

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

God's people become illiterates as far as reading and understanding the abstract, spiritual truths of Scripture are concerned. Good, spiritual books are written but all they do is decorate our book-shelves. They are not read. Reading and studying the Bible becomes too difficult and far too time-consuming; and to spend time reading other religious books and periodicals just takes too much time out of our busy lives.

See "Spiritual Illiteracy and the Rise of
Antichrist"—page 211

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Meditation— | |
| Jesus Christ Our Lord | 194 |
| Editor's Notes | 197 |
| The Lord Gave the Word— | |
| Reformed Evangelism | 197 |
| Translated Treasures— | |
| A Pamphlet Concerning the | |
| Reformation of the Church | 199 |
| My Sheep Hear My Voice— | |
| Letter to Timothy | 202 |
| Taking Heed to Doctrine— | |
| Evangelism and the Reformed Faith (2) | 204 |
| From Holy Writ— | |
| The So-called Postmillennial | |
| Proof-texts in Holy Writ | 206 |
| The Day of Shadows— | |
| The Clouds Return After the Rain | 208 |
| Signs of the Times— | |
| Spiritual Illiteracy and the Rise of Antichrist | 211 |
| Book Reviews | 213 |
| News From Our Churches | 216 |

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.

Editor-in-Chief: Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema

Department Editors: Rev. Wayne Bekkering, Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma, Rev. Arie den Hartog, Prof. Robert D. Decker, Rev. David J. Engelsma, Rev. Richard Flikkema, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman Hando, Rev. John A. Heys, Mr. Calvin Kalsbeek, Rev. Kenneth Koole, Rev. Jay Kortering, Rev. George C. Lubbers, Rev. Rodney Miersma, Rev. Marinus Schipper, Rev. James Slopsema, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Ronald Van Overloop, Rev. Herman Veldman.

Editorial Office: Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

4975 Ivanrest Ave. S.W.

Grandville, Michigan 49418

Church News Editor: Mr. Calvin Kalsbeek

1313 Wilson Ave. S.W.

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504

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.

Reprint Policy: Permission is hereby granted for the reprinting of articles in our magazine by other publications, provided: a) that such reprinted articles are reproduced in full; b) that proper acknowledgement is made; c) that a copy of the periodical in which such reprint appears is sent to our editorial office.

Business Office: The Standard Bearer

Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.

P.O. Box 6064

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

PH: (616) 243-2953

New Zealand Business Office: The Standard Bearer

c/o OPC Bookshop

P.O. Box 2289

Christchurch, New Zealand

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.

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

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

MEDITATION

Jesus Christ Our Lord

Rev. C. Hanko

Ques. 34. Wherefore callest thou him our Lord?

Ans. Because he hath redeemed us, both soul and body, from all our sins, not with gold or silver, but with his precious blood, and hath delivered us from all the power of the devil, and thus made us his own property. Heid. Catechism, Lord's Day 13.

"Our Lord."

Every child that was born in the line of the covenant aroused new hopes in the hearts of our first parents, Adam and Eve. They were looking for the promised Seed as they rejoiced in the birth of Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, and Enoch.

Noah blessed the God of Shem because his hope of salvation was centered in the generations of Shem.

Abraham longed to see Christ's day. Jacob spoke of the coming of Shiloh, and breathed the cry of longing, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord" (Gen. 49:18).

It was David who was privileged to hear with a prophetic ear, "The Lord (Jehovah, the covenant God of His people) said to my Lord (Adonai, the Mighty One), Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (Psalm 110:1). The king who fought the battles of the Lord saw the promised Christ risen from the dead, exalted at the right hand of the Father, with all power entrusted to Him in heaven and on earth, until the mighty Jehovah gives Him the glorious victory over all His enemies in the creation.

Daniel declares, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they (the angel host) brought Him before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." What a wonderful preview that was of the mighty Conqueror coming forth out of the torments of hell, out of death and the grave, marching triumphantly into the highest heavens to receive of the Father a Name which is above all names, "King of kings and Lord of lords"!

When Jesus began His public ministry His disciples first were impressed by the fact that He spoke with authority, and not as the scribes, so that they made bold to call Him Rabbi, Master. But when they beheld His power over devils, sickness, and death, and saw that even the winds and the seas obeyed Him, they began to call Him Lord. Many others who were healed from their physical infirmities and who were quickened to a living faith in Him fell down in worship before Him and confessed Him as their Lord. After the resurrection Thomas cries out, "My Lord and my God."

Today we sing of our exalted Lord in heavenly glory when we confess with the church of the shadows, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle" (Psalm 24:7,8). For we now "see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9). He is the Lamb that was slain, and Who lives and reigns in heaven, that we may live and reign with Him in His glorious kingdom, "Our Lord Jesus Christ."

This is a very personal confession, for as individual believers we may say, "My Lord." Yet we never want to isolate ourselves from the assembly of the saints, of which we are such an integral part, so that we count it a privilege to declare with all believers that He is "Our Lord."

Our Catechism teaches us in the section quoted above that there are three specific benefits that we derive from that confession, namely, He redeems, He delivers us, and He makes us His property.

Our Lord Redeemer.

Our Lord has "redeemed us, both soul and body, from all our sins, not with gold or silver, but with His precious blood."

The first thing that comes to our minds as we read this is that we come into this world as children of Satan, slaves of sin, and in the bondage of death. When Adam and Eve fell in paradise, God's just punishment upon them and us was, "The soul that sins must die." The death that we died in paradise includes nothing less than the heavy burden of God's wrath upon us. That wrath includes that God gave us over to Satan, the prince of darkness, so that he has power over us to rule over us. We even bear his deceitful nature as his children. We are evil, sold under sin and bound in the shackles of physical and eternal death. We would not be honest with ourselves if we should try to deny this. Yet what fools we are. We imagine that our freedom lies in sinning, that we can transgress God's law and escape His condemnation. We call that fun, real living, even while we can hardly fail to realize that the reward of sin is death. We are taking a heady, exciting ride down a steep slope that opens into the chasm of hell. Yet we love it. We refuse to give it up. The shackles of sin and the power of death are too strong for us to break.

But we have a Redeemer in the heavens, Who is none other than GOD. God has eternally appointed His Son, the Christ, to be our representative Head, our substitute, to break the power of sin, and to set us free in the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The price of redemption had to be paid—not to Satan, but to God, for God's justice had to be satisfied. Not all the gold and silver in this world, no matter what its value may be per ounce on the common market, can redeem one soul from even the smallest sin. No angel in heaven, not all the blood of sheep and rams in the Old Testament sacrifices, no Moses and no Paul could deliver us. But God's Son, Jesus Christ, stands eternally before the triune God, His Father, declaring, "I come to do Thy will, O God!" God came in the flesh in the person of the Son, took on the form of a Servant, and humbled Himself to the bitter, shameful, accursed death of the cross. He did this to pay the ransom price of His own precious blood, God's blood, as an atonement for the sins of all His people. Were there millions more, this sacrifice would have been sufficient even then. But God gave His Son as a ransom for His chosen people. Christ laid down His life for His sheep. The fact that you and I may be privileged to count ourselves among this people, these sheep,

fills us with humble worship. In deepest gratitude we may confess: "I know that my Redeemer liveth!"

We are redeemed in body and soul, for time and eternity; redeemed to the adoption of sons, members of the family of God; redeemed to live and reign with Christ in the new creation forever and ever!

Our Lord Deliverer.

I belong to the spiritually armed forces of the living God, not as an enlistee, nor as a volunteer for Jesus, but as a draftee who has been drawn by the impulsion of the Holy Spirit through the means of the Word of God. According to God's sovereign election, and on the merit of Christ's atoning death, I underwent a second birth. I was separated from the world, which became my enemy, and I became a new creature in Christ, a soldier of the cross. I am a friend of those who love God, and an enemy of all those who oppose Him. Therefore I find myself out on the battlefield, called to ward off my many personal enemies and to guard the City of my God day and night. We live in an evil day, for the devil is taking his last stand and making his final attack upon God's Name and God's Cause. I cannot begin to tell how many cunning onslaughts are made against God Himself, to wipe His Name from off the earth, against His Christ, His infallible Word, His Church, both as institute and as it manifests itself in its various members. The devil has succeeded in creating a spirit of complacency, a cold indifference in the hearts of members of the church, who cry, "Peace, peace," even when heresies arise and the very foundations are being undermined. Even as our Lord forewarned us, the ten virgins rest, some in slumber, some in deep sleep. I find myself a victim of satanic attacks every moment of the day and night. This would be of no concern to me, if it were not for the fact that I am prone by nature to succumb, because of my innate selfish pride, and my evil inclination to hate God and my closest neighbor. I know, as our Canons teach, that if it were not for Christ, the Captain of my salvation, Who preserves me by the power of His grace and Spirit, I not only *might* perish, but I certainly *would*. Therefore I need the complete armor of God, wearing on my head the helmet of salvation, on my chest the breastplate of righteousness, about my waist the girdle of truth, on my feet the shoes of the preparedness of the gospel of peace, gripping firmly in my left hand the shield of faith to ward off all the fiery darts of the evil one, and in my right hand the sword of the Spirit, which is, along with all the rest, the *Word of God*. Shoulder to shoulder I stand with all those who belong to the armed forces of the living God in an evil world. Our confidence is that, even as David could go alone,

only an armor bearer with him, into the camp of Saul and his three thousand soldiers, we also can meet the enemy in the confidence that no one can harm the Lord's anointed. Even as a small army of Judah could go out and gain the victory over a mighty enemy host, often without shooting an arrow, so we also always have the victory in our Lord Jesus Christ. When God is for us no one can be against us. We are more than conquerors through our Lord, Who loved us unto death and loves us still.

Our Lord Possessor.

Our Lord is ours, and we are His sole possession. He has a very special claim on us as His peculiar property. We are as closely knit to Him as members of the body are united with the head. We are one with Him as sheep of one Shepherd. He intercedes for us in heaven, and from heaven blesses us with every spiritual blessing. He is the Bridegroom Who is preparing the Home for His Bride, and preparing His Bride for His Home to live and reign with Him in His glorious Kingdom forever.

Our Lord's rule is totalitarian. Peoples may rage, but He directs their lives that, in spite of themselves, they serve His purpose. Nations, like Russia, may devise schemes and plans for power, but God's Christ reigns as our Lord in the heavens. Antichrist may lift his vile head, but his doom is sealed by the victory of the cross twenty centuries ago.

There is nothing, not a thumb breadth of all that we claim as our own, that does not belong to Christ. Our time, our very life, our strength, our gifts and talents, our families and homes, and everything else must be used in His service. We are servants in His house and vineyard who will be called to account when He returns.

To Him we owe our whole allegiance. The more so, because the Lord is our Shepherd, Who leads us in green pastures and beside still waters, ever leading us onward to the sheepfold of glory. In that confidence we confess: "And I shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever." You see, we belong to Jesus.

*The Standard Bearer
makes a thoughtful gift
for a shut-in.*

Editor's Notes

With this issue we present a new department editor, Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma, who will be responsible for *Signs of the Times* for the next six issues. We welcome him to the ranks of our associate editors. Thanks, Rev. Flikkema, for your quota of six articles so faithfully submitted!

* * * * *

Our readers will have noticed that this year from time to time we have presented special issues of the *Standard Bearer*, devoted in their entirety to one subject. We have one more such special issue planned—on the subject of Missions. It is planned

for the month of March. We would appreciate hearing from our readers about this. Do you like the special issues? Would you rather not have them? Do you have suggestions for others? Drop your Editor a note.

* * * * *

The Editorial Department will be omitted in this issue, in order to make room for some long overdue book reviews. We must keep peace with the publishers, or they will stop sending us books for review.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

Reformed Evangelism

Prof. Robert D. Decker

In previous articles we have distinguished among the various aspects of the church's missionary task. There is mission work which must be done among the heathen. Missionary efforts must be directed toward the Jews who are the natural branches of the olive tree of God's church (cf. Romans 11). There is also mission work to be done among what we termed, "covenant wanderers." This latter work we prefer to call evangelism, or Reformed evangelism. At this point the question is: is this a legitimate aspect of the missionary task of the church? Should the church do mission work exclusively among the Jews and heathen or does the church have a calling to preach the gospel (evangelize) to those who have apostatized?

Dr. J. H. Bavinck answers the question affirmatively. He defines this work as the church's "efforts to bring back into the church covenant members who have wandered or strayed away..." (pp. 74ff., *An Introduction To The Science Of Missions*). Bavinck points out that there is a real difference between work carried on among the "churched" and among those who have never heard the gospel. Among the latter obviously one can assume no prior knowledge of the gospel. The missionary must come to them with the milk of the Word, for these are not able to receive the meat. Bavinck

bases his distinction between mission work among the heathen and that done among the "covenant wanderers" on a threefold parallel: 1) The prophets of the Old Testament were sent to apostate Israel. 2) Jesus' compassion for and His sending of the disciples to "lost sheep of the house of Israel." These were as sheep without a shepherd. Jesus was deeply concerned for them. He both personally and through His disciples ministered to them (cf. Matthew 9, 10, *et al.*) 3) There is finally the example of the apostles who "beginning at Jerusalem went through Samaria to the uttermost parts of the world" (Luke 24:47) and then, too, always to "the Jew first and also the Gentile." In this connection Bavinck makes a point well taken when he writes that the distinction between "covenant wanderers" and heathen is not to be overstressed because the two are coming together. The gap between the two is narrowing. This is due primarily to two reasons: the growing secularism of our times and the woeful ignorance of the wanderers.

We essentially agree with Bavinck's position. The church definitely has a calling to labor among covenant wanderers. This belongs to Church Reformation, and Church Reformation is always the calling of the church; it belongs to the genius of the Reformed Faith. The Church must be *Reformata et*

semper Reformanda, Reformed and always Reforming.

This is also the position of the *Form For The Ordination Of Missionaries* used by the Protestant Reformed Churches. We noted in the previous article that the *Form* distinguishes between the "Heathen" and the "Dispersed." The Heathen are those who in their generations are outside of the covenant: "all nations" in distinction from Israel. The grounds which the *Form* cites are: Matthew 28:19 where Jesus instructs the disciples to baptize and instruct "all nations"; Peter's vision and his preaching to Cornelius (Acts 10); and the church at Antioch ordaining Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13). This is valid, this is missions. The church, as long as history continues, must go and preach the gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the triune God.

Concerning the dispersed the *Form* has this to say:

That unto the *Dispersed* also these glad tidings must be brought is plainly inferred from what God says in Ezekiel 34:11-16: "For thus saith the Lord God: Behold I Myself, even I, will search for My sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountains of the height of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and will bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick. I will feed them in judgment."

That the Lord does this by means of His servants, is clearly shown by the way wherein God, in the same chapter, rebukes the unfaithful shepherds: "Neither have ye brought again that which was driven away," and expresses His holy indignation because: "My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, My sheep were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and there was none that did search or seek after them." Ezek. 34:4, 6.

The same follows from the fact that Jesus, Who Himself was sent to the "lost sheep of the House of Israel," calls the Church the salt of the earth, while besides all this, the example of the Apostle Paul teaches us plainly that it is our high calling to bring the bread of life to our dispersed brethren after the flesh everywhere, and therefore certainly first of all in our own country, to gather them, if possible, as congregations of our Lord.

By the "dispersed" it is evident that the *Form*

means those who are apostatizing. These are what Bavinck calls "covenant wanderers." Missionary work among these the Protestant Reformed Churches call "Church Extension" and/or "Church Reformation." The preamble to the *Constitution of the Mission Committee* of these Churches reads: "The Protestant Reformed Churches believe that, in obedience to the command of Christ, the King of the Church, to preach the blessed Gospel to all creatures, baptizing, and teaching them to observe all things which Christ has commanded, it is the explicit duty and sacred privilege of said churches to carry out this calling according to the measure of our God-given ability.

"We believe that this missionary activity includes the work of church extension, and church reformation, as well as the task of carrying out the Gospel to the unchurched and heathen. However, we are convinced that our present duty lies primarily in the field of church extension and church reformation." (Quoted from the revised constitution, *Acts of Synod 1977*, p. 32)

The grounds cited by the *Form* for working among the dispersed are fourfold: 1) Ezekiel 34:11-16. This passage speaks of God's promise to gather and feed His scattered sheep. These were scattered by unfaithful shepherds (cf. vss 4-6) and belong to the house of Israel. 2) Jesus was sent to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (cf. Matthew 15:24; John 4:22). 3) Jesus sent the disciples to the lost sheep of the house of Israel upon whom He had compassion because they were as sheep without a shepherd (cf. Matthew 9, 10). 4) There is the example of the Apostle Paul who in all his labors always went to "the Jew first and also the Greek or Gentile. Our Lord in His ministry followed this formula. He Himself went and He sent His disciples to "the lost sheep of the House of Israel." The Apostles did likewise. They went from Jerusalem to Samaria and thence to the uttermost parts of the earth. And even St. Paul, the great missionary to the Gentiles, went and preached in the synagogues first, and he carried with him to his grave a tremendous, heartfelt concern for his brethren, "his kinsmen according to the flesh" (cf. Romans 9:1ff.). But the question persists: does this mean, as our *Form* infers, that our first calling and mission responsibility is always Church Extension and Church Reformation and then we go to the heathen? This is explicitly stated in the Preamble to the Mission Constitution. Should this be revised, or is it correct?

We believe the emphasis is correct. While it is certainly true that the Jews enjoy a unique priority (cf. Romans 9 - 11), the analogy referred to in the *Form* (the Jew first—then the Gentile) holds. The church must first go to the "covenant wanderers" and then the heathen. We must first labor among

our "brethren after the flesh." We quite agree with the Preamble to the Mission constitution that our first responsibility is to those who are closest to us. In all of this we must follow the Spirit's direction and seek the doors which He opens to us. We must labor according to the opportunities presented by the Holy Spirit and by the grace which He supplies. We must be very conscious of this calling. It belongs to the very essence of the missionary task of the Church of Jesus Christ. We must zealously seize every opportunity and "labor while it is day, ere the night cometh in which no man can labor." We must never forget that now is the accepted time, now is the Day of the Lord. We must remember that right now the fields are white with harvest and the laborers are few.

Ideally, therefore, the Church will have a two-pronged mission program. The church will direct its efforts to the dispersed and to the heathen. The church will do this under the direction of the Holy Spirit of Christ and by His grace. Neither aspect of this two-pronged mission will be to the detriment of the other. Neither will be to the exclusion of the other. Beginning at "Jerusalem," at home in its own locale, the Church of Jesus Christ, in obedience to its Lord, will preach the Gospel, seeking to effect continual reformation and seeking to reach the untold numbers of elect in every nation under heaven until finally the multitude which no man can number is complete and Jesus comes again in all His power and great glory.

TRANSLATED TREASURES

A Pamphlet Concerning the Reformation of the Church

Dr. A. Kuyper

(In the last part of the last article Dr. Kuyper began a discussion of the deformation of the churches. He defined what he meant by deformation, i.e., the deterioration of a church which had once held a correct form according to the Scriptures and was now in need of church reformation. This idea of the deformed church Kuyper continues to discuss in the following paragraphs.)

36. Concerning Imperfect Church Formation.

Churches which, without suffering deformation, nevertheless do not manifest the true form of the church, not even in an in-itself attainable form, exist in a state of imperfection. Completeness therefore requires that we treat also this imperfect church, at least in so far as it concerns many churches in our day.

Incomplete churches can be of four kinds, namely, mission churches, occasional churches, churches under the cross, and protesting churches. We must treat each of these churches individually. Mission churches are not what men now call them, e.g., in Doetinchem and on the Vluchtheuvel. There men have, in opposition to all good principles of church polity, in places where a church already exists, imposed a second kind of ecclesiasti-

cal congregation into the area. At Doetinchem there is the Dutch Reformed Church (State Church) with its own consistory and ministers, preachers, elders and deacons. But alongside of this church, in the same Doetinchem, exists yet another church on a par with it, with its own government *and its own institution*, which calls itself a mission congregation.¹ No matter with what good intentions these rules might be brought into existence, yet they are to be very sternly condemned on the ground of the principles of our Reformed church polity. Nothing like this must happen. No, mission churches can only originate where there is yet no church, and, therefore, either in lands inhabited by Jews, heathen, or Mohammedans, or in areas of our own land where faith in Jesus Christ is destroyed; but only in those places.

Such mission churches can arise in two different ways, namely, either because an existing church sends delegates there from elsewhere to establish a church, or because particular believers are a means in God's hand to make confessors of unbelievers

¹I have omitted here a paragraph from the translation which has reference to local circumstances which are no longer known to us. The interested reader can consult the original.

and because these confessors unite into a church.

A mission church of the first kind begins in an extremely imperfect way and for the time being consists only of the family of the minister of the Word sent to that place. It is then a daughter church of the church which has sent him. It stands under its consistory, under that confession, and, as a plant not yet on its own but bound to the mother plant. If God grants to a few of the inhabitants of that place conversion, then these are baptized, not by virtue of the office of the minister, but by virtue of a power extended to the minister by the sending consistory. If that circle spreads out, then holy communion is also granted under similar conditions. And at first in a gradual way one would begin to place an individual elder and deacon alongside of the minister of the Word so that in this way the organization of this church is gradually brought to completion and the day brought about when it, as a severed cutting from the mother church, can begin its own independent existence. One has, in this mission church, an image of a yet imperfect church which is for a period of time without the right use of the sacraments and without the exercise of discipline. But the character of a church cannot be denied to this church while it is coming into existence.

Somewhat different is the process where a mission church originates by individual initiative. To take an extreme case, it is even conceivable that a few castaways, landed on an unknown island, bring the inhabitants of this island to conversion and to Christ, and yet, through lack of communication, are unable to come into contact with an existing church. In such a case these confessors ought not to live without a church connection but would be obligated to establish a church, to choose overseers and deacons, to permit to be installed by these office bearers a minister of the Word, and through him to introduce a ministry of the Word, the use of the sacraments, and the exercise of discipline. This situation would only very rarely occur but it does place the process of becoming a church in the clearest light. Mostly such a circle of believers can make contact with existing churches; and then the proper procedure is to ask help from an existing church so that a delegated minister of the Word may come to that place with an elder to proceed to choose overseers, to recommend a ministry of the Word from elsewhere, and to seal the confession of the converted by holy baptism. Occasional churches are those imperfect churches which originate temporarily, never receive definite and complete manifestation, and disappear again with the disappearance of the reason which brought them into existence. Thus, an occasional church forms itself in times of war in an army in the field. Or an occasional church forms itself on a fleet which is at

sea for a long time. Or an occasional church forms itself in a resort where a few Christians stay together for awhile. Earlier many such churches were formed in embassies because Christian ambassadors with their Christian families and helpers moved among Mohammedans and heathen. Or also Reformed ambassadors were in Roman and Lutheran courts. With the exception of a few embassy churches these occasional churches never received a definite form. Often all ecclesiastical institutions, even all use of the sacraments were missing, and a minister of the Word, in case such an office bearer were even present, stood entirely by himself without a consistory and therefore without government. For the merchantmen this presented less difficulty where these men were considered to belong under the consistories of the port of clearance. But even this connection was lacking for the army in the field and for the navy at sea. Mostly the minister of the Word was not even chosen by the church but by the military administration. And so we have here examples of scarcely recognizable churches which lack nearly every mark and yet in their temporal and imperfect form are not entirely devoid of an ecclesiastical character. The justification for this very imperfect form of the church lies in the impossibility of doing anything else. And, therefore, as soon as the possibility was present, these men immediately abandoned such imperfect church formations. So efforts always were condemned to establish separate little churches in high schools, in royal palaces, in the courts of nobles, in places of pleasure, in religious institutions, and such like places. Indeed, separate preaching and separate sacraments administered in these places are permitted by way of forming parishes, because (and to this principle one must hold with tooth and nail) such parishes are under the consistory of that place and are subject to the exercise of discipline so that both the administration of the key of preaching and the administration of the holy sacraments take place not on the authority of the one who seeks help or of the minister but on the authority of the mandate of the consistory. What happened at Loo, when the king appointed court preachers who, outside of union with the consistory of Apeldoorn, preached and administered the sacraments, is opposed to the requirements of Reformed Church polity. Such ministers must either be commissioned by the consistory of s'Gravenhage or sanctioned by the consistory of Apeldoorn.

Churches under the cross, the third kind of occasional churches, are either imperfect or curtailed churches. Their peculiar character is that they are brought into their stunted condition not by inner corruption but, on the contrary, because of a great demonstration on their part of the power of faith. A

church under the cross is in fact always a persecuted church. If the magistrate of a land or city or village becomes hostile and misuses his power as magistrate to shut down the worship of the church, then the cross of persecution comes upon such a church. Such a cross can be very light, heavy, or moderate, and according as the cross is, the incompleteness of such a church is small or great. Put such a cross of persecution on the churches of God before they can completely organize themselves, the cross does not in that case cut off an existing organization but rather prevents the realization of it. Thus it was in the days of the Reformation when newly formed churches fell into the fire of persecution; and so it was, although in a different way, with the new church formation of 1834, which, when just risen, was more or less stunted in its free development. If such a cross of persecution is very heavy as it was under the persecution of the Roman Caesars and under the Romish pope, then such a church of the cross can become entirely incomplete, lose all organization, be robbed of its ministers and overseers, lose the ministry of the Word and sacraments, and finally exist only in the small circle of believers, and yet without the essence of the church falling away. With a less heavy cross, such a church of the cross can lose only its meeting place and the regular use of her minister so that it meets in secret, must gather in different places and must help itself with the edification of edifiers.² Such a church is often cut off from all contact with neighboring churches. With a very light cross, on the other hand, no other tribulations usually come over such a church of the cross than that she is punished with fines, that she is deprived of certain privileges and that she cannot maintain her just, public character. Appearing in many diverse gradations, these churches under the cross demonstrate, therefore, to us an entire series from the almost complete to the almost unrecognizable, always, however, distinguished by this from all other incomplete churches, that they not only want to be complete but also would be if the cross of persecution would only cease.

Aggrieved churches, the last kind of occasional churches, are a kind of imperfect church which also desires to be complete and would be, but it is hindered in this, not by the cross of persecution which the magistrate places upon it, but exclusively by the pressure which a church body forces upon it and falsely exercises over it. Also in this connection one must think of various grades and cases, agreeing however in this that the church itself is not yet to be considered false nor unformed.

If this were the case then one would have to abandon it and go over to a new church formation. But the church, as much as it may yet be the good church of Christ, fails to show itself as church and fails to show its life because of the unfaithfulness or declared enmity of church rulers who have falsely crept in. Such church rulers who have penetrated the church are maintained in their positions by various powers. Sometimes that power can lie in the church itself if many hypocrites enter who outvote the believers and who with the majority of votes maintain an unbelieving and opposing church government. That power can also lie in correspondence with other churches, i.e., in the denomination, if this denomination holds its hand over the head of unfaithful overseers and prevents their expulsion in a believing congregation where there are only a few hypocrites. Or, finally, that power can be found outside the church if the magistrate continues such unfaithful overseers in office through direct or indirect influences. Also two or even three of these causes can work together if there are churches which suffer under being outvoted by hypocrites, are bound in an obstructing church connection, and, e.g., are hindered in the performance of what is right by the influence of state salaries. Yet under whatever form this vexation of the church of Christ appears, this vexation is never the cross of persecution, but rather the vexation of being oppressed under an intruding unfaithful church government which one would surely like to throw out but is unable for the time being. In all such cases such a church, as long as it does its duty, becomes an aggrieved church, i.e., a church which complains to God that her vexation may be taken away. She still has the consciousness that she shall renew herself no matter how deathly sick she is. And she, finally, is not misled by any dead theories, but reveals the rightness of her complaint exactly in this that she directs herself, be it but imperfectly, to the Word of God. A church which complains without raising herself is a complaining but not a grieving church. Indeed a church which would have a right to grieve before God and man is such a gathering of believers which separates herself from those who oppress the church, appoints faithful overseers according to the Word of God, and, giving over the consequences to God Almighty, she proceeds as soon as possible to a good institution of the ministry of the Word and sacraments. In the meantime, these attempts lead immediately to very imperfect results. It can be that men can find only very few overseers inclined to accept this office. It can be that men can have the ministry of the Word in no other way than very irregularly. Perhaps the ministry of the sacraments is only once per year. This does not harm the character of the grieving church. It remains church.

²Edifiers are men chosen from the congregation to lead the congregation in worship even though they are not official ministers of the Word.

It has the essence of the church. It seeks the well-being of the church.

For the sake of completeness one could count

under the imperfect churches also the very small and, as a rule, vacant churches. But where this phenomenon is not abnormal, it is outside our discussion.

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Letter to Timothy

February 1, 1981

Dear Timothy,

In my last letter I mentioned, toward the end, that the best way to understand the emotions and their effect upon us is to discuss the various kinds of emotions. Perhaps if we have some understanding of this matter we will have a deeper appreciation also of the role that emotions play in our life.

Before we discuss the different kinds of emotions however, we must bear in mind that there is basically only one kind of emotion or feeling in us—although that one emotion of feeling has two sides to it. Our entire emotional life can be reduced to feelings of like or dislike, attraction or revulsion. Our emotions are basically a matter of liking or disliking whatever comes to our attention and whatever is part of experience. Whatever happens to us, whatever is part of our life is either liked by us or disliked by us, and that fact is basically what emotions are all about.

God made us that way. Man was originally created that way in Paradise. It is clear that this is unique to the life of man, for animals and lower creatures do not have this at all, or, if they do, they have this in a very low and unintelligible way. There is, among some animals, obviously a feeling of like or dislike also. An animal likes to be fed, has certain preferences in food, dislikes being beaten, etc. But these are part of the instinctual life of the animal and are present in the animal only because the animal was created by God in the image of man.

But God made man to have these definite feelings of like or dislike. When Adam was in a state of perfection in Paradise, these feelings of like and dislike were all morally and ethically related to Adam's calling to serve God. That is, what he liked was what was pleasing to God and what he disliked was that which was contrary to God's commandments. His whole life revolved around his calling to

love the Lord his God with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. This was pleasing to Adam and in this he found his delight. Nevertheless, we must remember that Adam was created as a part of the whole earthly creation. He was related to every single creature which God had formed. And as related to every creature, he was a part of all that happened in this earthly creation. These relationships were infinitely varied and of every conceivable source. To all these relationships and in all these experiences Adam reacted, also emotionally. There were, so far as we can tell, no reactions of dislike in God's world. How could that be in a perfect world? All the creation and all Adam's experience in it were sources of pleasure and delight. Whatever Adam saw and whatever Adam ate; whatever he heard and whatever he touched; whatever happened in the garden and whatever happened to him, all was pure delight and happiness. There was nothing to be disliked, nothing to repulse Adam, nothing to be displeasing to him. There was nothing which could bring a frown to his brow and a look of horror or revulsion to his face. There was nothing from which he shrank back in disgust and nothing loathsome to him. There was nothing which made him weep and nothing which filled him with anger.

Nothing? Well, there was one thing. That was sin. Adam did not know experientially what sin was, but God explained to him what disobedience was. There was the tree of life, but there was also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And, while even with respect to this tree it was a delight to Adam to obey his God by refusing to eat of that tree, nevertheless a certain horror must have been at least part of Adam's emotional life when he saw the possibility of disobedience to his God.

Nevertheless, for the most part, feeling and emotions of dislike have come after the fall of Adam and the human race into sin. We too stand in the middle of God's world related to all the differ-

ent parts of the creation and to our fellow men in an infinite variety of relationships. We are created in such a way that we respond emotionally to all about us. We are always filled with like or dislike in relation to everything. We can never be neutral in these things. We sometimes think that we are neutral. But it is really not the case. We certainly have stronger feelings about some things than about others. One who cares not a whit for sports has no strong feelings about whether the New York Yankees or the Baltimore Orioles win the world series. But such a man may be a rather skilled musician and he may react very strongly to the playing of a piano that is badly out of tune. Nevertheless, we are never completely emotionally neutral about anything which comes within the scope of our experience. We react with feelings of like or dislike.

Because sin has come into the world, there is a great deal in this world to which we react with dislike. It cannot be any different. Into this world has come a tidal wave of sin, and with this sin has come trouble and suffering, sickness and death, war and hatred, distress of every kind. All of these things are of such a kind that we react to them with strong dislike. It cannot be any different, for these things are not "normal." They are not the way God created all things, and they are not as things ought to be. But we are sinful too; and the result is that our entire emotional life is influenced also by sin. We like the things we ought not to be liking and our whole depraved nature is so corrupted and polluted by sin that every inclination is to have feelings of like for what is contrary to the law of God. And all that belongs to God, to things spiritual, to that which is heavenly and eternal, these are the things we dislike and to these we react with disfavor. This remains the case as long as we are in this present evil world. Even though we are regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, the fact is that our natural reaction to sin is and remains one of like and our natural reaction to holiness is one of dislike. We do not really like to go to Church on the Lord's Day. We do not really like to read Scripture and to pray. We do these things because we know they are our calling before God, and when we do them God blesses us in a great mercy so that we enjoy all these things. But our natural and first reaction to things spiritual is always one of dislike.

So these are the basic reactions of an emotional type. And all the different kinds of emotions which there are belong to these basic ones.

What are these emotions then?

To start with the very lowest, there are certain lower forms of the activity of the will which are the lowest forms of emotions. We could probably call

them *desires*. It is particularly characteristic of them that they are things we *want*. They involve a specific activity of the will because they are what we *will* to have, what we *want* to have, what we *desire*. They are of different kinds depending on their strength. Perhaps the weakest of all is what we may call *inclinations*. Now it is characteristic of inclinations that they are vague and indefinite, somewhat ill-defined and without very clear-cut objects. They are both innate and acquired. There are certain such inclinations with which babies are born. Babies come into the world with an inclination to be fed. They need nourishment and, without being taught, suck on the nipple of a bottle as a way to quiet the need for food. We are told, and there is no reason to doubt that, that babies are also born with a need for love. They have this from the moment of birth, and if they are denied this, even their growth will be stunted and retarded. They have not acquired this nor have they been taught this. They are created by God as creatures who have need of these things, and the need is there from the moment of birth. It expresses itself in the inclination to have the need satisfied. These inclinations change as the person himself develops. There are new inclinations added. They change as a person goes from infancy to childhood and adulthood. But they always remain vague and ill-defined. They are very closely related to habits and, indeed, habits may very well be a part of these inclinations. If we are in the habit of driving a car with a stick shift, we are very uncomfortable in a car with an automatic transmission, and the inclination is always there to reach for the shift lever. If we are used to eating breakfast at 8:00, if 8:00 comes and goes without breakfast being served, we have vague feelings of discomfort and sometimes more powerful inclinations to eat than if we had eaten at the usual time.

Somewhat stronger than these inclinations are what we may call *wants*. They are closely related to inclinations and differ not too much from them. But they are somewhat different because they are stronger and more clearly defined. They are more clearly defined because they involve more specifically activity of our minds. They are more clearly defined also because the object of them is more exactly defined. If the usual time for our meals comes and goes, we first of all have vague and ill-defined feelings of discomfort, but these change to definite wants when we begin to realize that the reason we are uncomfortable is that we are hungry, it is time to eat, there is no food on the table, and we get up from our chair to go to the kitchen to find out what is happening that is delaying our meal. The Bible often uses the word *desire* in the bad sense, and that becomes particularly apparent

when we consider the moral implications of this. But before we do that, we must consider one more kind of desire. This kind of desire we could call *longing*. It is not essentially different from an inclination or a want, but it is characterized especially by its great strength. We have inclinations towards certain things; we also have certain wants; but these wants can become longings. They become longings when there is difficulty in obtaining that which we want. An inclination turns to a want when we realize that it is time to eat and there is nothing ready as yet. But that want turns to a longing when it is not only time to eat and nothing is ready for mealtime, but when, in fact, there is not food in the house at all and no means to obtain it. The difficulty of obtaining the object of our inclination and want makes that inclination and want a longing. Everyone needs to be loved. That does not

change through life. That inclination becomes a want when it becomes clearly defined in our consciousness. But it becomes a longing when we are, because of the circumstances of our life, denied that love. A child can have a longing for love when that child has no love in his home because his parents are too self-centered, too preoccupied with acquiring material things, too "busy" with a social life to give to the child the love which it needs.

These are the more basic emotions. We must discuss yet their ethical and moral implications and we must say a few things about their importance in our life. But we shall have to wait with this till our next letter.

Fraternally in Christ,
H. Hanko

TAKING HEED TO DOCTRINE

Evangelism and the Reformed Faith (2)

Rev. David Engelsma

Editor's Notes. 1. Rev. Engelsma called my attention to a typographical error in his article in the Jan. 1 issue, p. 155, first column, last paragraph. The sentence concerned should read: "His reference was not, primarily, to the heathen, but to the multitudes of fainting, scattered Israelites, the Old Testament people of God, under the care of the priests and scribes." 2. These articles of Rev. Engelsma are a transcript of a lecture on this subject. The reader will notice there is duplication between this department and Prof. Decker's. The latter had begun his series, however, before Rev. Engelsma's material was submitted; and Prof. Decker will continue on this subject in his Missions department.

What the Reformed Faith Is

Why then is it charged upon the Reformed Faith, and sometimes feared, that it is incompatible with evangelism? This is because of what the Reformed Faith is. It is the teaching that salvation is the free gift and sovereign work of God in Jesus Christ, wholly without the slightest merit or work of man. The message of the Reformed Faith is, "Salvation by Grace Alone."

This message consists of several outstanding truths. God has eternally loved and predestinated unto eternal love some persons out of the human race, in distinction from others whom, in the same

decree, He predestinated unto perdition. This is the gracious source and foundation of all salvation.

God gave His only begotten Son to die for all those, and those only, whom He had given to Christ as His people, effectually to redeem them, by atoning for their sins. This is the gracious ground of all our salvation.

God now efficaciously calls, by the gospel and the Holy Spirit, into saving fellowship with Jesus, all those, but only those, whom He chose and redeemed. This is the gracious accomplishment of salvation. This work continues, as preservation, until all the elect, redeemed, and renewed people of God are perfected in glory.

With these doctrines, the Reformed Faith holds that all men alike are, by the fall of Adam, dead in sin and slaves to Satan, having wills that are not free, so as to be able to choose Christ and salvation, but bound, so as to be incapable of doing ought else, save to reject the Christ presented in the gospel.

The Reformed Faith preaches an almighty, gracious God and a powerless, totally depraved mankind.

Such a faith, men charge, cannot evangelize. Indeed, such a faith must be unevangelistic in its

very spirit. It cannot be motivated to be zealous in evangelism. Even if it were so motivated, it would have no message to bring.

Note well, however, that his charge, or fear, as the case may be, arises from certain preconceived notions about evangelism— notions that are un-Biblical. There is the notion that the motivation of evangelism is God's love for all men and desire to save all men. There is the notion that the message of evangelism is a universal love of God, a universal atonement, and a universal grace in the preaching, all dependent upon the free will of sinners, who, it is thought, are able to choose for Christ. There is the notion that the efficacy of evangelism is the persuasiveness of the evangelist and the decision of the sinner's wooed will.

Having these notions of evangelism, men proceed to corrupt the Reformed Faith in the interests of evangelism. Double predestination hinders missions; and, therefore, reprobation is denied, and men proclaim a universal saving love of God—the evangelist preaches to all and sundry, "God loves you." Limited atonement hampers missions; and, therefore, men preach a universal atonement—the evangelist assures all and sundry, "Christ died for you." An efficacious call of the gospel to some only restricts mission work; and, therefore, men teach that God is gracious to all men in the preaching—the evangelist announces to all his hearers, "God desires your salvation and is now sincerely offering salvation to you." Total depravity does not square with such evangelism (for what good is all this love, atonement, and grace, if the sinner cannot avail himself of it?); and, therefore, it is suggested to the sinner that he has the ability to open up his heart to let Jesus in, or he is told outright that the new birth depends upon his believing.

With this kind of evangelism, the Reformed Faith is incompatible; of such an evangelism, it is the sworn foe. A Reformed preacher would not dare to engage in evangelism of this kind. He would not, because he fears to stand in the Judgment, having preached a message that robbed God of His glory in the salvation of sinners and that taught sinners to trust for salvation in their own ability and activity. The worst evolutionist, a veritable Charles Darwin, will not be so culpable of despoiling the wonderful works of God as such an evangelist.

But this is not Biblical evangelism. With Biblical evangelism, the Reformed Faith is perfectly compatible. It is false, it is absurd to suppose that the Reformed Faith cannot do evangelism, because of the doctrines of grace that it espouses. These truths, assailed as detrimental to evangelism, are truths that set forth salvation as God's gracious gift. They constitute the *gospel*, the "*evangel*," the *good news*.

How foolish of men, whether within Reformed churches or without, to deny the gospel, in order that they may better evangelize, i.e., proclaim the gospel. Men are really saying that God's gospel is unpreachable, or that it is not serviceable for saving sinners and gathering the Church.

Let us see that the Reformed Faith can engage in evangelism, and how it does so. We will examine, in turn, its message, its method, and its motivation.

The Message of Reformed Evangelism

The message of the Reformed Faith in evangelism will be the whole counsel of God, as was the message of Paul, according to Acts 20:27. The Reformed preacher knows the entire Scripture and knows it as the inspired Word of God. He comes with Scripture, not with a little list of spiritual laws or some gospel on a thumbnail. Essentially, the message is always the same; but the preacher applies it differently to different audiences. Christ's evangelism of the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-22) differed from His evangelism of the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42). Paul's approach to the Jews of the synagogue differed from his approach to the Greek philosophers of Mars' Hill (cp. Acts 17:1-3 with Acts 17:16-34). That thorough doctrinal instruction is required in evangelism, the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 plainly shows, for it calls the Church to baptize the converts in the Name of the Triune God, implying that the missionary has taught the converts the doctrine of the Trinity. In order to do this, the preacher must himself have thorough knowledge of the Word of God and must possess the wisdom to address the Word to every audience. He must be called and qualified by Christ through the Holy Spirit. We must not have uncalled and unqualified "evangelists," no matter how well-intentioned.

Although our message is the whole counsel of God, there are certain crucial elements in the message of evangelism. What they are, our Lord pointed out in His mandate to the apostles, and to the Church, in Luke 24:47. Immediately upon His resurrection from the dead, Christ opened the understanding of the disciples "that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day" (vss. 45, 46). Then, He commissioned them (and in them the Church down through the ages): "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Similar was the later commission of the apostle born out of due time, Paul, in Acts 26:18: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by

faith that is in me." This commission, Paul carried out by showing to all men "that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:20).

Evangelism must preach the sin of the people, the sin of the people as *guilt*—liability to the punishment of the offended God. Therefore, it is to proclaim the holy and righteous God, Whom the sinner has offended. This implies the preaching of God's Law, which the sinner has transgressed and which he cannot keep. The Reformed Faith does this sharply, pointedly, concretely! In contrast, much present-day evangelism says little or nothing about a holy God, His righteous Law, sin, guilt, and punishment. If sin comes up at all, it is only the aspect of sin that consists of the sinner's temporal troubles because of his wickedness. How different was the evangelism of Christ and of His apostles! Think of Jesus' deliberate exposure of the adultery of the Samaritan woman at the well. Think of Peter's searing condemnation of the Jews in Acts 3:14: "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you."

Evangelism proclaims the remission, or forgiveness, of sins for every sinner who repents. This is the removal of the sinner's guilt and the imputation to him of the righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith alone. The forgiveness of sins is *the* blessing of sal-

vation that is to be preached in evangelism. This was the great, glorious concern of the Reformation: justification by faith only. Where is this even to be found in much modern evangelism? The great concern is that the sinner go to heaven and be happy, or that he be happy and successful here on earth. Not long ago, I heard a "convert" give a testimony on behalf of the famous evangelist who saved him, that accepting Jesus made him a better pass-catching end for his southern university football team.

If remission of sins is preached, the cross is preached; and the cross is preached as substitutionary atonement, as satisfaction made to the righteous God, as effectual redemption of all for whom Jesus died, so that those who trust in the cross enjoy its real benefit. But the cross is not preached apart from the Crucified. Jesus Christ Himself is preached as the message of evangelism; He is preached as the eternal Son of God come in the flesh, so that His blood was precious blood, blotting out sins.

If this is Who Jesus is and if this is what His cross is, the love of God is preached when remission of sins is preached. For it was God Who gave His Son on behalf of sinners—not *all* sinners, but sinners, just the same. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..." (John 3:16).

FROM HOLY WRIT

The So-called Postmillennial Proof-texts in Holy Writ

Rev. G. Lubbers

Chapter 3

Twofold Kingdom Of Heaven?

It is of the utmost significance that we correctly understand at the outset the pivotal points of teaching of postmillennialism, lest when we come to our criticism we simply criticize a caricature of this teaching, which is a mere fabrication of our own. Needless to say, this would be both unfair and unwise. It would also be very unjust to misrepresent the teachings of others; it would be sinning against the eighth commandment of the Lord. Besides, it would be a deceiving of my readers. In short, my words would then not be seasoned with salt, giving grace to the hearers. God is not mocked.

When I write above this Chapter, "Twofold

Kingdom Of Heaven?" I am asking a very pertinent question concerning the teachings of leading Postmillennialists. For the fact is that they stress this point very much in their writings on the meaning of the Kingdom of God. Such is the distinction which J. Marcellus Kik makes in his book entitled, *An Eschatology Of Victory*, to which none other than Rousas John Rushdoony writes an Introduction.

We will allow the writer, Marcellus Kik, to speak for himself.

....Revelation is concerned almost entirely with the Messianic kingdom which begins in time and ends in time. For instance, the "thousand-year" period of Revelation 20 cannot refer to the consummate kingdom because it commences in time with the binding of Satan and ends in time with the short period of the

release of Satan. It deals with time before the last judgment. Also the Messianic kingdom, as such, ceases to exist, as is clearly indicated in I Cor. 15:24-28, where it is stated: "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father....And when all things shall be subdued unto Him then shall the Son also himself be subdued unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." The eschatology of the Old Testament is chiefly concerned with the Messianic kingdom, and its types speak of the Messianic kingdom. The predictive didactic elements of the New Testament prophecy deal with the Messianic Kingdom. The consummate kingdom is not the great object of Old Testament prophecy or New Testament prophecy.

So when we speak of the kingdom of God, the millennial kingdom, and even the kingdom (Christ's) of glory, we refer to the kingdom that God has given exclusively to the God-man for a definite period of time (I underscore, G.L.). The millennium, in other words, is the period of the gospel dispensation, the Messianic kingdom, the new heavens and the new earth, the regeneration, etc. The millennium commenced either with the ascension of Christ or with the day of Pentecost and will remain until the second coming of Christ. There was a period when Jesus received the kingdom and there will be a period of time when He will surrender it to the Father. (pages 16, 17)

It is quite evident from this excerpt from the writings of Kik that he insists that in proper eschatology we must distinguish very rigidly between the "Messianic kingdom" where Christ is King of glory, and the "consummate kingdom" where Christ will no longer reign in glory as the "God-man." The Bible is really not interested in the consummate kingdom, but only in what Kik calls the Messianic kingdom.

Obviously Postmillennialists need this distinction for the very quintessence of their teaching concerning the "golden age" of the Gospel triumph shortly before the return of Christ. Writes Kik, "The *Postmil* looks for the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of a glorious age of the church upon earth through the preaching of the gospel under the power of the Holy Spirit. A few enlightened *amils* (Amillennialists) will grant that some of the millennial blessings may be enjoyed upon earth in the gospel dispensation, but do not look for a golden age upon earth."

The eschatology of victory is given in the following paragraph by Marcellus Kik.

The *postmil* looks for the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of a golden age of the church upon earth through the preaching of the gospel under the power of the Holy Spirit. He looks forward to all nations becoming Christian and living in peace one with another. He relates all prophecies to history and time (I underscore, G.L.). After the triumph of Christianity throughout the earth he looks for the second

coming of the Lord. There are, of course, differences of opinion concerning details among the *posts* as among other schools of thought.

For this *postmil* position Kik appeals to such worthies as Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge, Warfield, Alexander in opposition to Dr. Geerhardus Vos, who also was of the Princeton School.

Now it ought to be obvious that the appeal of Kik to I Corinthians 15:24-28 is rather challenging, even as it is a bold appeal to this very beautiful passage from the inspired pen of Paul. Perhaps we may say that this text is a key text which deals with the very crux of the question whether we must say that Christ reigns only in the "Messianic kingdom" and that He no longer will reign after His Parousia in the "consummate kingdom." It seems to me that if this is really the teaching of Paul in this text, the infallible Word of God sustains the position of Post-millennialism.

We will need to give careful exposition and exegesis of this passage as well as other passages in Scripture which cast light upon this reign of Christ in His kingdom.

The question is whether the Scriptures teach that Christ shall reign forever—also in the ages to come after His Parousia and the consummation of the ages. Is the import of such passages as Daniel 7:14 and Luke 1:32, 33 that Christ shall reign with His saints forever, in a kingdom which shall *never end*? Is the view of Kik and other Postmillennialists corroborated by such a clear passage as Hebrews 1:8, where the writer quotes Psalm 45:6a?

What do we read in these above-mentioned Scriptures?

In Daniel 7:14 we read, "And there shall be given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, *which shall not pass away* (I underscore, G.L.) and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Again, in verse 18 of this same chapter, we read, "But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom *forever, even forever and ever*" (I underscore). And, furthermore, in verse 27 we read, "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the Most High, *whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom*, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (I underscore).

Do these passages allow for a separation of the Messianic kingdom into two parts, making the Messianic kingdom in this time before the end, and the consummate kingdom in eternity? That is the question. It is a question of exegesis pure and simple. *Holy Writ* will attempt to investigate this basically.

And what must we say of such a passage as Luke 1:32 and 33? There we read, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God will give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob *forever*; and of His kingdom *there shall be no end*." Can we take the statement "of His kingdom there shall be no end" to refer to the Messianic kingdom both in this time and in the age to come? Or does the "shall have no end" refer to the fact that the kingdom shall have no end till the time of the ushering in of the "consummate kingdom"?

And what must we say of such a passage as Hebrews 1:8 (Psalm 45:6a) where we read, "But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, *is forever and ever*: the sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom..."? Here we read that the throne of the "Son" is forever and ever. Is this "forever and ever" relative only to the raising up of the kingdom in time, up till the time of Christ's coming with clouds to take the elect with Him in eternal glory? Is that the perspective, the prophetic perspective, of Hebrews 1:8, which is a quotation of Psalm 45:6, 7?

Surely the Scriptures do not contradict themselves on so important a matter, it would seem. However, if the Holy Spirit teaches in I Corinthians 15:28 that the reign of Christ in His "Messianic" kingdom ends "when He shall have delivered up the kingdom" to God even the Father, then we will need to explain the passages which we quote above accordingly. For the Scriptures do not contradict each other!

This does not mean that we will not need to exegete the passages given in Daniel 7 and Luke 1 in the light of the immediate context and in the light of all of the Scriptures where light is shed on the

meaning of these Scriptures. Such exegesis remains our burden from the Lord.

At this point we are not yet interested in going into any detailed exegesis of these Scriptures. In this Chapter we merely desire to set forth the teaching of the Postmillennial view, and at the same time call attention to the calling which we have to make a critical analysis of this view, and to see which Scriptures come to the foreground calling for careful exegesis.

We must do more than merely assume that a given Scripture passage teaches a certain truth, and then find other passages which we simply quote at random to bolster that position. Such is the method of many of the Postmillennial writers. I shall have opportunity to point that out when we come to consider some of the texts which these writers quote.

We end this Chapter stating briefly the view of the leading Postmillennialists. It is as follows:

1. We must distinguish between the Messianic kingdom of Christ and the consummate kingdom in eternity.
2. In the Messianic Kingdom Christ reigns as King, but not forever. This is a kingship which begins in time and ends in time.
3. The Kingdom in the consummate kingdom is under the dominion of God alone, even the Father. Here the Son no longer reigns on David's throne.
4. And at the end of the dominion of Christ, His reign here on earth, we shall have the golden age, when all things shall be under the influence of the Gospel-preaching, through the Holy Spirit, and the world shall be Christianized. That will be the kingdom perfected, which is prepared for Christ. Christ will come after (*post*) the kingdom is perfected.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

The Clouds Return After the Rain

Rev. John A. Heys

"It makes a difference whose children have the measles."

This little adage we frequently hear, and there is a measure of truth in it. If the neighbour's children have the measles, your children are kept far from them so as not to contract the childhood disease.

But if your children have the measles, they will be sent to school in the early stages of the disease, so as not to miss too much school, and their friends are not kept out of the house, or their parents told that there is this childhood disease within the walls of the home.

Of this we are reminded when in the closing verses of Genesis 35 we read, "And it came to pass when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it." When Shechem had defiled Dinah, Simeon and Levi, her brothers, murdered all the Shechemites. And when they were mildly rebuked by their father, they answered, "Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?" Now when their full brother, Reuben, defiles their father's concubine, they are silent and look the other way. This was their father's concubine, even though it was not their mother nor her maid, who also was a concubine of their father. They do not now ask, "Should he deal with our father's concubine as with an harlot?"

And this was not because they took to heart that mild rebuke that their father gave them after killing the Shechemites. It was not that they learned not to seek revenge. It was simply a case of measles that could be tolerated since they were in the family. And here Scripture gives us another picture of the troubled life of Jacob. Not only does Jacob's oldest son behave very immorally, but note how divided this family is. Two wives, two concubines, four sets of children, and one father and husband in the middle of the bickering, clanishness, and rivalry. There was polarization in that family! Six sons were drawn to one mother (as well as to each other and their sister), and two were drawn to her maid. One son, Joseph, clings to another mother, and two to her maid. And Jacob is in the middle of it all. Had this been done by Dan or Naphtali from the other faction in the family, to Zilpah, the maid of their mother, sparks would have flown and a clash would have resulted. Now there is no concern that their brother did this to a concubine on the other side of the family feud. If Reuben has measles, let Joseph, Dan and Naphtali protest, if they want to do so, but the other eight brothers will look the other way and behave as though no measles are in that family. It is of no concern to them, even though all twelve children, eleven sons and one daughter, are united in the one father whose concubine, (and bed) has been defiled. Benjamin is still too young to understand.

Having read all this we cannot help but say, "Poor Jacob; will his troubles never come to an end?" After all, he is our brother, and our father. He belongs to the same body of Christ to which we belong. He is a citizen of the same kingdom of heaven wherein our names are from eternity enrolled as fellow citizens. It is not pleasant to write about Jacob and his troubles. But it must be done for our learning, and, indeed, "Let children thus learn from history's light, To hope in our God and walk in His sight; The God of their Fathers' to fear and

obey, And ne'er like their fathers to turn from His way" (Psalm 78).

And the statement, "And Israel heard it," also makes one's heart bleed for this fellow saint whose name has been changed from Jacob to Israel. And pity wells up, not simply because he received another blow in his family, and by one of his children—and indeed you could almost wish, after reading of all Jacob's troubles, that he was kept unaware of this horrible thing in his family—but because we read nothing more than that he heard of it. We read of no rebuke which he gave to Reuben. Simeon and Levi he rebuked, and that mildly, by pointing out, not the sin against God, but the fact that he had been made to stink among the Canaanites by their murder. Sin against God is not the essence of his rebuke, but it is the embarrassment and trouble that this deed caused him.

Much later, on his death bed, Jacob did say something about this sin of Reuben. He told Reuben that he was unstable as water, and that he had defiled his father's bed. Evidence there is then that he "heard it," that is, that Reuben had gone in unto his concubine. He knew it all these years from the day it happened until he died. And his words on his death bed reveal that he was grieved because of it. It hurt! But was this another case of measles in the family, which also hurt and make quite sick? Although Reuben was a son of Leah, for whom he had no love when she was forced on him by her conniving father, he was also Jacob's firstborn. Listen to what Jacob says about him in Genesis 49:3, "Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power." He was proud of this son. Is this why he hears of the sin but says nothing to that son? Was it also because Bilhah was only a tool of Rachel for getting more sons for Jacob, and was therefore a woman for whom he had no love, a woman used only for the sake of his flesh and Rachel's ambition? He cared that his bed was defiled, but did he care for Bilhah's shame and debasement?

It may even be questioned as to whether Bilhah did not invite, if not even engineer this sin. A woman very much older than Reuben, a woman whose physical, earthly beauty—if she had it in her youth—had long faded, and her attractiveness had slipped away, could cast her eyes on this handsome young son of Jacob and make advances to him. Jacob left her severely alone, and indeed he had others to whom he could turn. One fact becomes plain, namely, that she was not raped. She was not forced into this sin. And Jacob did not hear of it from Bilhah as a complaint against his oldest son. There had been communication between her and Reuben before this sin. We read, "He went and lay

with her." Now not only is this expression used so often in Scripture of what happened legally in the marriage bond, but it speaks of no resistance at all on the part of Bilhah. She may therefore have enticed him in one way or another. She certainly did not fight any advances on Reuben's part. And the statement of Jacob on his death bed that Reuben is unstable as water, always going the line of least resistance, does suggest that Bilhah used Reuben, and that he was not able to resist. What is more, Jacob's words in Genesis 49:4 indicate that it all took place in Jacob's tent. We read, "unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defilest thou it: he went up to my couch." Taking that bed and couch literally would mean that it took place where Bilhah had access to and was in Jacob's very tent. All this would not excuse Reuben; and on his death bed Jacob did not minimize its evil. Nor would all this excuse Jacob after hearing of it to be so silent about it. He was obliged to rebuke and counsel his son.

And yet with all his weaknesses Jacob was a child of God. Therefore, although it took him a long time to get to Hebron and his father's tent—as God had commanded him more than ten years before this incident—he did finally arrive in "Hebron where Abraham and Isaac sojourned" (Genesis 36:27). Although from Deborah, his mother's maid, he learned long before arriving in Hebron that his mother had died, there was for Jacob a feeling of grief to be in these familiar regions and not to experience the nearness and fellowship of his mother. She saw to it that for his safety he was sent away; and they never met again in this life.

And soon another blow strikes Jacob. Isaac his father dies. And this is but another painful experience that is a prelude to more to come. It would seem as though Solomon had Jacob in mind when he wrote that "the clouds return after the rain" (Ecclesiastes 12:2). It had rained a great deal in Jacob's life; and we are at the point when we would expect the skies to clear and give Jacob some sunny, happy days in the promised land. But no, Joseph is going to be sold into Egypt, and Jacob is going to be led to believe that he is dead. All his love focuses now on Benjamin, the only son left of his beloved wife, who had also been taken from him by death. Simeon is in prison in Egypt. And Benjamin must also now be taken from him to go to Egypt just when he was becoming a promising young man. Not only have the clouds returned, they have brought torrents of rain after the rain that already flooded his soul.

Yet we must remember that clouds always come from the hand of the God Who in the beginning created them. And we may also remember the words of Jesus in the storm that threatened the dis-

ciples in the ship with Him, "Peace, be still," and the amazing result, "And the wind ceased and there was a great calm" (Mark 4:39). And again, in Psalm 135:7, "He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh the lightnings for the rain; He bringeth the wind out of His chambers." Likewise in Psalm 148:8, "Fire, and hail, snow and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling His word."

What is more, we have that comforting truth in I Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Let all covenant families take hold of this truth. Let every child of God keep it before his consciousness when troubles arise and the rain is followed by more intense rain. Through all the ordeals in Jacob's life, no matter how many times he was cast down, and though it looked repeatedly as though the floods would sweep him away, Jacob the supplanter did become Israel, the prince of God. All worked together for good to this one who was called according to God's purpose of sovereign, eternal, unconditional election from before the foundation of the world. Nothing separated him from God's love. His enemies did not. Satan, who tried in all these griefs to do so, failed. Jacob's sins did not. And all because, as Paul writes in that section of Romans 8:28-39, that love of God is *in Christ Jesus*. Because He paid for our sins in full by His precious blood, there is nothing that has the right or ability to separate us from God's love.

This becomes plain in Genesis 36. After we read of Esau and Jacob being united in that deed of burying their father, we are told in Genesis 36:6 that "Esau took his wives.....and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob." God will spare Jacob of any more fear or confrontations with Esau for the remainder of his earthly pilgrimage. You could expect a clash, and Satan certainly wanted to realize one. Isaac, who was the link and wall between the two rival brothers, is out of the way, and there is now no man to restrain Esau from assaulting his brother, as he once vowed to do. But there is a God Who loves His people in Christ Jesus. And from that love His erring and weak children cannot be separated, because God loves them for the sake of Christ, The Seed of Abraham, Whom God loves with an unchangeable and infinitely profound love.

In this life the clouds will return after the rain. But see the rainbow of God's grace that is caused by the sunny skies of the new creation, wherein all the saints, with body and soul, are gathered in that of which Canaan was only a picture.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Spiritual Illiteracy and the Rise of Antichrist

Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Many and varied are the ways which Satan devises to destroy the Church of Christ in this world and at the same time to establish his antichristian kingdom. Although many of these ways become boldly evident to us as we watch for Christ's second coming there are others which are much more subtle and for that reason can sneak by undetected. Every way conceivable Satan is out to destroy the Church and the cause of Jesus Christ in this world. And he sets out to do so with the savagery of a roaring lion. He stalks us unrelentingly. If we are caught sleeping but for a moment we become the prime target of his attack. For that reason we must be on our guard every moment of our lives, carefully watching every aspect of our lives as the people of God.

One such attack upon the Church of Christ through which Satan attempts to destroy her is a lack of knowledge of God and His works and ways. This attempt of Satan to render the people of God ignorant of God's Word has been evident throughout all of the history of His Church.

Soon after the nation of Israel had inherited the land of Canaan for a possession, Satan set to work to sway the hearts of the people. Because Israel had already possessed the land and become quite powerful she felt no need to drive out and to destroy the heathen nations that had previously dwelt there. Instead of obeying God's command Israel allowed the heathen to dwell among them. Already Satan was at work fulfilling his scheme to destroy the church by causing her to forget God and His mighty works. Now that Israel dwelt among the heathen nations of Canaan the next step was simple. In Judges 3:6 and 7 we find, "And they took their daughters to be their wives and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God and served Baalim and the groves." Satan's tactics were simple enough. At that time all the great works of God which He had done for His people were passed from generation to generation only by word of mouth. The knowledge of God and His precepts was passed in tradition from father to son. By

means of intermarriage Satan had caused the ignorant, unbelieving heathen to enter into the very homes of Israel. The result is evident. The knowledge of God and His commandments that had passed from generation to generation by word of mouth now ceased. Therefore, "there arose another generation which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10).

Today the avenues through which God instructs His people are more than those used in the early, old dispensational church. No doubt covenant instruction in the home remains basic to all instruction in the Word of God and His commandments. Now, however, there are more means. We receive instruction in God's Word by means of the preaching of the gospel, by means of the Christian school, and also by means of the printed page. Because of all these different ways by which we are instructed in God's Word, Satan's attacks upon the church become more varied. In order for him to make us ignorant of God and His mighty works he must in some way approach each of these avenues of instruction and rend them apart. That he does.

In this article we focus our attention on Satan's attack upon our knowledge of God by means of the printed page. To be sure, Satan still works in the home, he still works in the schools, and he still works within the church. Now, however, he must also contend with the fact that there is readily available to the child of God good, sound, spiritual literature. In fact, this means of instruction in God's Word can be found within all three of the spheres mentioned above. We can be sure that Satan emits a painful roar every time a book or a periodical which instructs in the Word of God comes from the printing press.

With the Reformation God raised up godly men who translated the Bible into the everyday language of the people. These same men began writing concerning the truth of God's Word. By means of the printing press the Bible was not only given to the laity but a need for good literature was filled with the writings of godly men. Through the years their writings were preserved and many more books of a sound, exegetical character were added.

Today you and I have at our fingertips the best spiritual literature available.

But Satan never gives up. He has his ways, shrewd, cunning, and oh so devastating. He realizes that at this time he is unable to destroy all of those books that have been written concerning the mighty works of God. But it really does not matter. He has other ways. He is able, for example, in some parts of the world where the child of God is suppressed by the government, to check the flow of spiritual literature. Or, if this cannot be accomplished, Satan will cause that spiritual literature to be watered down. Instead of books based upon Scripture and an explanation of Scriptural truths the market will be flooded with the trash of Christian experience and personal testimony. Books such as *Calvin's Institutes* will become scarce, while others such as *How I Accepted Christ Into My Life*, will fill the walls of the bookstores.

But Satan does not stop there either. He works within the hearts of God's people. He attempts to destroy within them any desire to read these spiritual works. He attempts to make the child of God a spiritual illiterate, that is, one who is unable to read or understand the truths written between the covers of those books. The child of God will have no trouble picking up an easy-reading novel and reading it through from cover to cover, but give to him a book filled with abstract ideas and after ten or twenty pages he has had enough.

Satan works that tendency within us in several different ways.

He does so first of all by means of a doctrinal error. Somehow people begin to believe that they can have a strong, vibrant faith without possessing knowledge—the most essential element of faith. It is true, of course, that this knowledge is a certain, heartfelt, spiritual knowledge, yet it does necessarily imply an intellectual knowledge. It is felt, however, that one can be a strong child of God and yet not have a knowledge of Scripture. All the abstract truths of Scripture are too difficult for the common member of the church to grasp, but it really does not matter. His faith is not dependent on that anyway. Therefore those books which speak concerning these truths of Scripture also become too difficult to read. But again it really does not matter. It is of no consequence to being a strong child of God.

Secondly, Satan works a kind of spiritual illiteracy within us by means of the world's influence. In the schools of the world, "Johnny can't read," so teach him skills instead of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Find textbooks which show to him pictures instead of forcing him to read and understand concepts. In the homes of the world, children are no longer forced to sit and read. Life is too filled

with activity and fun. Being with the family is no longer sitting with one another in the family room. It is going out with the family and having fun. Or, if it is sitting with the family, it is in front of what worldly authorities peg as the idiot box. There the family can sit for hours, not required to use their intellect but being spoon-fed the trash of this world. Such is to be found within the schools and homes of the world. No wonder "Johnny can't read."

But what has already become true of the world now begins to filter into the church. The result is the same. God's people become illiterates as far as reading and understanding the abstract, spiritual truths of Scripture are concerned. Good, spiritual books are written but all they do is decorate our book-shelves. They are not read. Reading and studying the Bible becomes too difficult and far too time-consuming; and to spend time reading other religious books and periodicals just takes too much time out of our busy lives.

This spiritual illiteracy which begins to infiltrate the Church of Christ is a contributing factor in the rise of antichrist. Because of the failure to read and understand the terminology of Scripture the church becomes characterized by a lack of knowledge. Even as Israel of old we begin to lose sight of the wonderful works of God for us and in us. The precious doctrines of Scripture become vague, abstract concepts which we fail to understand. Not understanding the truth of God's Word paves the way for heresy. Once heresy has entered the confines of the church it spreads until the church crumbles and falls.

Then begins the amalgamation found within the church world today. Because there is no more knowledge of doctrine, because there is only ignorance of God's work of salvation, there are no longer any barriers to separate churches. The only difference between them is their names. No one understands the clear truth of Scripture any more. Those books which teach the Word of God are discarded. The idea soon arises, let us join hands and all march happily to heaven. That is the rise of the great antichristian kingdom of Satan. Satan uses every means possible to build that kingdom of antichrist—including spiritual illiteracy.

How do we fight him? We must first of all recognize this tendency for what it really is, an attempt of Satan to build his antichristian kingdom. As we see more and more the spiritual inability of people within the church-world to read and understand Scriptural truths; as we see the inability of the same to pick up a soundly spiritual book and read it from cover to cover, we must watch for the rise of the antichrist. Then too we must heed the Word of God to us in I Timothy 4:13-16, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. . .

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thy-

self, and them that hear thee." Only in this way will we resist this particular attack of Satan upon the Church. And when we resist he will flee from us.

Book Reviews

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS, An Exposition of the Canons of Dordrecht, by Homer Hoeksema; R.F.P.A. Publishing Co., 1980; 861 pp., \$18.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate my close friend and colleague in the ministry on the publication of this beautiful and important work. There is not, as the author comments in the introduction, any such commentary in the English language on the Canons. This book fills a great lack and we hope and pray that it has the widest possible circulation.

An exposition of the Canons of Dordt is welcome for a number of reasons. For one thing, the Canons are still the Confessional basis of a large number of Reformed Churches both in this land and abroad. An exposition in English ought to be welcome to all who hold this confession dear. Secondly, although the Canons were adopted finally by the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, Reformed theologians from throughout Europe participated in the work and finally signed these Canons, so that the Confession is of much wider interest than Dutch Reformed Churches. The Canons were truly a document produced by all the Protestant and Reformed Churches about a century after the Reformation. Thirdly, while it is sad but true that many within the Reformed Churches are departing from the heritage of the faith, those who want to maintain this heritage will have to know their Canons thoroughly. This book will be of assistance to them. E.g., in the case of the recent "Boer Gravamen" which was rejected by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in 1980, the Synod rejected the gravamen (against reprobation in the Canons) largely on the basis of a committee report which corrupted the doctrine of predestination and gave to the Canons a "new interpretation which neither our fathers at Dordt nor the Reformed Churches ever gave to them. To defend the Church against this requires that one know our Canons thoroughly. In the fourth place, the Canons were written against the heresy of Arminianism. Who

will deny that Arminianism (though of a different brand) is still rampant in the church—even more so than in the days of Dordt? The Canons are the answer of the Reformed Churches to Arminianism and the development of what has become known as the Five Points of Calvinism. With the renewed interest in Calvinism throughout the world today, this book will find a broad acceptance.

The first section of the book is very valuable. It contains a history of the Arminian conflict in the Netherlands, a history of the Synod of Dordrecht, an important discussion of the confessional status of the Canons, the author's translations of the historical forward to the Acts of the Synod of Dordt and the opinions of the Arminians concerning the five articles. This historical section alone is worth half the price of the book.

Every article in both the positive section of the heads of doctrine and in the negative section (the rejection of errors) is treated concisely, yet thoroughly and in an interesting way. A separate chapter is devoted to the Conclusion of the Canons—an important chapter, for it is the conclusion which has been used by many enemies of sovereign predestination who try to make the Canons teach something they in fact do not teach. At the end of the book is found an index of Scriptural passages cited.

Because our Canons are such an important and beautiful Confession, all those interested in the truth of Scripture ought to purchase their own copy of this book. The price may seem steep to some, but in comparison with prices of books nowadays (I recently read a paperback book of less than 200 pp. which sold for \$5.95), it is cheap. And we often forget that we quickly spend more than \$20 to eat out at night, while for less than \$20 one can purchase a book which will give to the reader countless feasts for the soul.

PHILIPPIANS, The New Century Bible Commentary, by Ralph P. Martin; Eerdmans Publishing Co.,

1980; 176 pp., \$5.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

From a letter which came with the book we learn that, "the new paperback edition of this standard commentary on the Revised Standard Version of the Bible makes its scholarship available to a broad range of people at a modest price. The editors have revised and replaced some volumes in the series and have drawn on the leading contemporary biblical scholars in an attempt to provide a commentary that is balanced and up-to-date in terms of both its scholarship and its reflections on the contemporary relevance of the biblical text."

The commentary is not really a very successful one. In the first place, it is very brief—almost too brief to be of help. Secondly, it is fairly technical and makes many references to many different scholarly works. While this gives the volume some value for students in theology, it is not of much help for the people of God. Thirdly, it must be read with caution, for it is not always as Scriptural and Reformed as one would like in a commentary. One quotation from the commentary will demonstrate this and give, at the same time, some flavor from the commentary. The quote is the exegesis on the well-known passage in 2:13.

They are not, however, left to themselves in this enterprise (of working out their own salvation). At first glance it seems to remove all responsibility from the Philippians, except perhaps the passive consent to let God work in their midst. This is why G. Bornkamm ('Der Lohngedanke im Neuen Testament', *Studien zu Antike und Urchristum*, Munich, 1959, p. 91) can call the verse 'an oddly paradoxical sentence', raising all manner of dogmatic issues to do with justification *sola gratia* and synergism. But such matters seem remote from this Pauline situation, even if later generations of Christian thinkers have to wrestle with the mutual relations of human accountability and divine initiative and grace (see Barth, pp. 71-5). In the context Paul probably introduces the promise of divine help to reassure his friends that, since he cannot be with them ('in my absence'), they should not despair but remember that God's gracious assistance (his 'active good will', Gr. *eudokia*; the Heb. equivalent is *rason*, meaning God's declared purpose of good in electing and blessing His people; cf. Lk. 2:14 and E. Vogt's discussion *ad rem* in *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. K. Stendahl, ET London, 1958, pp. 114-17) is available *both to will* (i.e., promote the desire) and *to work* (Gr. *evergein*, effectual action in bringing human aspiration to good effect is implied). The Greek phrase rendered *for His good pleasure* is a little unusual. *Hyper tes eudokias* is 'in the interests of, for the sake of, His good pleasure', and this wording suggests to BDF (Sec. 231.2) that it should be detached from verse 13, and made the opening of the next verse: 'for the sake of (human) goodwill (as in 1:15; cf. Rom. 10:1; 2 Th. 1:11) do everything without complaining, etc.' But G.

Schrenk (TDNT ii, p. 746, n. 32) is critical of this expedient.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS and **AN EXPOSITION OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS**, Charles Hodge; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich.; \$7.95 each (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema)

Both of these volumes are reprints of works which date back to 1857 and 1860. Many of our older ministers probably have commentaries by Charles Hodge in their libraries. But for a long time students and younger ministers could only obtain secondhand copies. Charles Hodge for many years was professor of theology and New Testament at Princeton Seminary in its better days. While one may not always agree with his exegesis, the fact remains that Hodge was a careful workman; and his commentaries are generally in the Reformed line and are helpful.

One of the helpful features of these volumes is the fact that in most instances the Greek is put in parentheses, so that its presence will not prove to be a stumbling block to the reader who does not know the Biblical languages.

Baker Book House has done well in making these volumes available again. Recommended.

PRINCIPLES OF SACRED THEOLOGY, Abraham Kuyper (Translated by J. Hendrik De Vries); Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich.; 683 pp., \$12.95 (paper) (Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema)

This is a reprint. For some time now the original edition, published by Eerdmans, has been out of print. I do not know whether it is still possible to obtain the three volumes of the original Dutch edition; but perhaps most readers would prefer anyway to read this English abridged edition. Nevertheless, the fact that this work is newly available, especially for theological students, is beneficial. Every student should have a work like this among his reference works.

The original work of Kuyper in the Dutch language was a work of three large volumes. I have already indicated that the English edition is an abridgement. It includes the first fifty-three pages of Volume 1 and all of Volume 2. A bonus in this English edition is an interesting portrait of "Abraham De Geweldige" and an introduction by Benjamin Warfield.

Recommended.

PETER, STEPHEN, JAMES & JOHN, Studies in Non-Pauline Christianity, by F.F. Bruce; Wm. B.

Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980; 159 pp., \$7.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

Few contemporary New Testament scholars have the wideness and depth of learning which Dr. Bruce has. While recently retired from the University of Manchester (England) he continues to add books to the large number he has already written. Generally speaking, his books are worth purchasing and reading.

In this book the author attempts to collect all the data from Scripture and secular sources on the four men mentioned in the title because the author is convinced that knowing all we can about these men will help us to understand better the apostolic Christian community and the tensions, debates, troubles, and problems which existed within it.

The book is interesting and helpful, although it must be read with care. There is too much room left in the book for literary and historical criticism. To cite but one example: the author is of the opinion that the position which Stephen took in Jerusalem was more radical than that of any of the apostles with respect to the Old Testament economy.

We recommend the book to our ministers and

teachers especially, although all can read it with profit.

A quoted view on modern English versions (of the Bible)

The most modern English versions (of the Bible) are none of them convincing on the level of language; I find this morally and intellectually confusing, since I find it means I am incapable of taking seriously anything that they say. Since I cannot think that I am unique in this experience, I am forced to regard the new versions as ill-judged, and their imposition as an act of folly. I am clear that the principles of English style are a moral matter, not just a question of taste. Reticence, clarity and sobriety, strength and simplicity, logical coherence and a decent habit of speech have their foundations in moral sensibility. The modern English Bibles are written in the language, or the non-language, of a class, and of a class that has no authority in spoken English.

—Peter Levi, 1974. Quoted from, "The Bible in its Literary Milieu."

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

We wish to express our sincere sympathy to two of our members: to Jake De Vries in the passing of his brother, **Wiebe**, and to Ben VanderMolen in the loss of his brother, **Cecil, Jr.**

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

Adult Bible Study Class
Protestant Reformed Church
Pella, Iowa
David Abma, Vice-President

NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Loveland, Colorado on Wednesday, March 4, 1981, at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. Material for the agenda must be in my hands thirty days before Classis convenes. Delegates who fly into Denver and delegates in need of lodging should make arrangements with the Clerk of Loveland's Consistory.

Rev. David Engelsma,
Stated Clerk of Classis West

IN MEMORIAM

The consistory and congregation of the Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church express their sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Bishop and family in the death of their infant daughter, **GINELLE JANE**, who went to be with her Lord November 3, 1980.

"But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:16).

Rev. Bernard Woudenberg
and the Consistory of the
Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed
Church

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 12, 1981, our parents, MR. and MRS. JOE BRUMMEL, will, the Lord willing, celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren, thank the Lord that He has preserved them all these years in His grace. We are grateful for the sacrifices they made to provide us with a Christian education and home. We pray that the Lord may be near and bless them in the future.

"For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting and His truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Rich and Sylvia Van Baren | Allen and Sharon Brummel |
| Dave and Nancy Van Baren | Allen, Nathan, Jodi, |
| Brian, Nancy, Marcia, | Shari, Tiffany |
| Ricky, Kathy, Kevin | |
| Andrew and Judy Brummel | Dale and Delma Post |
| Steven and Andrea | Chris, Tricia, Matthew |
| Ade and Gertrude Lenting | Glen and Twyla Griess |
| Jeff, Andrea, Bradley, | Jessica, Sara, Luke |
| Patrick, Philip | Joe and Mary Brummel |
| | Marijo, Joel, Teddy |
| | Glenyce |

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On January 6, 1981, our parents, MR. and MRS. HOWARD E. PASTOOR, celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. We, their children, are thankful to God for His preservation of our loved ones, both physically and spiritually. We are thankful too for their many years of sacrifice to give us Christian instruction in home, school and church. It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless and guide them.

Their children,

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Mary Pastoor | Ken Pastoor |
| Howard and Eileen Pastoor | Don and Linda Van Dyke |
| Heidi and Rachael | Brenda and Bryan |
| Ron and Kathy Kooinga | Kevin Pastoor |
| Chad and Joel | David Pastoor |

News From Our Churches

"Where's my *Standard Bearer*?" was a familiar refrain in the ears of our business manager when answering the telephone in early January. These calls were a result of the fact that the January 1 issue wasn't its usual punctual self. Although most of us would have soon tired of listening to these complaints, it was music to Mr. VanderWal's ears, for each call was another positive (or would we call that negative?) evidence that S.B. is read, appreciated, and even anticipated.

On December 28 Rev. Miersma preached his farewell sermon in Pella. A week and one half later, January 7, he was installed as pastor of our Holland congregation. However, Pella's vacant pulpit was to be short-lived, as Rev. Lanting has *accepted* their call.

Our Hope, Michigan congregation's wait for an answer to their call to Rev. Flikkema has been in keeping with the length of their extended parsonage vacancy (1½ years). The reason for this is that Rev. Flikkema has received another call from a Hope Protestant Reformed Church, this one of Redlands, California. As a result Rev. Flikkema has asked for a three-week extension of the call from Hope, Michigan. As of this writing, therefore, Rev. Flikkema is considering calls from *three* Hopes: Hope, Michigan, Hope, Redlands; and the congregation he is presently serving, the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Isabel.

Rev. C. Hanko and his daughter Alice left Grand Rapids in late December for a two-month stay in Bradenton, Florida. He is replacing Rev. Heys who spent the month of December preaching there under the auspices of our First Church in Grand Rapids.

The bulletins of recent months abound with information concerning nominations, elections, installations, and appreciations of new and retiring office bearers. A glance at sermon themes shows that many of our ministers use these occasions for expositions on the offices of elder and deacon. It seems clear from it all that the Lord has abundantly

blessed our churches with capable men of God who, though weak in their own sinful flesh, nevertheless by His grace and Spirit labor faithfully in these offices. In this connection it's interesting to note that due to personnel changes in consistories and diaconates, many of our church bulletin covers also undergo changes. For some this means a few Sundays with the old covers or a blank side to their bulletins; but for our Wyckoff, New Jersey congregation it serves as a good time to get rid of their misprinted covers. Unless the one I received was an exception, all those who attended their services on December 28 went home after church and read the bulletin cover information from its reflection in the bathroom mirror.

Since we're on the subject of Wyckoff's December 28 bulletin anyway, we might just as well say something about the announcements on the side which could be read without the aid of a mirror: There we find that Prof. H. Hanko was kept quite busy during his visit there during the Christmas holidays by preaching at their evening services and the morning services of the People's Park Reformed Church.

Finally from Wyckoff we learn that the congregation has approved the proposal to add the doxology, "Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow" at the beginning of the morning worship services; and at the end of the morning service their new doxology is Psalter No. 196.

The following selected quote was gleaned from a Hudsonville bulletin: "In the centuries since Adam, men have fallen for the lie rather than believed the truth because they have given more heed to the world's viewpoint than to God's. The world in general has filled men with the notions of the Devil. If men will not study the Bible, they cannot know God's truth. Tragically, men drink from the Devil's fountains of pleasure and blame God for their stomach aches."

C.K.