 232, Vol. I).

Thus we believe we must look for such a Scriptural pattern also in the matter of explaining the texts which are quoted by the proponents of the Postmillennial position. We must not follow the slanted bias, which we believe to observe in the writings of current enthusiasts for the Postmillennial position. We must seek to stand on solid ground in our interpretation of Scripture and find the Scriptural, Biblico-Hermeneutical pattern.

## THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

### The Objects of Missions

*Prof. Robert D. Decker*

In the previous article we took issue with Dr. J.H. Bavinck's opinion that there is no special urgency to do mission work among the Jews. The fact is that Romans 11 in its context (cf. especially chapters 9 and 10) teaches that the natural branches (the Jews) once cut off may be grafted in again into the olive tree (the Church). This is the unique position and special privilege of the Jews. The wild branches (Gentiles) once cut off remain cut off. There is no possibility of their ever being grafted in again. From this point of view the Jews do enjoy a certain priority. They are proper objects of mission work and, in fact, mission work among the Jews ought not be ignored by the church.

The proper objects of mission work (those to whom the church must direct its mission preaching) are the Jews, the apostates or covenant wanderers, and the heathen. The necessary distinctions among these must be made. Mission work among the Jews is just that, and it is called by that name universally within the church world. Mission work among the heathen is work that is done among those who in their generations have stood outside of the sphere of the covenant of God. This is called "mission work among the heathen" or probably more commonly, "Foreign Missions." The *Form for the Ordination of Missionaries* used by the Protestant

Reformed Churches refers to this work by the former name. Mission work among the wandering covenant members is work carried on among those who either themselves or in their past generations once belonged to the church but have wandered into the ways of sin and disobedience. The Protestant Reformed Churches, for the most part, call this "Church Extension" or "Church Reformation" work. Dr. Bavinck and a host of others designate this work, "Evangelism." This latter is the preferable term. It is that mainly because it is literally taken from the Bible. Not only so but one does not really extend the Church. Scripture teaches us that the Son of God from the beginning to the end of time *gathers* His Church out of the entire human race. The chosen church is gathered but not extended (cf. Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 21).

As far as mission work among the heathen is concerned there ought to be no difference of opinion. In fact, there really can be no difference of opinion at this point. No one, as far as I know, questions the legitimacy of the church engaging in this work. The church has always, even from its earliest New Testament history, conceived of this as part of its mission task. The Book of Acts reveals how the church began the realization of the "Great



Commission" at Jerusalem, then to Samaria, and from there to the uttermost parts of the world. Our Protestant Reformed Churches, although for nearly fifty years involved almost exclusively in Church Extension work, have always regarded mission work among the heathen as part of the church's task. *The Form Of The Ordination Of Missionaries* in its "...short declaration touching the office of missionary ministers of the Word" reflects this same position:

Since our God, according to His infinite mercy, has chosen a Church unto everlasting life, and gathers it by His blessed gospel, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, unto the fellowship of His Son, in unity of the true faith, therefore our risen Savior has ordained an office and has called men, to carry the message of salvation to all peoples, commanding His apostles, and in them all lawful ministers of the Word: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15. For He that ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fulfill all things, gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ. And the Apostles, responding to this, went forth into the world declaring the whole counsel of God, particularly repentance, and remission of sins, through faith in Jesus Christ, testifying: "for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16. "But all things are of God Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation: to-wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. We are ambassadors, therefore, on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." II Cor. 5.

Without this word of reconciliation, faith in Christ and consequently salvation, is and remains forever impossible, for Holy Scripture says, Acts 4:12: "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved"; and elsewhere: Rom. 10:14, 15, 17: "How shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Although all ministers of the Word have in common, that to them is committed the preaching of the Gospel, the administration of the Sacraments, the government of the Church, and the maintenance of Christian discipline, yea, all that, according to the Word of God belongs to the office of pastor and teacher: and although from the difference of field of labor no difference is resulting, concerning office, authority, dignity, since all possess the same mission, the

same office and the same authority, yet, not withstanding this, it is necessary that some labor in the congregations already established, while others are called and sent to preach the Gospel to those without, in order to bring them to Christ. And let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called by the Church of God and consequently by God Himself and whereunto each has received gifts, until it pleases the Lord to lead him along a lawful way to a different field of labor.

#### UNTO THE HEATHEN

That unto the heathen also these glad tidings must be brought appears plainly from Matt. 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

That same was revealed to Peter by showing him as it were a great sheet let down by four corners upon the earth, wherein were all manner of beasts, and thereupon commanding him to go down to the Gentile Cornelius, saying: "Arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting; for I have sent them," Acts 10:20. Likewise he spoke to Paul in a vision in the temple: "Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles." Acts 22:21.

This divine charge was also carried out by the church of Antioch, when they, after fasting and prayer, laid their hands upon Barnabas and Saul and sent them away to preach the gospel also unto the Gentiles, Acts 13. And when they on their first missionary journey had arrived at Antioch in Pisidia they testified to the contradicting Jews: "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying: I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles; that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth."

And besides all this it is evident that the work of missions is the task of the Church since the Lord Jesus Himself calls His Church the salt of the earth, and says: "Ye are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under a bushel, but on the stand." Matthew 5.

It is perfectly obvious from the above Form that our Reformed fathers certainly understood that Scripture calls for mission work among the heathen. The heathen are those who in their generations stand outside of the church, the line of the covenant. These are the "all nations" in distinction from Israel in the Old Dispensation and in distinction from the true Israel of God in all ages.

These must be the object of the missionary preaching of the church because, according to the Form, Christ commanded it. Christ said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations..." (Matt. 28:19). Christ commanded that to the Apostles who stood as the representatives of the entire New Testament Church. The Church, also today, has the mandate of Christ to teach and baptize all nations. The



Church has the assurance that Christ will be with her even unto the end to enable her to perform that great task, to encourage her, to protect and preserve her. Not only that but Christ will also make that teaching and baptizing effective unto the salvation of the elect and the condemnation of the reprobate. Christ, "adds daily to the church, such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).

The Form also cites as proof for this the vision God gave to Peter of the clean and unclean animals and God's command, "rise, Peter, kill and eat." With this vision the Lord made plain to Peter that he must go to Cornelius, the Gentile. As a result, Cornelius and his house believed, were baptized and added to the Church (Acts 10). When the church saw this she confessed, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). Finally the Form cites the incident of

the Church at Antioch ordaining Paul and Barnabas to go to the nations preaching the gospel (Acts 13:1ff.).

The fact is, therefore, the people of God (the elect) are scattered in every nation under heaven. These must be gathered into the sheepfold of Christ. These are the "other sheep" which Christ must bring (John 17). These will be gathered only by the preaching of the gospel by the institute of the Church. This must be done simply because Jesus told the Church to do so. When the task is complete the end of the world will come. Then the Church of all ages, from Adam to the very last elect, will be perfected in union with the exalted Christ. God's glory will be reflected in His Church everlastingly.

That is the glorious goal of the mission work of the church. May God's Church be faithful in that holy task until we see Jesus on the clouds of glory.

## BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

# Matthew—The Gospel of the Promised Messiah (concluded)

*Rev. J. Kortering*

Having considered an outline of the gospel of Matthew, we have yet to make some summary observations that deal with this gospel's distinctive emphasis.

### DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

1. Since Matthew is the bridge between the Old and New Testaments, we should take note of the many references which are made to the fulfillment of prophecy. This is more true of Matthew than of the other gospel writers.

Let's examine some of them. Already in chapter 1:22, 23 we read, "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, 'Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son.'" This is a reference to the prophet Isaiah, who writes of this in chapter 7:14. Likewise, the Messiah's birth-place was predicted in Micah 5:2, and referred to in Matthew 2:5, 6. Matthew makes the point in 2:15 that Christ was taken to Egypt in fulfillment of prophecy, Hosea 11:1. Just a little further on he reminds his readers that the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem (2:17, 18) was also prophesied by Jeremiah in chapter 31:15. The same applied to their sojourn and residence in Nazareth (2:23); it

was a fulfillment of the words spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene," a reference to the contempt and hatred placed upon Him, Psalm 22:6, Isaiah 49:7, 53:3, Daniel 9:26.

Matthew refers to the fact that Isaiah (40:1) spoke of the ministry of John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ (3:3). He even mentions in Matthew 4:14, 15 that Isaiah gave such minute details as the place of John's labor (Isaiah 9:2). Jesus, the Messiah, was prophesied as the Great Physician Who would take our infirmities and bear our sicknesses, a reference in Matthew 8:17 to Isaiah 53:4. Isaiah the prophet even knew that Jesus would be as a bruised reed and a smoking flax (Isa. 42:1), and Matthew saw significance in that (Matt. 12:14-21). Jesus, the Messiah, spoke in parables, and Matthew observes in chapter 13:33-35 that even this was known in the Old Testament (Ps. 78:2). The great entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and the spiritual impact that it had upon His work as Messiah was predicted in Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9, and Matthew took note of it in chapter 21:1-5. Finally, Matthew included in his gospel account, in 26:55, 56, the words of Jesus that He was being taken by the soldiers and bound for



trial according to the Scriptures of the prophets, a reference to many passages that foretold that Jesus would suffer and die, e.g. Isaiah 53.

As we examine these references we must draw a few conclusions. First, it lived in the mind of Jesus as well as Matthew that the events in the life of Jesus were not determined by situations of that day only, but that His Father in heaven was bringing them to pass. This applied to a staggering amount of detail and to such an extent that prophecy and fulfillment testify of God's sovereign control. We conclude that this was a comfort to Jesus, and that it must confirm our faith in the historical reality of Jesus' ministry. He was not a victim, He was appointed to die in exactly the manner in which it took place. This is important for our place in the kingdom of which Jesus is Messiah. Secondly, Matthew made such repeated reference to the fulfillment of prophecy, not only for the benefit of the Jews of His day, but also for the church today, that we may *know* that this fulfillment took place and that we may rejoice in its comfort and truth. Jesus is in truth the promised Messiah! The Scriptures testify of this glorious fact.

2. We should also take note of the fact that Matthew, more than the other gospel writers, includes in his gospel account sermons and messages that were declared unto the people. You can observe this if you have a New Testament Bible with the words of Jesus printed in red. Compare Matthew with the other synoptic writers and observe that there are more and longer passages of Jesus speaking to the people. We list some of the longer ones: the sermon on the mount (5:1-7:29), specific instruction to His disciples to go out and preach (10:1-42), parables (13:1-52), importance of confessing faults and being forgiven (18:1-35), condemnation of the Pharisees and the promise of His future glory (23:1-25:46), all of which ends in the great commission (28:18-20). The special significance of this is that the Holy Spirit moved Matthew to record these in order that the world may believe that the promised Messiah is in truth the Lord from heaven, Whose dominion includes not only the subjugation of the wicked, but also the rule over His people by His Word and Spirit. He is king, to be sure, but He is also prophet and priest; and they go together in order that He might be the Mediator of His people.

3. We should mention briefly certain things that are recorded only in Matthew and not in the other accounts. This includes certain events in the life of Jesus, such as the vision to Joseph by the angel, assuring him that it was all right to take Mary to be his wife, (1:20-24), the flight of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus into Egypt (1:1-12), the visit of the wisemen (2:13-15), the slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem

(2:16), the dream of Pilate's wife (27:19), the suicide of Judas (27:3-10), the resurrection of the saints at the time of Jesus' crucifixion (27:52), the payment of the guards so that they could circulate the lie concerning the disciples' having stolen the body of Jesus (28:12-15), the great commission to preach and baptize (28:19, 20).

Besides these events, Matthew makes reference to certain parables that are unique to his gospel: tares (13:24-30), hidden treasure (13:44), the pearl of great price (13:45,46), the dragnet (13:47), the unforgiving servant (18:23-25), the laborers in the vineyard (20:1-16), the two sons (21:28-32), the marriage of the king's son (22:1-13), the ten virgins (25:1-13), and the talents (25:14-30).

Only three miracles are mentioned in Matthew which are not mentioned in the other gospel accounts: restoration of sight to the two blind men (9:27-31), healing of the dumb demoniac (9:32,33), and the provision of the coin in the mouth of the fish to pay taxes (17:24-27).

It is rather difficult to answer the question as to why these things are included in Matthew and not in the other accounts, except that we may see in many instances that their inclusion supports the main theme that Matthew is presenting, namely, that Christ is in truth the promised Messiah. His identity is heavenly, His power is "other worldly," His goal is not earthly, but heavenly, and all His ministry confirms that, as the King, He has done and continues to do all things necessary to realize that kingdom.

In conclusion, then, we may observe that the Holy Spirit led Matthew to set forth Christ in His kingly glory. One cannot read this gospel account without concluding that Jesus, as the Anointed of God, is God's King! He has a royal genealogy, He came into Jerusalem, not to establish an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly one. He came in humility, lowly, riding upon a foal, the colt of an ass, declaring to all that stood by that the way into His kingdom was that of His suffering and death. He had to establish righteousness as the foundation of His true heavenly kingdom. This he further confirmed with His discourse regarding the future glory of His kingdom and the promise of His coming again to sit on the throne of His glory (27:31). In truth, He is as the cross declared, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.

#### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Why did God want four gospel accounts written when it might seem to us that one would be sufficient?

2. Explain why the different gospel accounts of the same event were written and that their differences do not conflict with the truth of the inerrancy of



Scripture. Illustrate.

3. What do we know of Matthew, the author?
4. Why is Matthew the first book in the canon of the New Testament?
5. Explain what the central message of the gospel of Matthew is. What does Messiah mean? How is Christ the Messiah?
6. Give a brief outline that will indicate how the

central message of Christ as the promised Messiah is developed in the gospel.

7. What information concerning the kingdom of Christ do we learn from this book? Refer to select passages.

8. How should a child of God respond to the reading of this gospel?

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## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

# A Story of Two Families

*Rev. R. Flikkema*

Allow me to tell you a story. This story is about two families. What the names of these two families are is not important. But what is important is that each of these two families had a little child. Let us just say that these two little children were approximately six years of age. Oh, yes, there is one other fact that we ought to be aware of before we begin this story, and that is that the one family in this story is an ungodly one, while the other is a God-fearing, covenant family. With that in mind let us begin.

Ever since the time that God had seen fit to give this godly family their little six-year-old child, this family had been filled with joy. For some time the parents of that little child had prayed for that little child. With all their hearts they had longed for a covenant child to fill their home with gladness; a covenant child whom they could love; and a covenant child whom they could instruct in the fear of their covenant God's name. Those prayers and that longing God had answered. He gave to them their little child. With great love and kind compassion in their hearts they cared for their little child that God had given unto them. With respect to his spiritual needs that is true. Each day anew they brought him to the Bible. They, as Jesus had said to them, brought their little child unto Him by instructing him in God's Word. They sent him to Sunday School, and now that their little child was six years old, they sent him to Catechism. They taught their little child the Sunday School lesson and the Catechism lesson, and rejoiced in doing so for they knew and understood well that it was but their obligation before the face of their covenant God. And, too, these covenant parents also cared for their child with respect to his physical needs. They fed and clothed their little child. They provided him with nourishing food and clothes to keep

him warm. And when that little child was wayward, they chastised him. Not in anger did they do that, but in love, with the very same love with which God chastised them when they themselves were wayward.

But the ungodly family did nothing of the sort. The ungodly family who also had a six-year-old child did the exact opposite. Instead of praying to God to give them a child, they had refused to pray. From the moment they were married, they had decided that they would have no children. They both had their professions. They both had good paying jobs, and they were going to make the most of those good paying jobs. With the money that they received from their jobs, they were going to buy all the earthly comforts that their money could buy. But then all of a sudden it happened. A little child was born to them, and all their vain plans were dashed. It was a mistake, was their word to themselves. The birth of their little child was all a mistake. Angry they became when their little child was born, and angry they remained all through the past six years. In their anger they refused to instruct him in the fear of God's name. There was no Bible instruction for their little child. There was no Sunday School or Catechism instruction for him. That, they in anger considered to be a waste of time. And in their anger they refused not only to instruct their little child in the fear of God's name, but also to care for him even with respect to his physical needs. And that is the very sad part of this story.

They in their anger did not even care for their little child with respect to his physical needs! It all started when the mother of this little child had to quit work when the child was born. As a result of that, money became somewhat scarce. And it all



got worse when the father was laid off from his job. Oh yes, he tried to find another job, but no job was to be found. The father became even more angry about that. How was his family going to live? What was his family going to do? Food had to be provided and bills had to be paid, but where was the money going to come from? Those questions and many more plagued the mind of this father. But instead of reminding himself that God would provide; instead of being content and happy with his lot in life; instead of thanking God for giving to him his wife and his little six-year-old child, this ungodly father became even more angry. In anger he thought to himself, "It is all that little child's fault. If that little child had not come along, none of this would have ever happened." And so, with those thoughts in his mind, in anger he dealt with his little child. He began to starve his little child. He began to lock him up in a closet for two or three days at a time with no food or water. And when he was allowed to eat, all that his father would feed him was some cold oatmeal and not much more. He began to beat his child whenever the child did anything that displeased his father in any way. First the father used a switch on that little six-year-old. But then the switch was replaced by a board two feet long, four inches wide, and a half inch thick. These beatings occurred five or six times a day, and so hard did this father beat that little six-year-old, that that child soon developed bruises and scars that became permanent. They did not go away. As time went on, that father in his anger devised new ways in which to punish his child. He saw his wife drying clothes in the dryer and he thought to himself: "I will fix that little brat who was a mistake anyway! I will throw that little mistake into the dryer! I will let the drum spin a few times! Maybe that will knock some sense into him!" But even that was not enough. Oh no! The father sought more ways with which to punish his child. He took him outside and made that little six-year-old hold out his hands while the father poured battery acid all over his hands! Yes, you read correctly, battery acid! So burned were the hands of that little child that he had to be placed in a hospital for quite some time. But did things change when that little child returned home? By no means. The starvings continued and the beatings proceeded until finally that little six-year-old died!

And with that we come to the end of my story. Oh, I suppose I should tell you what happened to that other six-year-old child, that child of those covenant parents. He grew up to be a covenant child indeed. He too became a parent. And the God-fearing love and care that he received from his parents, he manifested to his children that God was pleased to grant unto him. That is what happened to him.

And now that I have come to the end of my story, I suppose I should tell you just exactly why I have written this story. But before I do that I must make a confession. You see, the contents of my story are not all that original. By that I mean this. The story that I have just told has been told before. With respect to that part of my story dealing with those ungodly parents who so horribly treated their little six-year-old, that part of my story was based on a book condensation found in the November issue of the *Reader's Digest* entitled, "The Murder of Robbie Wayne." Read that story if you have the opportunity. And with respect to that part of my story dealing with those covenant parents and their little child, that part of my story was based on many, many stories that are found, not in the *Reader's Digest*, but in the most marvelous book imaginable, the *Bible*. Stories such as that of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and many, many more. Stories which are real and true stories. That too ought to be said. Both stories are real and true. That story in the *Reader's Digest* is real and true, and those stories in the *Bible* are real and true.

And those real and true stories go on. They go on even today. Today too there are many, many ungodly parents who in anger consider their children to be nothing more than a mistake, a burden, an unwanted burden. Today, too, there are many, many parents who in anger treat their children as badly or even worse than did those ungodly parents in my story or in the story found in the *Reader's Digest*. But thanks be to God that today too there are many, many parents who are covenant parents—parents who pray for covenant children; parents who love their covenant children; parents who care for the needs of their children, both spiritual and physical. I say that with great sincerity in my heart. Thanks be to God for that! That is, after all, all of God. God gives us covenant children. God sets up covenant homes in the midst of His Church. God says to covenant parents: do not abuse or misuse My covenant children, but care for My covenant children. Care for their spiritual needs. Care for their physical needs. And God gives us as covenant parents the grace to do what He says in obedience to our covenant God.

And that is why I wrote this story. I wrote it in the first place to remind us of the horrible things that go on in the homes of ungodly parents in these last days. We must take note of what goes on in the midst of ungodly homes in these last days. And with all the strength that we can gather, we must condemn what goes on. But in the second place I wrote this story to cause us, covenant parents, to pause and to give thanks. Thanks to God for our covenant children, thanks to God for giving us the grace to care for and provide for all the needs of our covenant children.



Do you as covenant parents give God thanks? If this story of mine causes you to do that, then this story will not have been in vain. And with that my story has really come to an end—an end as far as

this article in *The Standard Bearer* is concerned. And yet, it is only the beginning, the beginning of thanksgiving in our hearts and in our homes as covenant parents.

## Report From Singapore

*Rev. Arie den Hartog*

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ:

We greet you again in the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We give thanks unto God for His continued abundant blessings upon the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ which He has given to us. Our Heidelberg Catechism teaches us in one of its most beautiful Lord's Days: "The Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends and preserves to Himself by His Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race a church chosen to everlasting life..." (Lord's Day 21). It is indeed a particularly great joy to witness this on the foreign mission field. What a glorious thing it is that the Lord calls His elect from heathen nations out of darkness into His marvellous light and so gathers His one universal catholic church unto everlasting salvation and glory. Let me tell you again some of the most significant new developments here in Singapore.

The focus and center of our work continues to be matters relating to the organization and establishment of the church here. We together with the members of the G.L.T.S. continue to look forward with eager anticipation to the day when a Reformed Church will be established with us in Singapore. We are thankful that things are progressing smoothly and in a settled routine way toward this goal. The G.L.T.S. has now elected a commission of elders and deacons which has as its primary purpose the study of our Three Forms of Unity. The outcome of the elections was a commission of four elders and two deacons. These brethren will, the Lord willing, be ordained as the office bearers of the church at the time of our organization. Every Tuesday evening this commission receives from your missionary instruction from the Reformed Creeds. We are thankful that these weekly classes are not only attended by the members of the commission but also by a goodly number of other interested brothers of the G.L.T.S. We decided to begin our study with the Belgic Confession. We will not need to spend a lot of time studying the Heidel-

berg Catechism. As I have told you before, each Saturday there are two groups of members of the G.L.T.S. receiving instruction in the Heidelberg Catechism. I teach the older members of the G.L.T.S. at the Adult Fellowship. Brother Francis Quek teaches the younger members at the Youth Fellowship. So the majority of the members of G.L.T.S. are receiving instruction in the Heidelberg Catechism. In the Adult Fellowship we are now almost half way through the Catechism. Expectations are that the commission will take about nine or ten months to study the creeds, after which time, the Lord willing, we shall be ready to organize the church. This will probably take place some time in May or June of next year.

I cannot tell you what is happening at all of the different meetings which we have in the G.L.T.S. Let me just highlight some of the more significant ones. Our worship services are always well attended. There is faithful attendance by the members and there are almost always visitors brought by various members.

Every Lord's Day afternoon we have the pre-baptism class in our apartment. This class is attended very faithfully by eleven members ranging in age from 18 to 25 years. Nine of the members of this class are preparing for baptism. Two members have been baptized before (prior to our coming to Singapore) and desire to be better instructed in the faith. We have about twelve weeks of instruction left for this class, after which we will have met for a total of about twenty weeks. The Lord willing we shall then again have the blessed experience of a special baptism service for these young people.

On the evening of each Lord's Day we gather together for what are called "tape hours." At these tape hours we sing and pray and listen to tape recorded sermons. Presently there are four such tape hours meeting simultaneously in various localities of Singapore. We are listening to many of our Protestant Reformed ministers as well as some from other denominations. Work is going on finally to es-



establish a second worship service on the Lord's Day. This is the ideal goal to strive for. However, there are several problems associated with the holding of a second worship service. One of them is that the place where we presently worship is a Kampong, which means that there are many residents living on the other side of the thin walls of the place of worship. It is feared that instituting a second worship service on the Lord's Day will aggravate the residents of the Kampong into making complaints against us to the authorities. To appreciate fully this situation one almost has to see the circumstances of our place of worship. Anyway, as long as no one makes complaints against us we are permitted to use a Kampong for our worship services. However, should there be several complaints it would be possible that the Singapore government would forbid us to use our present place and that would we would be left entirely without a place to hold our worship services. A second problem is that many of the members of the G.L.T.S. must travel for an hour or longer by bus to get to our worship services. There are strong parental objections for some of the young people to their being away from home all day Sunday. If these members would come to two worship services they would have to spend four or more hours just traveling. The four tape hours are nearer to the residences of the members and this makes it possible for more of the members to attend. How this will develop in the future remains to be seen. The situation of course would change somewhat if we by God's grace could acquire our own place of worship. There has been some talk about circuit preaching, in which I would go to one of these tape hours each Lord's Day to preach. Presently we rejoice at the blessed fellowship we enjoy from week to week at these "house churches." We are thankful that we can hear the preaching of the Word of God through this means. One of the tape hours is regularly at our apartment.

Every Thursday evening there are various "cell groups" throughout Singapore. These cell groups are groups of members and visitors that meet for Bible study and prayer. We also have one of these cell groups in our home. This group was started especially for the residents of our apartment building. Presently there are a few residents of Pacific Mansion who regularly attend our cell group as well as several members of the G.L.T.S. We are studying the book of James.

Next month (November) will be a busy and exciting month for us. During the first week of the month I have been asked to give a series of three speeches on the Five Points of Calvinism to a group of Singapore University Students. Some of these are members of the G.L.T.S. and some of them are not.

This is in part still a fruit of the lectures given here by Prof. Hoeksema. I have been asked to deal specifically with each of the five points, explaining their meaning and proving them from scripture.

In the middle of the month we are going to have another week-long retreat. The G.L.T.S. regularly has two such retreats every year. These retreats coincide with the school vacations of the members. This varies for the different members. We as Protestant Reformed people are probably surprised that there are two such retreats every year. Again we must remember that the members of the G.L.T.S. do not have all the blessings of Christian fellowship that we have in our homes and other places. They yearn after Christian fellowship with one another and count these retreats as an especially great blessing. The theme of next month's retreat is "Take Time to Be Holy." I have been asked to give a series of five messages on this topic.

This past Monday was a national holiday in Singapore. On this day the G.L.T.S. organized a mass tracting session. A group of the members distributed tracts and invitations to the worship services and Sunday school classes, to the homes in the neighborhood. This is in keeping with the tradition of the Gospel Literature and Tract Society. This is difficult work and involves many of the members. It affords opportunity occasionally for members to get into homes to share the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I was just interrupted in my writing of this report by a phone call. One of the members of the G.L.T.S. called to tell me about the persecution he is presently facing in his home. It seems that he just told them now that he had been baptized two years ago in the G.L.T.S. His parents became very angry with him. He is the only Christian in the family and his whole family is against him. He is presently a university student and his parents are threatening to remove him from the university. They see Christianity as a Western religion and they believe that it often comes with Western teachings in the universities.

Another young man has been trying to bring his sister to our worship services. They both have been experiencing a lot of persecution in their homes. Their parents are threatening to cast them out of the home if they continue to attend Christian worship services. Pray for the many hardships which the young Christians of the G.L.T.S. must face. I could tell you of many more such situations. I urge again upon our Protestant Reformed Young people to appreciate the Christian homes which you have. Be thankful for them. Use the Christian training you have the privilege of receiving from your youth up. To whom much is given, much is required.



While most of you in the U.S. are presently in the midst of winter and are experiencing cold weather we here in Singapore continue to have very hot and humid weather (always in the high 80s). It seems so strange to us that there are really no seasons at all here. The temperature remains very much the same all year round. Also the rainfall is very much the same although we are told that there is some increase in rain during the months of December through February.

We cannot end our report to you without expressing to all those who have written to us in the past weeks our hearty appreciation. Since the time of Prof. Hoeksema's encouragement in this paper we have received floods of mail. Your letters are a great source of joy and encouragement to us. We thank God for them.

Your Missionary in His Service  
Rev. Arie den Hartog

## GUEST ARTICLE

### "By Faith"

Mr. M. A. Straayer

(Note: This is the third and last guest article by brother Straayer, a member of our Edmonton, Alberta, Protestant Reformed Church. HCH)

In the preceding articles we wrote about the call and the expectation, even in our situation today. Both articles ended with the words "By Faith," and therefore we will now spend some thought in this last article on *BY FAITH*.

When writing these articles, like you, I asked myself whether it is not unrealistic to expect growth, to expect reformation, to expect great things. Is it not better to hope and to long for the end of all things, to say, "Maranatha, Jesus comes; yes, Lord Jesus, yes, come quickly?"

Do we still plan expansion? Do we still look forward to growth? Or have we become so tired of it all that it is becoming too much of a bother to go out to evangelize, to witness, to promote church expansion? Fifty years of Protestant Reformed church existence, and not much to show for it. And even if we were to grow, there would again be the apostate, the turning away from the truth; it is all a repeating process. So why growth? Why not stay small and faithful (as if the one includes the other)?

It is a general attitude today, a general mood that one finds all around us, that every human being seems to be tired of it all. We have seen it all before, repeat and repeat. And therefore society in general comes to the conclusion, "Why try?" "Let us eat and drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Something of that mood (*geistesgestahlte*) may also be seeping into us: the general feeling of the hopelessness of it all.

As God's children we know His commandment

to listen for the call from Macedonia and to enlarge the tent in expectation; but are we not often trying to find excuses? First of all, we are afraid of the task; we don't believe it can be done, and we therefore must find excuses why we should not be active. One very good excuse that is heard much among us is that we live in the end of times, and that therefore the church must become smaller till there are no more saints left; that there can be no more reformation, that all signs point to the end of time, and in pious righteousness we can then sit in a corner—as our Dutch fathers said, "met een boekje in een hoekje"—and let the world go by. **BUT THERE IS HOPE, THERE IS EXPECTATION EVEN TODAY.**

By *faith* Noah, being warned by God of things *not seen* as yet, *moved with fear*, prepared an ark to the *saving* of his house, by which he *condemned* the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by *faith*.

When we read the examples of Hebrews 11, one thing that strikes us is the hopelessness of all these situations. By faith Noah, by faith Abraham, by faith Sarah, by faith Isaac, by faith Jacob and Joseph and Moses—all situations of which you and I say, "Impossible." For us today it is necessary to remember, to be reminded of, the faith of these saints of former days, because if we don't have that faith, we will read the previous two articles and will question the conclusions; we will reason that the writer is an optimist, a dreamer, a fantacist, and that he has more hope to be proven wrong than right. Time might show him up with "egg on his face." And yet I dare write, because even if I am found wrong (I am not), I have done nothing more



than repeat the Lord's calling to us all.

Let us look a moment at the situation of Noah. He becomes the laughingstock of his time. He must have been the *dorpsgek*. I can almost hear the jokes being cracked about Noah and that idiot monstrosity he is building. And listen to what he is telling, that the thing he is making is an ark (what is that?), and that God (God is dead!) will open the gates of heaven, and it will rain (what is that?)—never heard of anything so crazy! If Noah lived today, we would put him in a mental institution and take away his axe, so that he could do no further damage to the environment or disturb the balance of nature; just figure how many acres of timber he needed to build the ark!

Things not seen before: an ark floating on the water! Noah, how can you believe such a thing? How can you build such a thing? Do you really think it can float? Where did you dream that up? If it wasn't so funny, it would be a nightmare. Noah, come on, give up. Just imagine the logistics of food for all the animals and for Noah and his family, and the preservation of the foodstuff. Think of the hygiene after the Lord closed the ark; think of the ventilation. O, the world today remembers the story of Noah. We here in Canada have the Irish Rovers who sing of it. And the story becomes actual about the unicorn; Noah becomes God's helper in building a floating zoo with cats and rats and elephants, camels, chimpanzees and long neck geese; and, said God, "As sure as you're born, Noah, don't forget my unicorn." And when in the song the ark starts floating with the tide, the unicorns don't come in, but keep playing silly games; and therefore to this day you have never seen a unicorn any more. And the actual message of the outpouring of God's wrath over a sinful world and God's particular grace to Noah and his family is completely forgotten. So the world makes the Word of God of no avail.

But Noah kept working over a hundred years. And he was dead serious; he was moved with fear, that is, also with speed and consciously accepting the Word of God to be true, so that he might save himself and his household from the wrath of God being poured out on the then existing world. Noah kept working, expecting a new world.

One hundred years he preached, and no results. When he finally gets into the ark, it is only with his direct family—no brothers, no sisters, no father, no mother, no uncles, aunts, cousins, or neighbors. Noah probably had help with building of the ark; or he might have employed labourers; and they became fellow witnesses. But they did not enter the ark; out of ourselves we will never enter the ark (Jesus Christ). Noah by fear moved in faith. Do you think he never doubted? Do you think he never like

Abraham asked God to spare the world? Do you think he never asked people to join him and believe? Noah preached by building; we must still preach by building, by enlarging the tent.

There is another lesson of comfort that comes to us in this story. It shows how the Lord provides for a help against our infirmities. Look at the ark: no window in the sides, only one that looks up to heaven. What a blessing that Noah could not see the dying of all his neighbours and acquaintances, that he could only look to heaven, where is the finisher of his faith and our faith. What a blessing that the Lord closed the ark. Noah would have never done it. But the Lord separates, and the Lord closes the ark; otherwise Noah would still have perished with the world. And if he could have, he would probably have opened it again to let others in.

Now there is still an ark, Jesus Christ. And the world still exists; it is still the excellent (*welaange-name*) time to preach of that coming of judgment, to witness as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Brothers, what a perspective we have. What a cloud of witnesses. The Lord still allows us to walk in the footsteps of those who are now the Church triumphant. If we look at ourselves, we doubt. We have all the standard excuses: too old, too young, can't speak, can't walk, etc. But if we look at Christ Jesus, the finisher of our faith, then we go out; then we reach out; then we preach in season and out of season; then we witness in word and deed, expecting great things. And even if there are no results in numerical growth, it becomes a wonder that He will use us; it becomes a wonder that He did not bypass us; it becomes a wonder that He actively wills that "*no result*," actually as our Dutch fathers expressed it, not in proper grammar, but beautifully, lovingly, and intimately with the words of the Lord's "*heilig nieten*."

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, one soweth and another reapeth. I send you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour; other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that by grace we may be reapers. Let us then move with fear to become heirs of righteousness, so that following generations will call us blessed, and that by faith.



## ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

### "Down With...All Gambling"

The above title heads an article appearing in *The Christian News*, Oct. 20, 1980. It was written with a view to combating the growing desire to gamble. Several states, evidently, in November voted whether or not to sanction bingo and other forms of gambling. Of course, Michigan did not have to vote this time. For some time already not only has bingo been legal, but the state itself conducts a well-advertised lottery. In most grocery stores, when one pays the grocery bill, the clerk inevitably asks, "Any lottery tickets today?" One can not help but notice, not infrequently, an individual pay for most of the groceries with government-provided food stamps while paying cash for several lottery tickets. Even the ignorant must recognize that something is radically wrong.

But, to return to the above-mentioned article. In it, the writer states:

...Bingo is the third largest gambling enterprise in the United States. Casino gambling is first, horse-racing second.

On any given day close to a million Bingo players, mostly women, and mostly elderly will spend at least \$10-\$12 for a few hours play. Annually this comes to a \$4.5 billion cash business. That's as much as Americans spend on movies and records, ten times as much as they spend on baseball, football, basketball and hockey.

Gambling has become big business throughout the world. Wayne Pearson of the Nevada Gambling Control Board has said that "Statistically, gambling is the normal thing. It's the non-gambler who is abnormal in American society."

According to a U.S. Commission on Law Enforcement, "Law officials agree almost unanimously that gambling is THE GREATEST SOURCE OF REVENUE for organized crime." Every week four million Americans make illegal bets with bookmakers. On an average fall weekend, when football games are played across the U.S., between \$50 and \$60 MILLION are bet illegally. The gambling fever never lets up.

Two years ago a Reuters story from London noted that "Gambling, perhaps the world's oldest obsession, is flourishing today as never before." It said that "The figures involved are astronomical. In the United States alone, the turnover in legal gambling is believed to amount to some \$19 billion."

...Professor E.L. Hebden Taylor wrote in the June 9, 1980 *Christian News* in an article titled, "Extent of Gambling—CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON GAMBLING":

"No Christian can engage in any form of gambling for he is a steward of all the time, talent, and treasure entrusted to him by God. Can he honestly use his gifts in gambling when his winnings are gained at the expense of another's losing? and where the "house" is ultimately the only winner? Can he expect to get something for nothing?

"It is claimed that the stock market, farming, raising a family, even (according to some theologians) faith is all a gamble. Therefore, why is the wagering of money in a game of chance any less moral than the investment of time, money and effort in the chance game of life?

"Life does have its normal risks which we must accept with faith and courage. But these normal risks are in no sense morally equivalent to the risks taken in a game of chance. Gambling offers artificial risks in the hope of excessive gain, gain far beyond what the investment of time, money or skill justifies. And the chance taken is unrelated to creative effort such as that called for from the farmer or the stockbroker who invests his mental and physical resources. At the gambling table money changes hands according to the luck of the players involved.

"The Christian knows that ultimately life is not a gamble, a risk, a game of chance. Rather, life is lived in the providential care and keeping of God whose self-giving love has been revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Viewing human life as God-directed and supported takes the odds out of life and transforms it into a response to God's counsel and plan for the believer....

"Gambling elevates money and material gain to a place of priority in human life; it encourages dependence on chance rather than on the providence of God. The gambler uses the individual as a tool for his own profit...."

In a resume on "What is Wrong with Gambling" the paper says in part:

"That it violates the commandments mentioned above by 'stealing, taking neighbor's money or goods'; he is not willingly giving it, but hopes to be lucky enough to take your money or goods; by coveting, by trusting to luck rather than in God and at times by



invoking God in situations of risk or sin, and 'robbery by mutual consent.'

"That it abuses the 4th petition and discourages trust in the providence of God, trusting instead to chance. While we ask for God to give us our daily bread on the one hand, we at the same time squander that 'bread' and look to goddess chance or lady luck for blessing.

"That it is trying to get something for nothing, the easy way, desire for gain without labor or production.

"That it is pleasure obtained at another's expense and generally against his will.

"That it feeds fleshly desire for mammon and encourages covetousness, which is idolatry.

"That it is addictive as much as alcohol or drugs. It is estimated there are 6 million compulsive gamblers in the United States, all of whom are sick.

"Caters to unwholesome competitive spirit and disregards neighbor's possessions.

"That it may lead to corruption, cheating, crime, bribery, embezzlement, moral deterioration of victims, suicide, ruin careers, break up families...."

Much more was written. But let this suffice. Gambling is sin—a sin of a most vicious sort. One wonders about the critical financial position in which the state of Michigan finds itself. This has been blamed upon the recession; concentration of industry in one area (automobiles); foreign imports of cars; etc. Doubtlessly, the greed and sinfulness of man has a large part in all of this. God surely can not look with favor upon those who openly and legally gamble. In addition to many other sins, there is this one in which the state encourages its citizens to gamble. Inevitably, the poorest and least financially able ones do. One wonders whether the Christian ought not to promote a drive to place on the ballot a proposal to rescind all laws permitting gambling or allowing the state to conduct this. The sin is having its inevitable consequences in the citizens who participate.

And the child of God ought to be warned never to participate. There is the temptation to try it—everyone does. Rather, oppose this evil and condemn it for what it is.

## The Crystal Cathedral

The *RES News Exchange* reports on Dr. Schuller's Crystal Cathedral:

On September 14, 1980 the Garden Grove Community Church in California, a member of the Reformed Church of America (RCA), dedicated its Crystal Cathedral. The steel and glass structure features more than 10,000 window panes and accommodates 2890 people in opera-style seats. At the opening of the church, pastor-founder of the congregation, Dr. Robert Schuller, was able to announce that the total cost for the construction, 18 million dollars, had been received in cash, gifts, or pledges. The church, an architectural masterpiece, was designed by architect Philip Johnson.

Recently Dr. Schuller, a graduate of Hope College and Western Seminary in Holland, Michigan, briefly returned to Western Michigan where he was well received by his colleagues in the RCA. Dr. Schuller has often been under fire in his denomination for his type of preaching. Schuller, who clearly favors his ties with the Reformed Church, openly admits: "I believe in the Bible, but if people want Bible preaching they

can get it elsewhere." He has also been much criticized for erecting this lavish Crystal Cathedral....

Much might be said about the size of this "congregation" and about the amount of money invested in its building. One might indeed wonder whether this is done, after all, to the glory of God or for the enhancement of man. But what is most disturbing of all is the remark of Schuller, which was reported also in the *Grand Rapids' Press*, "I believe in the Bible, but if people want Bible preaching they can get it elsewhere." That sounds exactly contrary to the statement of that great preacher in Scripture, Paul, who said, "For I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified" I Cor. 2:2. It appears, then, (if Schuller was correctly quoted) that he not only does not have Bible preaching, but by that very fact shows that he does not believe the Bible either—at least not the whole of it. Otherwise, he would preach what Paul did.

## Readmittance of the Excommunicated

The *Presbyterian Journal*, Nov. 5, 1980, quotes:

The Vatican will review the case of Galileo, the 17th-century Italian scientist and astronomer con-

demned as a heretic by the Roman Inquisition for teaching that the earth revolved around the sun, a Vatican official announced here.



Bishop Paul Poupard, an auxiliary bishop in the Paris archdiocese who is acting president of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Believers, said a commission had been set up to look into Galileo's case in connection with a study of science and atheism.

The French prelate, who is also rector of the Catholic Institute in Paris, said he would be directing the research on "the historical level," and that the commission would deal with the Galileo case "with complete objectivity."

The announcement came just short of a year after

the pope told a distinguished gathering of scientists and cardinals at the Vatican that Galileo had been "wrongly" condemned by the church and, as a consequence, had "suffered greatly."

Well—so much for the infallibility of the Romish Church. One wonders whether that body will soon get around to removing the ban on Martin Luther and expressing sincere sorrow for the persecution of many of God's people at the time of the reformation. But that, I suppose, would be far too much to expect.

## THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

### The Choice of Faith

Rev. Rodney Miersma

The last time that we met together in *The Strength Of Youth* we discussed the fact that every young person when he is become of age must make a choice. The emphasis was placed upon the fact that the child of God, a rational, moral creature, created in the image of God, *must* choose, and that, too, at the stage of spiritual development called "the years of discretion." This whole discussion was viewed from the viewpoint of God's Holy Word as recorded in Hebrews 11:24-26 which we repeat here: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

At this time we will look at *what* we must choose and *why*. Again, we will consider this from the viewpoint of the choice that Moses made as a young man, a child of the covenant, as he was surrounded by the pleasures of sin in Egypt. As we look at the passage quoted above we see that the object of Moses' choice is described from a three-fold point of view.

The first thing that Moses considered was his very identity. Was he to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter or as the son of Amram and Jochabed? He was born a covenant child, and thus belonged to the people of God. But as a small child he was taken out of the humble home of covenant parents and placed in the richness of the palace of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Now he was "come to years" and had to choose what he was to be called.

As the son of Pharaoh's daughter he had every right to manifest himself as such, as a prince of the land. His instruction in the palace had prepared him for such a life which the people of the land would readily acknowledge. On the other hand, he did not have to choose this name; he could instead have refused it in order to be declared the son of Amram and Jochabed, thus manifesting himself as an Israelite rather than an Egyptian.

What was Moses to choose? Once this question is answered by Moses he will have no trouble with other questions that arise before him. If he chose to be an Israelite, then he also chose to share in their ill treatment, reproach, and oppression. If he decided to be an Egyptian, then he would have the treasures of Egypt and the pleasures of sin.

This same question, young people, you now face as you "come to years." As you come into contact with the world you must decide whether or not you want to be called a child of the world. There will be no difficulty on the part of the world in receiving you; in fact, they are glad to see you deny your connection with the church and your connection with the covenant. Denying your people and your God you will enjoy the pleasures of sin and the treasures of the world. On the other hand, you can cast your lot with the people of God. Then you also accept and expect to bear the reproach of Christ.

Moses chose the latter. This choice was fundamental to the other two aspects of his choice. These two aspects really are explanations of the same thing, for it all depended upon which name Moses would choose for himself.



If he had chosen to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter he would certainly have chosen and enjoyed the pleasures of sin, the second aspect of his choice. Sin gives birth to and yields pleasure. This does not mean that we have to do with all kinds of gross and vile sins. But rather, whenever we choose against the kingdom of our God, against Christ, and against His people, and for the world and Satan, we sin. For a season we have pleasure in sin and pleasure in them that sin. It may simply be for a little money, maybe the honor of a higher position, or for any other selfish reason. Whatever it is, we deny God, thus enjoying for a while our money, our honor, and escape the ill treatment of God's people. In these circumstances it is the pleasures of sin that we enjoy.

This can also be said about Moses' choice. There is no reason to believe that if he would not have chosen for the cause of God's people, then he would have led a life of vile sin and dissipation. Certainly, he would have become a prince of a very great nation, enjoying all the honor and might and prestige of having the people bow before him. Moses, in enjoying these pleasures, would have sinned. Riches and honor and might are not in themselves sinful, but they are sinful when they are accompanied by a denial of the covenant God.

On the other hand, the alternative choice for Moses was ill treatment and reproach with the people of God. You have long been familiar with the deplorable conditions under which Israel lived and labored while in Egypt because you have been taught this in the home, in the school, and in catechism. They were slaves, poor and despised, hated with a bitter hatred, oppressed to a terrible degree. To choose for them meant to choose for their condition and to share in their shame and reproach. Thus the two alternatives: prince or slave, honor or revilement, freedom or oppression. All this was implied already in the choice of his name, that of the son of Pharaoh's daughter or that of the son of Amram and Jochabed.

The third aspect of Moses' choice was the choice between the treasures of Egypt and the reproach of Christ. These treasures of Egypt are really nothing more than another name for the pleasures of sin. They look at the same thing from two points of view: one from the viewpoint of enjoyment and the other from the viewpoint of its riches. Moses could have had access to all the treasures of Egypt, material and spiritual, if he had wanted to. But if he did not want to, the only alternative was the reproach of Christ. This is not only a beautiful idea, but comforting as well. The ill treatment of the people of God and the reproach of Christ are presented as being identical. In other words, Christ and His people are one. And because they are one, He being

the head of the body, His sufferings are theirs, so that through His sufferings He atones for their sins. But their sufferings are also His, so that when they are ill treated, He also suffers reproach. Moses, placed before this choice, was really confronting the choice between the false glory of the world and the reproach of Christ.

There you have it, young people, one or the other, for the two are mutually exclusive. Moses could not be called by both names just as we cannot serve both God and Mammon. Moses made the right choice; he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and chose instead the reproach of Christ.

Why? What motivated him to choose the way that he did? From a natural point of view anyone with any sense in his head would call Moses a fool. Moses could have had the world bowing at his feet, a life of ease and splendor, all the treasures of Egypt. Instead he decided to be called an Israelite, hated, oppressed, despised, ill treated, and reproached. The natural man looks over the circumstances and, shaking his head, judges that Moses is not quite all there. Simply put, Moses is a fool.

One then may try to excuse Moses by saying that his decision was of the moment, hastily made, without giving thought to the dire consequences. But Moses did no such thing, for the word translated "esteeming" indicates that he gave the matter much thought and consideration before deciding. He compared both sides, weighed them in the balances, and consciously and deliberately chose to cast his lot with the people of God. And again we ask the question, "Why?" And the answer is given in the words of our text: by faith.

Faith is the evidence of things unseen, and the substance of things hoped for. As such, faith is a power that also influences the mind and the reason, so that in the light of faith we see things which the natural mind cannot perceive. Therefore faith naturally influences a person's choice. It changes his judgment of things. He puts together an altogether different valuation on things that are placed before him, a valuation which one that does not possess the faith cannot possibly understand. Therefore it causes him to draw a different conclusion than the conclusion of the world. He makes a different choice.

Thus it was for Moses. As he looked at the two sides and considered their worth he could see something that the Egyptians could not see; he could see the recompense of the reward. He was a covenant child in whose heart God had implanted this faith which came to consciousness as he grew up. And as it came to consciousness he embraced the promises of the covenant that had been given to



the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel was the people of God, the people that would inherit these blessed promises. Now they were slaves, but were to become a great people. Yes, Jehovah was their God.

What Moses saw in these blessings of the covenant, given to the people of God, was a recompense of reward so great and so glorious that all the treasures and pleasures of Egypt could not weigh up against it. The choice no longer was difficult. By faith he made a good choice, the right choice.

All of this is for our instruction, especially you, young people, as you arrive at the years of discretion. You must make this same choice. It is between Satan and Christ, the world and the kingdom of heaven, the pleasures of sin and our covenant God. That choice you must make once. That

choice you must make repeatedly, yea, all your life here on earth.

According to the flesh the advantages are with the side of Satan and the world while the disadvantages are on the side of Christ. On the one hand, pleasures and greatness of the world; on the other, reproach and ill treatment. Today, you, as well as was Moses in his day, are called to self-denial and cross-bearing after your Savior. But also today the recompense of the reward is there, which can be seen only by faith, as an evidence of things unseen. The world passes away and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of the Father shall abide forever. Everlasting life and glory is the recompense of the reward.

Therefore, choose, consciously and deliberately! Choosing by faith the result is clear and glorious.

## Book Review

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF REVELATION**, by Herman Bavinck; Baker Book House, 1979; 349 pp., \$7.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

This book contains the Stone Lectures which Bavinck delivered at Princeton Theological Seminary in the school year of 1908 and 1909. Some of the lectures were delivered at various other places in this country and all were published in Dutch and German along with their publication in English.

Bavinck's tremendous erudition and wide knowledge of philosophy and history of dogma are evident in this book. One always stands amazed at

his vast learning. Nevertheless, the book is a disappointment. It is a philosophical, rather than a Scriptural, approach to the doctrine of revelation, and one of Bavinck's fundamental assumptions in the book is the theory of common grace. This is disappointing because it is so different from Bavinck's Dogmatics.

The book includes chapters on The Idea of a Philosophy of Revelation, Revelation and Philosophy, Revelation and Nature, Revelation and History, Revelation and Religion, Revelation and Christianity, Revelation and Religious Experience, Revelation and Culture, Revelation and the Future.

## News From Our Churches

New evidence for the fact that our "retired" ministers continue to be active in the ministry of the Word can be seen from bulletin announcements which confirm that Rev. Schipper will be preaching, D.V., in Redlands through January 4, 1981; and Rev. Heys is slated to lead services in Bradenton, Florida, beginning the first Sunday in

December.

Hope Church in Walker, Michigan recently formed a trio of Reverends Bekkering, Flikkema, and Joostens.

Speaking of Hope, on October 31 they hosted a program and open house commemorating Professor Herman Hanko's twenty-five years in the



ministry. In addition to numerous special numbers there were some remarks made by Rev. C. Hanko, Prof. Hanko's father, and Mr. Dewey Engelsma, whose comments concerned the seven years of Prof. Hanko's pastorate at Hope. Mr. Engelsma related that back in 1955 he and Mr. Newhouse delivered Hope's call letter in person to the then Candidate Hanko. Upon going to his home they were directed to where he was working, and there he received Hope's call, "with paint and brush, in painter's garb." Also mentioned was an early shock that Prof. Hanko experienced at the first consistory meeting that he attended, when Mr. Newhouse, a charter member of Hope and a member of Hope's consistory at the time, intimated that the minutes were written in Fries. (Those who know Mr. Newhouse will not be surprised to hear this of him.) The evening reminded us of our God's covenant faithfulness in providing faithful preachers of the Gospel. We concur with what Rev. C. Hanko said at the close of his remarks, "May the Lord use his (Prof. Hanko's) ministry to the glory of His name and the salvation of His Church." Incidentally—as reported two issues back—a few days before this celebration Prof. Hanko spoke for the Mr. & Mrs. League on the topic "Religious Ferver, Why is it Waning?" We mention this again to inform our readers that a cassette tape of that timely speech can be obtained by contacting Mr. Gary Bylsma, 7507 Astronaut, Jenison, Mi. 49428.

From a Kalamazoo bulletin we gleaned the following item of interest: "This year for the election of officebearers we will be following the first method given in Art. 22 of the Church Order. Accordingly we request that nominations for one elder and one deacon be submitted by the members of the congregation to the clerk of the consistory, Mr. H. Kuiper, in writing. From this nomination a selection will be presented to the annual congregational meeting for approval."

An organ dedication ceremony and Martha's Ladies Aid Commemoration were recently held by our Hull congregation.

Some tidbits of information from two letters received from our business manager, Mr. Vander-

Wal, may be of interest to our readers: The first one comes from a Reformed Presbyterian Church pastor who also serves as Librarian of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Hall in Belfast, Northern Ireland. This pastor came into contact with the *Standard Bearer* while a student at Westminster Theological Seminary and now requests current and back copies of the S.B. The second letter accompanied a notification of a change of address from a pastor in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Although the heading of this column does *not* read "Letters From Our Readers," this pastor's remarks merit additional circulation, I think. He writes: "Since becoming a reader I have very much enjoyed this periodical. Not an avid Calvinist, by any stretch of the imagination, I was at first wary, and even skeptical, of many of your contributor's positions. However, over the past year, finding myself carefully scrutinizing the scriptural assertions which find their way into your contributor's articles, I have diligently searched God's Word, and researched Calvinistic works on theology which has afforded me with a much broader base of comprehension, pertaining to a strategic grasp of our Lord's single Sovereignty and Glorious Grace in His work of salvation. Thank you for so fine a publication. It keeps us thinking, searching, and praying."

In recent months Rev. R. Hanko of our Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in New Jersey has had opportunity to preach in the People's Park Reformed Church of Paterson. Along these same lines, Pastor Bekkering, of our Trinity Protestant Reformed Church of Houston, Texas reports that Professor Hoeksema accepted a request to preach at the evening service of the Covenant Presbyterian Church during his already action-packed Reformation Day week end in Houston.

Sometimes a bulletin announcement activates one's curiosity, such as the one from our South Holland Church which announced a "Clue Car Chase" sponsored by their Mr. & Mrs. Society. At the risk of appearing nosy, and/or experiencing the fate of the curious cat, I wonder if someone might be willing to clue us in on this one?

C.K.