

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

...Jesus Christ is all but lost sight of behind the big-name ecclesiastical showmen who claim to preach Him. It surprises us not at all that it is continually being disclosed that these evangelistic enterprises are money-making schemes for the personal enrichment of the evangelists and their families. These are the gospel-hucksters (II Cor. 2:17), those who make merchandise of the Church through covetousness (II Pet. 2:3).

See "Evangelism and the Reformed Faith"

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MEDITATION

The Justified Believer

Rev. H. Veldman

"The just shall live by faith."

Rom. 1:7b

Righteous, or just, by faith!

This is indeed the heart of the gospel. The apostle is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ because it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Imagine if this gospel were merely a general, well-meaning offer of salvation! Imagine if a sinner must contribute something to his salvation! Imagine if

the love of God were universal and that this love of God were dependent upon a sinner's will so that the living God could be thwarted in His desire to save! This would mean that no sinner could ever be saved, that the house of our Father would remain forever closed and empty. Salvation, then, would be wholly impossible.

But now we are righteous by faith. And faith

always stands in Scripture over against works. Faith is the gift of God. And because this faith is God's gift, and we are saved, righteous by faith, our salvation is sure. And therefore the apostle can say that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ because it is the power of *God* unto salvation.

Indeed, we are just by faith, only by faith, by means of God's gift, through Christ Jesus, the God of our salvation.

We read here of the just or righteous. The child of God is righteous or justified. How fascinating! Is there anything in the life, the conscious life of a believer that is more fascinating, more wonderful than his justification, that he is just or righteous before God? Indeed, the experience of this wonderful gift of divine grace has fascinated the church of God throughout the ages!

We read: "The just shall live by faith." Two interpretations are possible of this expression. On the one hand, we can understand the expression, "by faith," with "shall live." Then we read: The just shall live by faith. This is the interpretation favored by our translation. However, the words, "by faith," can also be understood in connection with "just" or "righteous." Then we would read: he who is just by faith shall live. We choose the interpretation: the one who is just by faith shall live. We connect the words, "by faith," with "just." We believe that the context demands this interpretation. Had he not written in the first part of verse 17 that the righteousness of God, our righteousness which is of God, is revealed out of faith unto faith, so that faith is the exclusive sphere in which our righteousness is revealed and experienced by us? Paul, therefore, is emphasizing here that this righteousness before God is surely a righteousness which we receive by faith. Besides, this interpretation is also in harmony with the Scriptural idea of "shall live." Paul does not mean to say that we shall live by faith. But he writes that he who is just by faith shall live, forever and in heavenly immortality.

Literally we read here of *the* righteous one.

The righteous is he who is judged by God to be in perfect harmony with His law and who is also righteous in his own consciousness. The Judge of all the earth declares that He sees no guilt in him, and also declares him worthy of life everlasting. This righteousness is a legal concept. We are judged to be free of guilt and declared to be heirs of everlasting life and glory.

How unbelievably wonderful!

Wonderful, first of all, because of us. Fact is, we are so evil and corrupt. How weak we are and frail in the spiritual sense of the word! And, God is holy

and good and righteous! He is the Judge of all the earth. When He expresses a judgment it is a true judgment. How, then, can He say He sees no sin in us, when even we know that there is so much sin in us? Secondly, there is life all about us. How contrary is this judgment of the Lord to all we see and experience! We are in a valley of the shadow of death. God declares of us that we are righteous, and we die all the day long! The Lord visits tornadoes, earthquakes, pestilences upon the peoples of the earth, also wars and the destruction they leave in their wake, and yet we claim to be righteous, free from death and heirs of life and glory! Besides, all these things are of the Lord. The world, we know, always seeks a natural cause for all these calamities. God, however, visits His wrath upon the children of men because of their sins, and these men refuse to look for the cause in themselves and from God. What folly! Sickness and death, etc., are no accidents; they are of God. And we, too, are involved in these calamities. How wonderful, therefore, in the second place is this righteous judgment of God! Thirdly, how wonderful is this judgment of God because of God! He is the supreme Judge of all the earth. When He speaks and judges, that judgment is final. There can be no appeal to another or higher court; His judgment is final! As the Rock, the I AM, the unchangeable Jehovah, He never changes His judgment, cannot change it, because it is true and He can never deny Himself. Let us understand this. It is God Who justifieth, Paul exclaims, who shall condemn! Where in all the universe can, or will, anyone be found to dispute, counter-act, annul this divine judgment of righteousness? Once righteous, we are righteous forever! Whatever may befall us, sickness or enemy or death, once justified, we are righteous forever; nothing will be able to separate us from the love of that Judge of all the earth! What a wonderful gift, this gift of divine righteousness!

We read literally, he who is just out of faith shall live. To be just or righteous out of faith emphasizes the fact that this lives in the consciousness of the child of God. It means that I live out of faith, draw this justification out of faith.

How vividly this lives in the consciousness of the child of God! How wonderful is this assurance for the afflicted, harassed child of God, as he is plagued and tormented by the consciousness of his sin and guilt! He realizes his sin and guilt, is conscious of the holiness and righteousness of God, that no sinner can ever return into the fellowship of God and of His covenant, and that he can never pay even one farthing of that debt. The fellowship of God which he craves lies hopelessly beyond and outside of his reach. And now the wonderful gospel

truth is flashed into his tormented soul: fear not, ye weary pilgrim, thou art just by faith; you cannot and need not contribute toward your justification; Christ did it all. Believing, trusting not in oneself, but only in God through Christ, I am justified.

Righteous out of faith—what does this mean? O, this does not mean that we justify ourselves by means of faith. This is Rome's accursed heresy. To them, faith is the means to do all kinds of good works; and the doing of these works justifies. Neither does this mean that faith is a condition for our righteousness. God, then, knows that we can never pay for all our sin and guilt. Christ died for everybody. The Lord now accepts our faith as a substitute. We are justified if we merely believe, acknowledge our sin and the righteousness of God. However, there is no substitute for atonement; there is no substitute for the payment of all our sin and guilt.

Now we understand what it means to be just out of faith. Christ suffered and died for all His own upon the cross of Calvary. He took upon Himself the awful burden of our sin and guilt, bore God's awful wrath upon them, in perfect love and obedience. And now we receive this righteousness of Christ from God by sovereign grace. God, in Christ, calls us out of death into life; He unites us with Christ, engrafts us into Him, makes us one plant with Him. God lays us prostrate before Him in the dust, presses from us the penitent's cry of utter anguish: O God, be merciful to me, a sinner. God leads us to the cross, gives us to see in that Man of Sorrows our Sinbearer, our Redeemer. To Him we flee; in Him we trust; to Him we look up; out of Him we live and experience the truth: out of faith we know that we are righteous before God, only for Jesus' sake.

How wonderful this is! How futile it would be if our righteousness were left to us! How futile if we must merit it, we who are in ourselves dead in sins and in trespasses! How hopeless would be our lot if God were to demand of us faith as a condition of salvation, something which God will accept from us as a substitute. What man is there who could possibly believe? Is not the truth that we are saved only by grace, through faith, humanly speaking, utterly devastating? No man will confess that he is lost in sin and can do nothing unto his salvation! If we are not saved by grace, we simply cannot be

saved. How wonderful, however, are the mercies of our God! How wonderful that we need not do what we never could do! How wonderful it is that we are righteous out of faith, only for Jesus' sake, because God loved us, sovereignly, eternally, unconditionally before the foundations of the world!

We shall live—of course! We read in Romans 8:32: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" That he who is just out of faith shall live must follow. He Who spared not His own Son will surely with Him also freely give us all things. If He did the one, the other must follow. He died to save us from sin and guilt and hell, and to lead us into life and glory. The purpose of His redemption was exactly that, saved from death and hell, we should be partakers of His life and glory. The fruit of His work must follow: God has justified me, declared me to be free from all guilt and to be an heir of everlasting life; surely we shall live!

We shall live now. He who is righteous out of faith shall live immediately. Life, we understand, is fellowship and communion with God, to love Him and be loved of Him, to taste His life, to know and enjoy His fellowship, to say in all humble and unbelievably wonderful adoration: O God of all the earth, Thou art my God!

And we shall also live presently. Now we have and enjoy this eternal life, this blessed fellowship with God, only in smallest principle. Now the evil we hate we do, and the good we love we practice not. But, when all this weary night is passed, with all its sin and sorrow and disappointments, all its struggles and lamenting, as we read in Romans 7:24: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" Then we shall live; then we shall be clothed in righteousness, in perfect righteousness with no more sin or death or sorrow, but an everlasting knowing, a knowing as we are known, a seeing of God face to face in Jesus Christ, in that wonderful day when God's tabernacle shall be with man.

Indeed, the just is righteous only out of faith.

And, just out of faith, he shall live.

Now, and surely forevermore.

*Know the standard and follow it.
Read **The Standard Bearer**.*

EDITORIAL

Impressions of Singapore (2)

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Although our stay in Singapore was relatively brief, too brief to make as thorough acquaintance with the young brothers and sisters of the GLTS as we might have liked, and too brief to gain as great an understanding of the work there as we would have liked, yet we were able to gain a considerable acquaintance with the work there. This was partly because of our opportunity for fellowship and conversation with Pastor and Mrs. den Hartog in their home and partly because our stay was crowded with contacts with the young people there and partly because to no little degree we were directly immersed in the work during the several days of our stay. The result was that we gained some rather definite impressions which we wish to share.

One of our first and strongest impressions, of course, was that of the tremendous change which had taken place between our visit (with the Rev. C. Hanko) in the summer of 1975 and our visit last summer. This impression was unavoidable. In 1975 our sole Reformed contact there was with brother Ong Keng Ho. It is true that what was then the GLDT agreed, at his request, to sponsor our two evening meetings at that time; but this could almost be called incidental, if not accidental, and was certainly not because of any special interest in the Reformed faith on their part. And when we spoke on the doctrine of the church at that time, we doubted to what degree we had even been understood. We found much Arminianism and fundamentalism and little or no knowledge and interest in the Reformed faith. I recall distinctly that when we had to say farewell to Brother Ong Keng Ho, he told us that he felt so alone that he felt like Joseph in Egypt. Rev. Hanko and I had little expectation of fruits from our brief visit there; at that time, if you had asked us, we would have replied that Singapore was one of the least likely places where there would be any future positive fruits occasioned by our visit. But the Lord thought otherwise, and through what to us was a strange and unexpected series of events there is now a vital and thriving Reformed mission there and a highly interested and active group of young Reformed Christians who have made no little progress in understanding the Reformed faith and who show a tremendous and lively interest not only in their own growth in the faith but also in sharing

their faith with others and spreading abroad the truth of the gospel to others, wherever the opportunity presents itself. It stands to reason that during our stay there I was repeatedly struck by that sharp contrast between 1975 and 1980. I must confess that it was thrilling, and more than once I was moved to tears of joy and thanksgiving. What hath God wrought!

My second impression is concerning the Rev. den Hartog and his work there. Perhaps I should speak instead of a whole group of impressions, arranged here not in the order of importance but rather arbitrarily. We have all undoubtedly gained a number of impressions from his numerous and interesting reports in our *Standard Bearer*. But there is nothing like an objective evaluation from a third party. Living in their home and observing his work and his contacts, we were surely able to gain some firsthand and very definite impressions. One impression is that the Rev. den Hartog is indeed the right man for this work: he fits. And while he himself will tell you that he is constantly having new experiences yet, nevertheless in the time that he and his family have been there he has become well established in the field and is thoroughly at home in the work. He obviously has joy in his work, too. There is an air of excitement about him when he goes about the work and when he tells you of his experiences. Perhaps in a way this is natural and to be expected, seeing that this foreign mission work is entirely new to him. Yet it is real. When we were together, our conversation inevitably turned to the work and its various aspects and to anecdotes of his experiences and discussions of possibilities and future plans. We may indeed be thankful to God for having provided us with this missionary! Along with this, a second impression in this connection is that Pastor den Hartog is obviously loved and esteemed and trusted and confided in by the young Christians of the GLTS. They turn to him with their questions and their problems, whether these are questions concerning the truth or questions and problems of a more practical nature and regarding their lives. And the missionary-pastor's apartment-home is and must be always open to these young people, especially since they have no Christian homes to which they may turn and where they may

be visited. Mrs. den Hartog plays a part in this, too. In addition to the care of a busy family of little children, she must play the part of a gracious hostess to the young people. We found it to be literally true that there were visitors any time of the day, from morning to night. My third in this group of impressions concerns the living of the den Hartogs. I want to stress that I did not hear one word of complaint from them in this regard. Quite possibly they may even demur when I make mention of this. Nevertheless, we did have the opportunity to observe. And I trust that our Foreign Mission Committee and our next Synod will give due attention to this. But we must as churches take good care that the den Hartogs are well provided for abundantly. Daily living is tremendously expensive in Singapore, especially for those who want to maintain a modicum of a Western style of life. Food prices for very ordinary items—for example, such things as breakfast cereal or a head of lettuce—are fantastically high. I recall, for example, that when we were there a head of lettuce was \$4.70 Singapore, or about \$2.35 American money. We certainly must take care that along with all the unavoidable sacrifices which the den Hartogs must make, they do not have to pinch pennies when it comes to their everyday living.

My third impression also concerns Pastor den Hartog; but seeing that it directly concerns the work there, I will give it separate attention. That impression is that Rev. den Hartog is too busy. Viewed from another viewpoint: there is simply too much work there for one missionary. Again, this statement on my part is not occasioned by a single word of complaint on the part of brother den Hartog, though he was literally busy from morning to night. Our missionary did indeed mention to me repeatedly that there was simply too much work for one man. This was not, however, by way of complaint. It was rather by way of concern about the work and its accomplishment. In the nature of the case, most of Pastor den Hartog's work is with the young people of the GLTS. It must be. The primary goal is to instruct them and preach to them and assist them to become a Reformed congregation there. But there is such a large amount of work in this area alone that it is more than enough to keep our missionary busy. In the meantime, however, there is also the work of outreach from and beyond the GLTS itself. And as the GLTS

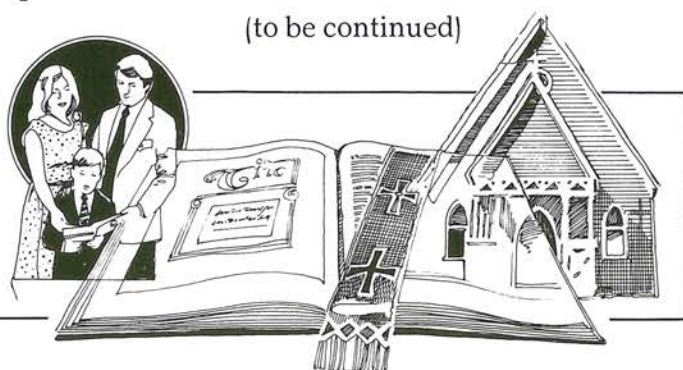
grows in the faith and also grows numerically, the drive and the impetus and the opportunities for outreach in Singapore itself and also beyond Singapore also grow. This is in the very nature of mission work on a foreign field. And it is the fact that there simply is not enough time and manpower to cope with the various opportunities for such outreach which concerns Rev. den Hartog—I would almost say "grieves him." He spoke of this again and again during our visit. And it is not too difficult to understand, I think, that it gnaws at a man to see all kinds of opportunities for expanding the work and not to be able to do justice to them.

The question is, of course: what is the solution? Our churches have thought of trying to have another man on the field as an assistant—possibly an elder or ex-elder, although personally I cannot see what being an elder or an ex-elder has to do with this, except, perhaps, from the viewpoint of abilities. After all, an elder in Grand Rapids Southeast, for example, is an elder only there, surely not in Singapore. But thus far we have not succeeded in providing such a man on an extended basis. Nor, by the way, is this everyone's work, even from the point of view of physical stamina and adjustment. Personally, I believe it would be best if we could send another missionary-pastor. This is true from many points of view. There is ample work for two, and much work that is strictly work for a missionary-pastor, not merely an assistant. I think, too, that two compatible missionaries would be of tremendous assistance to one another from the point of view of advice and consultation. It is simply a fact that there are many problems to be faced and decisions to be made on the mission field which at present our missionary must face all alone. How helpful it would be to have a co-laborer! Besides, the presence of two missionaries will serve to insure continuity of the work in case of furloughs or in case one minister leaves for another field of labor. Finally, to have two missionaries working together in a given field is, I believe, according to the Biblical pattern.

The practical questions are, of course, whether we can spare the manpower from the home front and whether our churches can meet the added expense of such a venture.

(to be continued)

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



THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

Missionary Methods (3)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

Continuing our study of the preaching of the Apostles we concentrate our attention on the second sermon of the Apostle Peter recorded in the Book of Acts. This sermon is recorded in chapter three verses twelve through twenty-six. (Since the passage is too lengthy to quote in its entirety the reader is asked to consult his Bible.) It is our thesis that the church in its mission work today must follow the same pattern laid down by the Apostolic Church. The church, also today, must preach the gospel, herald the good news, evangelize. In doing so the church must emulate the Apostolic pattern. Specifically this means that the church must preach the same gospel in the same way in which the Apostles preached. The Holy Spirit, we firmly believe, preserved these sermons so that the church of all ages might learn from them. They teach us, if we will but listen and learn, *how* to preach and *what* to preach, especially in the mission context.

The sermon was occasioned by a wonderful and well-known miracle. As was apparently their custom, Peter and John were on their way to the temple at "the hour of prayer" (vs. 1). As the Apostles approached the temple they encountered a man who had been lame (unable to walk) from birth lying near the gate of the temple called Beautiful. This lame man was brought daily to the temple where he asked alms of those who came to worship and to pray. When he saw Peter and John he asked alms of them. Peter, commanding the man to look at them, said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (vss. 5, 6). Peter then "took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God" (vss. 7, 8). He was really healed! He not only could stand for the first time in his life, and he not only could take a few tentative steps, but immediately after Peter had spoken he leaped to his feet and he continued walking and leaping and praising God! The effect of this miracle of healing on the people was instantaneous: they took note that this leaping man was he who sat daily asking alms at the temple and they

were filled with wonder and amazement (vss. 9-10). Soon a crowd gathered in Solomon's porch; all were greatly wondering (vs. 11).

When Peter saw the crowd he began preaching. It is obvious that the purpose of the miracle was to serve as an occasion for the preaching of the gospel. But before we examine the content of this sermon we ought to answer an objection that might be raised. It is conceivable that some may argue that this sermon cannot serve as a model for contemporary mission preaching because it is addressed to "children of the covenant." It is addressed to a Jewish audience. Of that there can be no question. It is also true, however, that these people, though they knew Jesus of Nazareth, had not yet believed on Him and in fact had crucified Him. If ever there were a potentially hostile audience it was here! Let us note how Peter "handles" them, the approach which he uses. We can learn much from this.

The main theme of the sermon is this: the miracle which they had just witnessed was a manifestation of the power of the resurrected Christ Whom they had crucified. This theme the Apostle drove home along the following lines. Peter denies that he and the Apostle John had healed the lame man by their own power. Why do you marvel at this and why do you look at us as if we had done this and made this man walk, Peter asks. Peter emphasizes that it was not on account of their holiness or power that the man was healed. The Apostle explains that God had glorified His Son Jesus, Whom they had delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate (vs. 13). The Apostle deliberately speaks of God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the covenant God, the ever faithful God of their fathers. One must be impressed with this emphasis. Just as he had done in his Pentecost sermon, the Apostle now proclaims the God of the covenant, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was God's power by which that man was made to walk, not man's. God brought glory to His Son Jesus through this miracle. It was all the work of God, the Sovereign One. This certainly is a key element, no, indispensable element of all proper preaching, also mission preaching. The missionary must, if he will be faithful to Christ Who sends him, preach God as

He is revealed in Jesus Christ in all of His sovereign power and glory. Those to whom the missionary is sent must be brought into a confrontation with the sovereign God in Christ through public preaching and private counsel. Missionary preaching as well as all preaching must be God-centered. It is precisely at this point that so much preaching, especially mission or evangelistic preaching is to be faulted. It is not so much that there is heresy being preached (though there is plenty of that too!) but much contemporary preaching on the mission fields fails to bring the people face to face with the Sovereign God in Christ of the Scriptures. Preaching, especially evangelistic preaching, concentrates on "a Jesus" who is sweet and lovely, who loves all men and wants to save all. In so doing, this preaching fails to bring people to come to terms with God in all His glory. It inevitably becomes man-centered. This runs contrary to the whole thrust of the Bible. In Scripture the first priority is not man and his salvation but God and His Christ and His glory. This is what mission preaching must proclaim.

The Apostle continues by pointing to the sin and guilt of the people. If one faithfully proclaims God in Christ he will necessarily preach sin. They denied the Christ before Pilate even when Pilate was determined to let Him go (vs. 13). They denied the Holy One and the Just and desired a murderer instead. They killed the Prince of Life (vss. 14, 15). All this they did in spiritual ignorance (vs. 17). Peter declared that God raised Christ from the dead. Note that emphasis once more. God did that! God raised Christ from the dead! "And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all," says Peter (vss. 15, 16). Peter explains that all the things concerning the suffering and glorification of Christ were the fulfillment of what the prophets had foretold. In other words Peter emphasizes that Scripture had been fulfilled by Christ. They have no excuse for their sin (vs. 18).

What does all this mean? It means they must repent of their sins and be converted: "that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you: Whom heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (vss. 19-21). The Apostle concludes by pointing to Moses' prophecy concerning Christ as a Prophet Whom they must hear. Those who do not hear Christ the Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people. Not only that but all the prophets from Samuel on had spoken of

these days (vss. 19-24). Finally, Peter reminds them that they are the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with the fathers. The Apostle emphasizes that God sent the gospel of Jesus Christ Whom He raised from the dead to them first of all (vss. 25, 26).

As is the case with the Pentecost sermon, so also in this sermon the one element which most people, even in Reformed circles, claim to be essential to preaching generally and to mission preaching especially, viz., "the free or well-meant offer," is missing. If the "offer" is so crucial that some go so far as to claim that the Protestant Reformed Churches are not able to preach from their pulpits and certainly are not able to preach in a mission context, why do we not find an offer either in this sermon or the Pentecost sermon of the Apostle Peter? There simply is no "well-meant offer" of the gospel. The whole idea is foreign to Scripture. Using not one but two imperatives the Apostle by virtue of his holy office commanded them to "repent and be converted" (vs. 19). Peter preached no offers. He confronted that multitude with the promise and command of the gospel. He brought them before their obligation. Christ is not to be accepted or rejected, He must be believed and served! God must be worshipped and praised as He is revealed in Jesus according to the Scriptures. This is not an option for man. It is a must. All who refuse perish. All who believe, "by grace through faith, the gift of God," are saved (Ephesians 2:8). Peter proclaimed the sovereignty of Almighty God and the sovereignty of His grace in Christ Jesus.

And the fruit? Many opposed the gospel in unbelief (4:1, 2). The leaders put Peter and John in prison (4:3). But many believed. The number of the men which believed was about five thousand (4:4). God gave a tremendous increase. That is always the fruit of the pure preaching of the Word of God. Where the Word is preached in all of its truth and power the thoughts and intents of the hearts of men are revealed. The elect are converted and brought to faith in Christ. The rest are hardened and they stand condemned, for they reject the Lord's Christ. In both God is well pleased. In both the Church of Christ triumphs (II Corinthians 2:14-17).

May God grant the missionaries and preachers of His Church the grace to preach that gospel of sovereign grace faithfully and to the glory of His Name.

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

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Lacking the Power of Godliness

Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

It is always a matter of extreme importance for us to watch for the various occurrences which give rise to the antichrist. Because of our busy everyday lives we all too often become oblivious to the many signs which surround us. Not only are these signs prevalent in the world "out there," as we have noted in the articles which have dealt with the rise of cults and the chaos of wars, but upon close examination we find Satan works hard (perhaps the hardest) *in our own churches* in order that when antichrist does appear we too might be deceived and unite with him. Such was the idea in the article which was concerned with spiritual illiteracy in our churches (have you read a good, spiritual book since then?). Such also is the idea of this article.

There seems to be, on the part of many, an increasing confusion in distinguishing between a life of godliness and merely a good, outward moral deportment. Many today are beginning to say that they are one and the same: godliness is good moral behavior and good moral behavior is godliness. These contend, for example, that if in their lives they refrain from such things as drinking too much, theater attendance, birth control, or abortion then they are also leading a life of godliness. At the same time they would claim that godliness is regular church, catechism, and society attendance, as well as such things as giving freely, being friendly to all, and so on. Now, it can very well be true that all of these things are a matter of godliness in a person's life. That cannot be denied. Nevertheless, it is also true, and many times it is the case, that all of these exercises in good moral behavior are nothing more than that. They are *not* a matter of godliness.

To clarify this entire matter it is necessary to understand what is really meant by godliness and, on the other hand, good moral deportment.

In I Timothy 6:11 we find godliness among the fruits of the Spirit: "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." From this it is evident that the life of *the man of God alone* can be characterized by godliness. It is a fruit which becomes manifest in his life because of the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart. The reprobate man is

void of this fruit. This is why he is oftentimes referred to by us as the ungodly. Godliness, therefore, speaks of one's relationship to God. The godly man is one who possesses a deep respect for God. He is one who beholds with awe and reverence this mighty Creator of heaven and earth, who loves Him and places all his trust in Him, and who will give everything just to stand before Him in humble adoration. The result of this attitude of deep respect toward God in that child of God's heart is that he will delight in all that God commands him in His Word. That is true godliness—conduct which is in harmony with what God commands us because we so deeply respect and love God. If we were to ask one whose walk is characterized by godliness the question, why do you refrain from drinking too much and why do you feel the necessity of attending church, his answer would without a doubt be: I want to! If I would not do these things in my life I would be living contrary to what my God commands me and that is sin! And I hate sin because it offends the very God Whom I love and respect so deeply! It is evident that this attitude of deep respect and piety towards God, this *power* of godliness, manifests itself in the walk and conduct of the believer. It so works in him that in his life he brings forth good works; and these good works include leading a morally good life. We find, then, that good moral deportment in his life flows out of that power of godliness.

But a mere outward life of good morality does not *always* imply the power of godliness in a person's life. To be morally good means that one in his walk and conduct conforms to a standard of right behavior. This definition, however, speaks nothing of the attitude of one's heart. It speaks only of conforming one's behavior to a set of laws or to a standard which is just and right. That can be done irrespective of one's attitude or relationship to God. Oftentimes the ungodly neighbor who has no love or respect toward God can seem to lead a very good moral life. He will not break the laws of the land, neither will he depart from the way of strict asceticism in his life. That, however, is not really godliness. There are those also within the church insti-

tute who feel that if they conform to the outward behavior which the church requires of them, then their lives are characterized by godliness. They think to themselves: The church tells me I must refrain from over-indulgence in the lusts of this world, so I must do that. The church requires that I regularly attend the Sunday services, that I give to the poor, and that I make public confession of my sin when I violate such commandments as the seventh commandment. Since these are what I am required to do to be a good Christian, I will keep them. Here, of course, is an example of leading an outward life of good behavior—leading a life of good morals but not doing so out of a deep love and respect for God. That is *not* godliness. That is good moral behavior, a behavior which from all outward appearances seems godly but in fact is void of the work of the Holy Spirit and grace.

Paul tells Timothy, in II Timothy 3:1-5, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves,... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof*: from such turn away." Those who have only a good moral deportment are those who have, in Paul's words, only a *form* of godliness. These, however, deny the very power of godliness, that is to say, they do not have *true* godliness which is a result of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Religion is just an outward show to them. It is not really a conviction of the heart.

This manifests itself in the church in two ways. On the one hand there are those who rigorously attempt to keep the positions of the church (the churches position on the law of God) to the crossing of a "t" and the dotting of an "i". In fact, they become quite upset when they find that the church has not taken an official stand on some aspect of one's outward moral deportment. Because of their attitude they become very judgmental of their fellow saints. They no longer trust anyone. They feel that they alone are keeping the faith with rigor, and almost everyone else falls short of them. These also feel that the preaching must emphasize more one's practical life and less of the doctrines of salvation.

On the other extreme, those who have but a form of godliness in their lives begin to stretch the law of liberty for an occasion for the flesh. Since the church does not have law upon law and precept upon precept they feel that they may do as they please. All they have to do is keep the basic positions (laws) of the church and for the rest eat, drink, and be merry. These, for example, realize that to be caught in a movie theater would mean discipline by the church since it violates the antithesis between church and world, but at the same time they know

that the church does not discipline one if he watches the same movies on TV. So they use their Christian liberty for an occasion for the flesh; yet at the same time have a false sense of security for they have kept what the church has required of them. And what is their feeling about the preaching? They too do not like to hear the doctrines of salvation. The doctrines of Scripture really do not apply to them; in fact, they all too often condemn them. They feel also that the preaching should be directed toward their moral lives and conduct.

But the question is: how does this lead to the development of the antichrist?

Slowly but surely within the church of Christ those who are characterized by godliness in their lives become the minority. Why? Because those who have the form of godliness are beyond discipline. They keep the law of God as far as externals are concerned. But their hearts are far from God! How difficult for a consistory to discipline one whose outward moral behavior stands in harmony with God's law as far as they can detect but whose heart is far from Him! In fact, mere man cannot judge the heart! When finally those who have the form of godliness but who deny the power of it are in the majority, the church begins to fall as a church of Jesus Christ. Men who are interested only in the outward moral behavior of the people in the congregation become consistory members and ministers. These no longer concern themselves with promoting godliness because they do not know what it is. Now from the pulpit are heard little moral homilies on the people's conduct. Sermons entitled, "Competition and Good Sportsmanship", or "Our Involvement in Politics," take the place of preaching the doctrines of salvation. The church becomes a social institution which is concerned with people's morals rather than with godliness. It becomes her duty socially to rehabilitate the downtrodden. It becomes her duty to restore morality to this country. It no longer is her duty to preach Christ crucified, which preaching alone can work godliness in the heart of a child of God.

These institutions of the Church which have already reached this point fail to realize that it is impossible to control the outward moral deportment of its members if those members have no power of godliness in their lives. Their lives will degenerate until they are really no different from the ungodly world about them! They are only empty shells! That too is why one can see the immorality of this reprobate world creeping into such situations.

But the point is, all the various institutions (and there are many) which have followed this route have now the same aims and goals—to improve this

world socially and morally. That will be the very aim of the antichrist. How easily he will be able to attract all these institutions which are different in name only. We already see evidence of that today.

Are we as churches following in this same way? Paul once again addresses us in I Timothy 4, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy. . . forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats. . . But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself

rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. . . Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." We must see to it that our obedience to the law of God and the doctrines of our churches flows out of a heart that longs after the living God! Only then will our lives be characterized by godliness! Only then will we stand over against the antichrist!

Report From Singapore

Rev. Arie Den Hartog

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ:

Greetings in the name of our blessed God and Savior Jesus Christ upon Whom we rely entirely and in Whose service we stand. Many of the readers of the *Standard Bearer* have expressed special appreciation for the news articles we have written on Singapore. We are happy and thankful for the interest in our work that this evidences. We are thankful also for all of the many prayers that are offered on our behalf. We are thankful that our work continues to prosper under the blessing of the Lord. We witness the Lord building His Church by His mighty and wonderful power. To Him alone belongs all the glory.

Though we have written to you several reports of our work in Singapore it seems that there are always enough new things to tell. There are always many exciting things going on. Day after day our lives are filled with activities. Our home is constantly the center of meetings and visits of members of the G.L.T.S. Many weeks there is a meeting at our home almost every evening of the week as well as several on the Lord's Day. Our supper table is also often shared with guests.

Let me report to you on what we presently consider the three most exciting meetings, besides of course the worship services on the Lord's Day. All of these meetings take place on the Lord's Day. Early in the morning of the Lord's Day we have five Sunday School classes. Your missionary teaches one of these classes. We give instruction in the Old Testament. Each Lord's Day we study one chapter of the book of Genesis. Attendance at our class alone is usually about thirty. There is especially a

great keenness for the study of the Old Testament. For most of the members this is all very new. They are eager to learn the truths of the covenant and of the wonderful works of the Lord in days of old.

The second of these classes is our new pre-baptism class. This is now the third of this kind of classes that have been held since our coming. We rejoice to see seven people in regular attendance. As we have told you before, it is especially exciting to teach this class because it usually involves teaching the first principles of the Christian Faith to new saints who have never before heard them. It is a rare joy and blessing to see these youthful saints grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The third of these classes is what is called the commission meeting. The commission is composed of a group of the leaders of the G.L.T.S. who will, the Lord willing, become the office bearers of the Church. The chief task of this commission is to study our Three Forms of Unity for their eventual adoption as the creedal basis of the newly organized church. What is especially encouraging about these meetings is the fact that many besides the members of the commission attend these sessions. In fact, these meetings are probably the best attended meetings in the G.L.T.S. This fact alone is an indication of the interest in the study of the Creeds. Presently we are studying our Belgic Confession. We had originally hoped to finish this study in a few months. It is evident however that this is quite impossible. There is so much discussion at the meetings that we are progressing quite slowly. Because of the need for instruction in all of

the doctrines of the Christian Faith as contained in our creeds we are convinced that going slowly is absolutely necessary. There is a great desire to know and understand. In our last two meetings we discussed the doctrine of the Trinity as it is taught in Articles VIII and IX of the confession. This doctrine, as you know, is a very difficult one. One would not normally expect, however, to spend two long sessions discussing this subject. Yet, because of the great desire to know and understand the truth of the Trinity and to see its significance for the Christian Faith, it was necessary to have two class periods. Each of the classes last two hours. We wish that all of our Protestant Reformed people could sit in on some of these meetings and experience their excitement.

We have also been busy again making the preparations for our coming June Camp Retreat. We have told you about these camps before in previous articles. The theme that was chosen for this year's camp is a truly beautiful and significant one: "I Love Thy Kingdom Lord." Your missionary has again been asked to give five messages on this theme. This camp will be held at a seaside resort in Malaysia or Singapore.

We have told you before about how the leaders of the G.L.T.S. take part in the work of the church. These brothers essentially do the work of the office bearers in the church. We see these brethren growing rapidly as the Lord is equipping them for the offices. More and more of the pastoral work is being done by the leaders, and much of this is being done very well. Attendance at the worship services is carefully supervised. New visitors who have attended several meetings are usually visited by two of the leaders. Members who are absent from the worship services for several times are also visited and encouraged and admonished as necessary. Those who have problems and are in distress are visited and counseled. We have also been working on preparing the leaders for the diaconal ministry. Because of the poverty of some of the members of the G.L.T.S. we are really in immediate need of the ministry of mercy. We experience more and more how essential the work of the office bearers is. Often we in our established churches take all this so much for granted.

We want to bring to you two great needs of the mission field in Singapore. The greatest need is to be organized and instituted as the church of Jesus Christ. We long for this to take place absolutely as soon as possible. The second great need remains the obtaining of a new place for our worship services. We have been seriously considering a very suitable building that could be used both for a pastor's residence and a church building. The price of this place is more reasonable than any we have

looked at thus far. However, the price is still very high in relation to our available funds. It is evident that the members of the G.L.T.S. are ready to make very great monetary sacrifices for a church building. This is especially true in light of the very low incomes that these young people receive by comparison to Western standards. Even with such large sacrifices we cannot however come near to the total needed to purchase the property under consideration. It is proving very difficult to make a loan from the bank. To appreciate the greatness of this problem one must know the housing situation in overcrowded Singapore. One does not just go down the street and rent a hall for worship services like we can often do in the U.S. This is very difficult if not impossible. We are waiting for the day when we shall be evicted from our present place of worship, because this kampong is going to be demolished to make room for urban redevelopment. We have learned by experience that this can happen within one month's notice. Humanly speaking, at this point, if this should happen we would be left entirely without a meeting place. We trust however that the Lord will provide this for us also. We ask you to remember this in your prayers.

We had a very unique opportunity to visit some of the homes of our members just recently. During the celebration of the Chinese New Year, which takes place in February, it is custom to go visiting to friends and relatives. Most of the homes are very open to receiving visitors during this time of the year. Even Western people and Christians are received into the home. We visited altogether ten different homes. This gave us a new appreciation of the circumstances under which our members live. Many live in conditions that by our standards would be abject poverty. None live in beautiful, spacious homes like we do in the U.S. All of the homes we visited were very evidently pagan, and we saw many idols and shrines to heathen gods. Some of our members live in very cramped quarters with many other members of larger families. Many do not have rooms to themselves, and it is easy to see how very difficult it would be to find a private place to read and study the Word of God. The only opportunity that some of the members have for this is very late at night or early in the morning when the rest of the members of the family are sleeping. What an amazing thing it is that our God has called these young people unto Himself out of these pagan homes. Because of the financial hardships of the families many of our young people must give a large part of the salaries they earn to support their families. Family allegiance is strong, a thing which is commendable. However, this makes all the more difficult the break that is necessary for the Christians to make

from their families. Our visits left us again with the overwhelming impression of how greatly blessed we are with material abundance in the U.S. At the same time, the blessing of the Lord is not bound up with abundance of possessions.

Our God continues to supply all our needs, not only through our regular support from the churches but also through special love gifts from our denomination and from the members of the G.L.T.S. Thanks be unto the Lord.

ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

The Evil of Abortions

One hears of the growing murders in abortion. The figures given are almost unbelievable. The Christian News reports of this in its March 16, 1981 issue:

Legal abortions in the United States totaled an estimated 1.5 million in 1979—a new record, reports the Planned Parenthood-affiliated Alan Guttmacher Institute.

The new total represented 30.2 abortions per 1,000 women of reproductive age. In 1978, some 1.4 million abortions were performed in 2,753 abortion facilities across the nation, a level of 28.2 abortions per 1,000 women.

In both years, about 30 percent of women who became pregnant chose to end their pregnancy by abortion. Some 31 percent of all abortions were obtained by teen-agers, who represent 18 percent of sexually active women of childbearing age.

Guttmacher researchers said their figures reflected reported abortions. Actual totals may be higher—perhaps 1.5 million in 1978 and 1.6 million in 1979, they said.

Since 1967, when the first states liberalized abortion laws, about 7.4 million women have obtained some 9.4 million legal abortions, the report said. "Since 1967, 15 percent of women of reproductive age have had legal abortions." Abortions became legal nationally with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling.

The figures are shocking. No wonder so many Christians are greatly concerned. All of this evil has an inevitable effect on man's attitude toward human life in general. Many doctors also are deeply concerned—some for spiritual reasons and perhaps some for other reasons. The *Christian News* of January 26, 1981 reproduces an advertisement which appeared in the Jan. 22, 1981 issue of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. The ad was signed by hundreds of doctors and began: "Jan. 22, 1973 - Jan. 22, 1981. In Memoriam - VIII; 'Respect for Human Life.' " The ad contained three brief statements: "Did you know that...all medical facts indicate human life begins at conception (and) the supreme court abortion decision allows abortions during the entire nine months of pregnancy—from conception right up to birth." They also quote from the declaration of Geneva—1948: "...I will maintain the utmost respect for human life, from the time of conception; even under threat, I will not use my medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity."

One hears of the growing crime rate in our country—but there can hardly be a greater crime than the legalized murder which still continues.

One Against the Union

Many states allow, and many businesses have approved, compulsory union membership, sometimes called the "closed shop." This is, of course, grossly unfair and contrary to the constitution of the United States which allows for freedom of religion. When some, for religious reasons, refuse to join the union, these have usually lost their

jobs. Yet there is on record in Michigan at least one case where an individual refused to join the union or pay dues—and kept her job. A report of this is given in the *Newsletter* of the Michigan Right to Work Association, December 1980. The report states:

In the spring of 1968, Carol Applegate faced a difficult choice.

She had been a professional educator for almost 20 years, and for the past 16 years, a voluntary member of the Grand Blanc Education Association (GBEA).

In recent years, however, Mrs. Applegate had noticed that GBEA officials, like their counterparts in the National Education Association (NEA-union), had abandoned selling unionism on its merits. Instead they had adopted the "rule or ruin" ideology of compulsory unionism.

Deeply troubled by the threat to academic freedom posed by forced unionism, Carol Applegate, after much thought and prayer, resigned from the GBEA.

"My decision not to belong to the union," Mrs. Applegate recalls, "was done as a very personal, private, quiet protest against what I considered to be unprofessional actions of the association."

And a quiet protest it would have remained, had not GBEA-union officials determined to quash the principle of free choice in the Grand Blanc education community.

So in September of 1968, the Grand Blanc Board of Education and the local NEA-union hierarchy struck a deal adding a compulsory "agency shop" clause to the teachers' contracts.

As a result, Carol Applegate, along with every other teacher who had chosen not to join the so-called "association," was forced to pay dues to the unwanted union.

Though well aware of the forces against her, Mrs. Applegate steadfastly refused to meet the compulsory dues demands of the GBEA-union officials.

"In all the time I have been a teacher," she later

said, "I have never had to answer to anyone except the people of the community through their elected representatives.

"I was not going to suddenly, at this point in my career, pay tribute to a private organization in order to teach in the public schools, especially when I disagreed with many of the tactics and practices of that organization."

The union officials quickly made it clear they would not tolerate such a challenge to their monopoly power. They demanded that the highly respected and highly competent school-teacher be fired from her job. And as so often happens, the school board caved in to the union bosses' demands.

Carol Applegate, however had other ideas. The school board may have broken, but she hadn't even bent.

With the aid of the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, Mrs. Applegate took her case, first to the Michigan Tenure Commission, and then to the Michigan state courts.

"I vowed to test in any way possible the validity of a system that demands, 'You either pay dues to the teacher union or you will be fired.' I did this because I could not in good conscience stand before my classes and say 'think' when I was being denied the right to think myself," said Mrs. Applegate.

The end of the case was that Mrs. Applegate won. She is still teaching. She withstood the union successfully. I have often wondered if we ought not also to use the laws of our land to insist on our constitutional right of freedom of religion in connection with work in "closed" shops.

Pornographic Music

The *Christian News*, Feb. 23, 1981, quotes an article which warns against the corrupt popular music which is being presented over radio today. The article states:

Where are the strongest influences on our morals today? Time-wise it's no contest! By age 18 the average teen has been exposed to approximately: 20,000 hours of radio; 18,000 hours of T.V.; 11,000 hours of school; 1,000 hours (or less) of Sunday School.

The Christian people of America seem to give attention to these influences in the opposite proportion to their effect.

It is important to check every work of our new hymnal for the implications words might contain, but it is equally important to start checking the words of

the songs our youth hear an average of 3½ hours a day.

The article continues by pointing out some of the corruption which is heard in the songs commonly played on some radio stations. It gives rather shocking examples of words which are clearly pornographic. The article points out that these songs are often far more explicit than the quotes indicate—for the worst of the words the author considers far too shocking even to print. The author then states:

The morals and philosophy of tomorrow's adults are being molded more by today's music than by any other single force. Our youth are struggling to establish their own identity and solidify the principles

that will guide their life and family style. We are all vulnerable to pressures of friends or "would be" friends and hero figures.

Parents, we ought to give constant thought and care concerning what our children hear. Often, it is true, our children spend more time with radio and

television than with Christian school instruction. When the radio and television present purely worldly entertainment, what kind of effect must this surely have on the spiritual lives of the children? Far more damage is being done than we sometimes are willing to admit.

That Third Option for Women Deacons

The Christian Reformed Church contemplates what action their Synod of 1981 will take with respect to women serving as deacons. Two years ago the earlier decision allowing women to serve in the office of deacon was suspended. This coming June the Synod must consider once more what to do. In the *Calvinist Contact*, Feb. 27, 1981, Keith Knight proposes three possibilities: refuse to allow women into the office; or, allow women to serve as deacons (which he admits might cause a split in the C.R.C.); or, leave the matter to the individual congregations. Of the latter, he writes:

The local congregation still has the final authority. Synod exists only 10 days but the congregation conceivably lasts for generations.

Synod would be wise to let each congregation make up its own mind with respect to opening up the office

of deacon to women. That, after all, is where ecclesiastical authority lays. Such a decision must ultimately be dealt with at the congregational level anyway.

That last proposal might be the one adopted. As the author pointed out, the synod did this back in 1957 when it allowed individual congregations to permit women to vote in congregational meetings.

However, this "solution" can only create further divisions in an already grievously divided denomination. If this were done with the office of deacon, what of that of elder and minister? Would this also be decided on the local level? It does not take much imagination to know what kind of problems would then arise in the churches. Rather, the churches ought to abide by the clear teachings of Scripture—and the question would be quickly and easily solved.

FROM HOLY WRIT

The So-called Postmillennial Proof-Texts

by Rev. G. Lubbers

GOD ALL IN ALL IN HIS GLORIFIED SON

Chapter 5

We are interested to learn from the Scriptures whether the kingdom of the Son of God is eternal according to the plain teaching of Scripture or not. In this chapter we will try to understand the sense and import of the Scriptural teaching that "the Son is subjected unto Him that put all things under Him, in order that God may be all in all" (I Cor. 15:28).

How must this Scripture from the inspired pen of Paul be understood?

Does this mean that in being subjected to the Father, the Son is dethroned, defrocked of His kingship? In the light of our findings in the former chapter, that can hardly be. For the "delivering up" of the kingdom to the Father was an official act of the Mediator. He had finished the work in history of this present time.

But what about the "ages to come" of which the Scriptures speak?

Is it so that Christ's Mediatorship is merely a means and an agency to an end; that when the end is attained, when history has arrived to the "con-

summation of the ages," this agency falls away; that Christ has, after all, but a temporal mediatorship wherein He is Prophet, Priest, and King in His church and kingdom? Is that the plain and unequivocal teaching of the Bible? Is it true that the Messiah's work in the history of the world does not find its *perfection* in glory after all? Does the fact that Christ is perfected, according to the teaching of the writer to the *Hebrews*, refer only to *temporal* glorification at God's right hand, as the very expressed image of His being, the effulgence of God's glory, far above the glory of the angels (*Hebrews* 1:3, 4)? When God begets His Son as the Firstborn out of the dead, through His death and resurrection, ascension and glorification, is it true that He is then *not* "perfected" in the eternal state, when the tabernacle of God shall be with man? Is it true that the new heaven and the new earth are not a part of the eternal state at all, neither is the tabernacle of God with man in eternity, in the city foursquare, in the new Jerusalem (*Rev.* 21:3)? Does this new Jerusalem and this new heaven and this new earth belong to the "golden age" of the Gospel prior to Christ's coming to judge the living and the dead? Is the covenant of God really not eternal as seems to be the obvious implication of *Hebrews* 8:8-12? Did Jeremiah *not* write this prophetic word concerning the New Covenant viewing the eternal state of things, as this has its firstfruits here in the New Testament (*Jer.* 31:31-34)?

But is that really the teaching and implication of "that God be all in all" and the "subjecting of the Son unto Himself" in *I Corinthians* 15:28?

Let us try to see that "God is all in all" in and through Christ even now already in the church, as she is the fulness of the Christ who "fills all in all" (*Eph.* 1:23). The church, the body of Christ, is the fulness of Christ, Who fills all in all. And in this present Dispensation of the fulness of times, when God is putting all things in heaven and on earth under one Head (*Eph.* 1:10), according to His eternal good-pleasure, Christ is the Son, in Whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily (*Col.* 2:9, 10). In this church, which are the Kingdom-citizens of God (*Matt.* 5:3; *Phil.* 3:20, 21), the Father is "one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all and in you all." And this fulness of Christ in the church is brought about by Christ in the gifts of the offices in the New Testament Church, till we all come to the perfect man, the one new man in Christ, the last Adam (*Eph.* 2:15; *I. Cor.* 15:44-49; *Eph.* 4:7-16).

God is all in all now, too, in the church and in His Kingdom. He is this in the Son, His beloved Son, in Whom is all His good-pleasure. But God will be "all in all" in very much greater degree after the Son of man delivers the kingdom to God. In the

eternal state God will be manifested and revealed in great splendor and glory. That all is now "not yet." We do not yet see Jesus crowned with glory and honor in that ultimate glory. We do not yet see that all things are subjected unto Him. *Psalm* 8 is not yet fully fulfilled in the last Adam. That will be in "the coming age." *Hebrews* 2:5 says that it is of that "world" (inhabited world = *oikoumene*) that he is speaking here in *Hebrews* 1 and 2. Into that *inhabited* world God brought His firstborn Son, where all the angels of God must worship Him (*Hebrews* 1:6; *Ps.* 97:7). That is ultimately, therefore, the eternal state. In that eternal state, where the Son shall be fully glorified as the Lord out of heaven, the last Adam, God shall be all in all. That is the eternal Kingdom; that is the church perfected; that is the tabernacle of God with man (*Heb.* 11:40; *Rev.* 21:3).

When *I Corinthians* 15:28 speaks of "God all in all" it refers to a new dimension of the glory of God in the incarnate Son glorified in His church. All that is Christ's humanity stands so in the light of the glory of the divine Son, that we see in this Son the fulness of the Godhead bodily, that we see Him as "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, the Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to Whom be honor and power everlasting" (*I Tim.* 6:15, 16). Here we will see fulfilled in the highest degree: "he that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father" (*John* 14:9). Again, "I am in the Father and the Father in Me" (*John* 14:10). Here will be manifested, "...glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory, which I had with Thee before the world was" (*John* 17:5). And, once more, here we shall see the fulfilment of the Sacerdotal prayer of the King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek, "that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world" (*John* 17:24). Here is the end of the golden chain: "whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (*Rom.* 8:30). And this glorification of the Kingdom-citizens is in their King, Whom they greet: Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord, Hosanna in the Highest!

Calvin writes in his commentary on *I Corinthians* 15 concerning this "God all in all" as follows:

"But Christ will then hand back the kingdom which He had received, so that we may completely cleave to God. This does not mean that He will abdicate from the Kingdom in this way, but will transfer it in some way or other (*quodammodo*) from His humanity to His glorious divinity, because then there will be open for

us a way of approach, from which we are now kept back by our weakness. In this way, therefore, Christ will be subjected to the Father, because, when the veil has been removed, we will see God plainly, reigning in His majesty, and the humanity of Christ will no longer be in between us to hold us back from a nearer vision of God." I Cor. 15:27

"...it will not be out of place if this phrase be taken as referring to believers only, in whom God has already begun His Kingdom, and will bring it to completion, and in such a way they will all cleave to Him entirely."

"...some imagine that God will be all in all in the sense that everything will vanish, and dissolve into nothingness. But the only meaning that the words of Paul bear is that all things must be restored to God as their one and only beginning and end, so that they may be bound closely to Him."

Commentary on Verse 28.

Yes, God will then be manifested in all the glory of His majesty, holiness, and grace in the Church, in His Kingdom of glory, as the all in all. That was evidently wholly impossible in the Old Testament Dispensation of the shadows. Think of the glory of God revealed in the Tabernacle in the wilderness as spoken of in Exodus 40:24. It is the same glory as was revealed in the mount of Horeb, which caused Israel to tremble and fear, and which even caused Moses the law-giver to say: "I exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb. 12:21). For we read concerning this presence of the Lord that "then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle." What a glory in which God shows that He is all in all. But this is glory which must be beheld from afar, even by Moses who speaks with God, not as a common prophet in visions, but mouth to mouth!

Again in the dedication of the temple of Solomon we read, "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of

the LORD" (I Kings 8:10, 11; II Chron. 5:13, 14). Yes, God was all in all, but not in a form in which men could dwell in His tabernacle. They could not be near to the glory of the LORD.

But now already in principle we can dwell in God's house, by the new and living way, the blood-sprinkled way, the new and living way into His temple (Heb. 10:19-22). Still we do not yet see that glory manifested in His temple, the church of the living God. That will be in the last Day, in the great Parousia of Christ. Then we shall be like God, partakers of the divine nature, conformed to His image; then we shall no more see in a glass darkly, but shall be changed from glory unto glory as by the Spirit of the risen Lord. We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is (I John 3:2; II Cor. 3:17, 18). Yes, now we know in part, but then shall we know even as we are known; now we see in a glass darkly, but then face to face—in the face of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 13:12). This is for all the pure in heart, who shall see God in blessed covenant fellowship, in His tabernacle forever. No, this will not be in an earthly sanctuary, but it will be in that church of the living God, the dwelling-place of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:21, 22; Rev. 21:22, 23). Truly the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

Such is the beautiful and comforting prospect of the future glory, in which "God is all in all."

What a far cry this is from the presentation of Postmillennial writers, who will not that Christ shall be the King of the Kingdom in glory. In our next chapter we will try to show a bit in depth that the united testimony of all the Scriptures, both in the Old and New Testaments, is that God's kingdom of heaven is eternal in Christ Jesus the glorified Christ, in Whom God is indeed all in all.

Those who deny the eternity of God's Kingdom in Christ, in the ages to come, do so to sustain their "theory" of the "golden age" of the universal kingdom of Christ on earth, prior to Christ's final return with the clouds of heaven. Only tendency exegesis, which fails to interpret Scripture with Scripture, will aid them for a plausible foundation and support for their theory, which they denominate "Eschatology of Victory."

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

Evangelism and the Reformed Faith (4)

David Engelsma

The Method of Reformed Evangelism

Just as it has its own message of evangelism, the

Reformed Faith has its own method of evangelism: the Biblical method of preaching and teaching. The

proper, effective method of evangelism is prescribed by Holy Scripture. No more than the Church may invent her own message may she invent her own method. She is bound by the commandment of the Bible. Christ determined the method in Luke 24:47, when He told the disciples, "...repentance and remission of sins should be *preached* in His Name among all nations." According to Mark 16:15, the Lord charged His Church in these words, "Go ye into all the world, and *preach the gospel* to every creature." To this method, and this method only, is attached the promise that there will be the fruit of those who believe and are saved (vs. 16). This is the pattern of the ministry of the apostles, set forth by Paul in the first verse of I Corinthians 2: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, *declaring unto you the testimony of God.*"

The method of evangelism is not stirring music; puppet-shows; testimonies by worldly celebrities; performances by worldly artists; or dramatic productions. Nor is it the eloquence, charisma, dynamic personality, flamboyance, persuasiveness, or enticing words of the evangelist. Jesus Christ is disgraced today by the gospel-rock (sic!), immodest Hollywood starlets, and Sabbath-desecrating athletes that are used to promote the gospel. Jesus Christ is all but lost sight of behind the big-name ecclesiastical showmen who claim to preach Him. It surprises us not at all that it is continually being disclosed that these evangelistic enterprises are money-making schemes for the personal enrichment of the evangelists and their families. These are the gospel-hucksters (II Cor. 2:17), those who make merchandise of the Church through covetousness (II Pet. 2:3).

It has pleased God to call His people to salvation by the foolishness of preaching (I Cor. 1:21). Preaching is the announcing of the gospel by a man (I use the masculine gender deliberately here) called and sent by Christ through the Church; it is official, authoritative proclamation. In Luke 24, Jesus sends the apostles out; and He sends them "in His name" (vs. 47). Romans 10:15 lays down the rule when it asks, "And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" There are no longer evangelists in the New Testament sense. That office was temporary, like the apostolic office. Evangelism is done today by ordained ministers set apart for the work of going with the gospel to those outside the established Church: our missionaries. The reason for this is that Christ Himself gathers the Church. He has revealed in Scripture that He does His work through the preaching of God's Word, which preaching belongs to the *office* in the Church.

Evangelism, or missions, therefore, is the work of the Church. It is the Church, the instituted

Church, that preaches the Word. This is the Biblical pattern: the congregation at Antioch, Syria sent out Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey and supervised their work (cf. Acts 13:1-4; Acts 14:26,27). Evangelism is not to be done by societies and para-ecclesiastical organizations. They have no authority. They have no power—they lack the office of preaching.

But does not every saint have the duty to evangelize? Is not every child of God a missionary? Emphatically not! It is un-Biblical to hold that every believer may and must evangelize. This is to maintain that every saint can and must preach the gospel. Where in Scripture is this authority given to every believer? Where in the practical parts of the New Testament epistles is this made the responsibility of every Christian? The notion that every member of the church is a missionary destroys the fundamental truth of the office in the church. Most pernicious of all is the utterly reckless act of putting this awesome burden on the shoulders of our teenage children, who, altogether apart from the matter of office, ought not to be teaching, but learning the Word of God.

This is not to say that the believer should not witness to the truth as he has opportunity; he should—this belongs to the office of believer (I Pet. 3:15). Let us not forget, however, that we witness, not only with our mouths, but also—and very powerfully—with our behavior. By our godly conduct, others may be gained to Christ (Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 86).

Nor do we intend, by denying that every believer is an evangelist, to exclude the saints from the great work of evangelism. How could this be? Evangelism is the work of the Church; and the saints are the Church. Although the instrument of evangelism is the man called to be missionary, it is the Church, the body of believers and their children instituted in the offices of elder and deacon, that is doing the work through him. Just as the body speaks by means of its tongue (you do not say, "My tongue is speaking," but you say, "I am speaking"), so does the congregation of saints evangelize through the missionary. Missions is not the work of the missionary; it is the work of the people of God.

The saints are active in this labor of the Church. They pray for the work of missions. This is the co-operation Paul asked of the believers: "...brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified" (II Thess. 3:1). They support the work financially. Paul praises the Philippians for helping him in his material need: "ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction" (Phil. 4:14).

Not least, the people of God are to live with each other in the church in such a way that the Spirit will bless their witness outside the church. It is striking, in the book of Acts, that the Church grew as it lived in faithfulness to the doctrine of the apostles; in zealous worship of God; and in peace among themselves. Where there is heresy, disinterest in spiritual things, carnality, worldliness, immorality, hatred, strife, and division, evangelism cannot be expected to prosper. For the Holy Spirit cannot be expected to bless our labor; and evangelism depends wholly upon the Spirit of Christ.

The means of evangelism is the Holy Spirit; He is the power of it. He sends forth the laborers into the harvest; He opens doors; He opens the hearts of men and women to receive the Word; He unites the elect to Christ; He places men in the body of the Church as it pleases Him. There is great concern today over methods of evangelism. Men try to discover what will make evangelism effective. The danger is, not only that they resort to un-Biblical methods, but also that they fall back, in the matter of missions, upon their own resources—their own wisdom, their own strength, their own inventions. *The method of evangelism is preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified; and that which makes this effective is the Holy Spirit. This is the profound, gripping doctrine of Paul in I Corinthians 2. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (vs. 14). "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (vs. 10).*

Christ pointed out the indispensable place of the Holy Spirit in missions when, immediately after He had charged the apostles with the duty of going out to preach in His Name, He instructed them: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

We must beware lest we suppose that for effective evangelism we need millions of dollars; far-flung radio networks; catchy radio formats: professional television productions: and handsome, eloquent speakers. Once, two men set out on foot into countries of unbelief and immorality, with nothing but the gospel of Christ—and turned the world upside down. Once, an obscure monk in the hinterlands of barbarous Germany spoke out for the truth—and let loose the Word of God over the whole world. The Holy Spirit is the power of missions. We must depend upon Him. We must always be beseeching Him to make our work fruitful. We must consciously be laboring in His might.

The Motivation of Reformed Evangelism

The motivation of the Reformed Faith in evangel-

ism, generally, is that God, by His eternal election of grace, has a Church to be gathered at all times and among all peoples; and He wills to gather this Church by the gospel.

Specifically, our motivation is obedience, obedience to the command of our Lord, Jesus. He has said to us "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations"; and this settles the matter. Is there any obedience like the obedience of the Reformed Faith with its knowledge of the sovereignty of Christ?

Second, we have the fervent desire that God be glorified in all His creation. We are grieved and angry that the Name of God is hidden and profaned everywhere. We share something of the spirit of Paul in Athens, whose spirit was stirred within him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry, so that he could not but speak on behalf of the one, true God, the Father of Jesus (Acts 17:16ff.). In love for God, we bring His Name everywhere and labor for the establishing of churches that will be light in the darkness. Should any outstrip the love of the Reformed Faith for God?

Third, we love the people of God who are to be restored, or converted. Jesus had compassion on the fainting, scattered sheep who, without the Word, were as sheep without a shepherd (Matt. 9:36-38). Do we? Should we not? Should any love be stronger than that of the Reformed Faith which knows the people of God to be eternally loved of God, redeemed by the precious blood of God's own Son, and destined for the bliss of glory?

Besides, there is the purpose of God with missions that the wicked be rendered without excuse and that the Day of Christ may come quickly.

The Reformed Faith can engage in this work with the confidence of victory. The difficulties and enemies are many and great. There are materialism and pleasure-madness. There are communism and humanism. There are the heathen religions and the cults. There is dreadful apostasy in the Christian churches. At bottom, there is the spiritual death of every human heart, the blindness of every mind, and the bondage of every will—and the energetic work of Satan to keep it so.

But the Reformed Church is not discouraged, is not pessimistic. For the Son of God has come, has died, has risen again, has been seated on the right hand of God. All power in heaven and on earth is His. We preach in His Name. He shall certainly gather His Church.

*Take time to study
The Standard Bearer*

SPECIAL ARTICLE

Reformed, Yet Always Reforming

Prof. H. Hanko

This is the first of three anticipated installments of the written transcript of Prof. Hanko's Reformation Day Lecture, delivered in Hudsonville on October 30, 1980.

At least 99% of those present tonight go under the name of Reformed. That name has come directly from the mighty movement of the Sixteenth Century called the Reformation. By using the name Reformed we confess that we are spiritually descended from the fathers of the Reformation. And by tracing our spiritual ancestry back to the Protestant Reformation of the Sixteenth Century we confess that we hold to the same truths which the Reformation held. We want to be identified with that movement; we want everyone to know that we stand for what the Reformers stood for; that we hold fast to the doctrines which they thought to be the truth of the Word of God; that we champion these truths as they did; that we confess them in the midst of the world as they confessed them; and that we are prepared to make the sacrifices for them which they made.

At this time of the year when the church of Jesus Christ commemorates the Reformation, she is not only called upon to recall that the Reformation is part of her own spiritual tradition, but the church is asked, yes, obligated before God to give honest answers to certain questions. Chief among these questions is the question of whether we are the faithful sons and daughters of the Reformation that we ought to be.

The Reformation was the name which was given to that movement of the Sixteenth Century because, through the work of the Reformers, God reformed His church. He made it anew. It needed renewing because, through the centuries in which Roman Catholicism had held sway, the church had lost her identity as the church of Christ. It had strayed so far from the doctrines of the Scriptures and had become so corrupt in morals and in life that, as the Reformers said, it was no longer recognizable as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. No one who understood from Scripture what the church was and what it was supposed to be could recognize the church any longer in the Roman

Catholic institute. It had to be re-formed. It had to be re-formed after the pattern of the Scriptures and after the pattern of the church established by the apostles. God wrought that work. He re-formed the church; therefore we speak of the *Reformation*.

When we give to our churches the name Reformed, we mean that we want our spiritual lineage to be traced back to that mighty event. We want to claim Luther and Calvin and the other Reformers as our spiritual fathers. Once a year on Reformation Day we look back to that event which happened over 450 years ago and point to it with thankfulness to God and say to others and to ourselves, "That event belongs to our history as Reformed churches."

But there is surely more. When we call ourselves Reformed, we insist that we are re-formed. And we are not only re-formed because 450 years ago the church was re-formed by the hand of God, but we are re-formed and, therefore, Reformed because reformation is *always*, in every moment of the church's life, the calling of the church of Jesus Christ. That is why a motto of the Reformed Churches for the last 450 years has been: "Reformed, yet always reforming." By this motto our fathers meant to emphasize that it is the essential mark of being Reformed that the church is always reforming. The two go together and are inseparably connected. You cannot, says this motto, claim to be Reformed unless you are a church always reforming. The one mark, which clearly marks churches that belong to the Reformation is the mark of continuous reformation within her own ecclesiastical life.

That is the question, therefore, that faces us tonight. Are we as a church always reforming? This is a question which faces all of us. Denominations do not enter into the matter directly. What has to be said is something that has to be said to all of us. I speak with equal intensity, equal earnestness, and equal concern to my own fellow saints within our own denomination. It is neither proper nor correct to say that other churches need reforming but our own do not. If we say this, we forfeit our right to call ourselves sons and daughters of the Reforma-

tion. We can best celebrate this glorious event of God, therefore, by asking ourselves before the face of God: Are we a church reformed, yet always reforming?

Why is it necessary that a truly Reformed church be at the same time a church which is always reforming? The answer is that, as long as the church of our Lord Jesus Christ is here upon earth, the church is not perfect. And, because the church is never perfect, the church is constantly open to the danger of decay and deterioration. This was true of the Romish Church. For many centuries before the Reformation it had so corrupted doctrine that the doctrine of the Scriptures was no longer heard. The truth of Christ and Him crucified was completely obscured by all the ceremonies, false rituals, empty liturgy, and doctrinal heresies which prevailed. Even more, the Romish Church took the Scriptures out of the hands of the people of God so that they might not read for themselves of Christ Who died for the sins of His people and of salvation which comes only through His cross. Further, the church had become so corrupt that not only was every moral depravity practiced in the church at large but it had become the normal everyday practice of the clergy, from the Pope in Rome to the lowest parish priest. One could no longer recognize the church of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Romish institute.

But what was true of the Romish Church is always true. Because the church is not pure, its tendency is always towards decline. There are especially two reasons why the church is never pure. One reason is that the saints, from whom the church is formed, are themselves saints only in principle. They are still sinners who have only a small beginning of the new obedience. The other reason is that there is always present in the church a carnal element. Scripture often refers to this and points out that the carnal and unbelieving element is even often a majority. This very truth elicited from the heart of the prophet Isaiah the anxious cry that the church is a hut in a garden of cucumbers, a besieged city. "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah" (Isaiah 1:9). That truth is emphatically stated in Romans 9:6 where Paul states that it has never been true in all the history of the nation that all those who are of Israel are truly Israel. There are many who are of Israel but are not, in fact, Israel. This is always true of the church. As it was true in the nation of Israel prior to the coming of Christ, so it is always true in the church of Jesus Christ after Pentecost.

Nevertheless it is also a fact that there are certain times in the church's history when, although there is a carnal element present in the church, the true

people of God are so in control of the church that the doctrinal, ethical, and moral direction of the church is determined by them. That was the case in Israel, for example, during the time of King David and King Solomon. As large as the wicked element was and as numerous as were the reprobate seed within the nation, the direction of the nation as a whole, the doctrinal, spiritual and moral direction of the nation was determined by God-fearing people. When that happens the church fulfills her calling in the midst of the world and is blessed by God.

But there is always an opposite tendency in the church. And so it happens sometimes that not the people of God are in those positions of power and control, so that the ecclesiastical, doctrinal, and ethical direction of the church is determined by them, but the wicked are in control. That happened too, in the nation of Israel, repeatedly, and it was because of this that there was in the nation the need for reform. When godless Ahaz was king, he imported an altar from Damascus to set up in the holy place of the temple so that the gods of the Syrians might be worshiped. Along with this, false prophets and false priests corrupted the sanctuary and the Word of God. So evil did the nation become that God raised Hezekiah to bring reformation in the nation. The direction of the nation was determined by ungodly men. There were people of God in that nation, but the control of the nation was out of their hands. And the whole moral and spiritual direction of the nation was determined by those who were enemies of God and of His promise.

This is what happens also in the church of the New Dispensation. That the church is always composed of elect and reprobate seed, no one can deny. When the true people of God are ministers, elders, and deacons and when the office of believers under the preaching of the Word functions strongly in the church, then, although there is a carnal element present in the church, the entire direction of the church is determined by the people of God.

But sometimes the opposite happens. Sometimes the wicked come into control. And when the wicked come into control then there are unregenerated men on the pulpit, who do not preach the gospel of Christ and Him crucified. They hide the cross behind the words of men. There are unbelievers in the office of elders and deacons. The delegates to the ecclesiastic assemblies are unregenerated and unbelieving men and the decisions that affect the life of the church are made by men who are enemies of the cause of Christ and enemies of the gospel of salvation. When this happens the entire direction of the church, even though the people of God may be present in it, is determined by men such as these.

Now, it is very striking and very important that we understand that what is true of the church at large is true also of the individual life of the child of God.

The child of God is, from a spiritual and moral viewpoint, two different people. He is, on the one hand, a saint in whom dwells the Spirit of Christ and in whom is operative the powerful work of regeneration. But there is in that same child of God, as long as he stands on this side of the grave and is a pilgrim in this present world, the old man of his sinful nature, which hates God and is opposed to all that belongs to the kingdom of God and is ridden with sin and guilt. Both are present in the Christian so that what is true of the church at large is true of the individual child of God as well.

It is for this very reason that the same thing which happens in the church at large can also happen in the life of the child of God. God has so given us His grace, His Spirit, and the life of Christ that that grace, Spirit, and life of Christ can and must determine the entire direction of our life, even though our natures are wicked. Even though the life of Christ within us is a principle, a small beginning of the new obedience, it is a victorious principle. It is a conquering principle. It is a principle that is the very power of the life of Christ

itself, and, therefore, is the principle which can and must determine the entire life of the child of God.

But there are times in the life of the child of God when the opposite happens and when the very powerful influences of sin that are rooted in his nature and are enemies of all that is holy become so strong in him that they determine the course of his life, his ethical and spiritual direction.

This can happen when the wicked are in control in the church. When Judah went into captivity and the elect of God went with the nation into captivity, we must not think that the elect in the nation were free of all the sins of the nation; they were not. The people of God, as well as the wicked, were bowing down before idols and were guilty of all the corruptions and sins of which the wicked in the nation were guilty, though they were the people of God.

It is exactly for this reason that it is possible for the wicked to gain the ascendancy in the church. This happens repeatedly in the history of the church. It happens in every church. No denomination is exempt from this. The history of the church, therefore, is always a history of gradual decay, gradual deterioration, gradual apostasy, and the desperate need for reformation. To be Reformed means to be always reforming.

(to be continued)

Book Reviews

UNDERSTANDING CHURCH GROWTH, Donald A. McGavran; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan; 480 pp., paper, \$12.95. (Reviewed by Prof. R. D. Decker)

This book is a full revision of an earlier (1970) edition bearing the same title. It is full of tables, graphs, and statistics, all of which are used to support the main thrust of the book. It is McGavran's contention that the church as it exists throughout the world *can* and indeed *must* grow. If the causes which hinder church growth are avoided and if those causes which foster growth are implemented, the church will grow, and that too rapidly and even spectacularly. This kind of numerical growth is what God desires. "God has a passion to find lost men" (p. 32). "Suffice it to say that lack of church growth is an unnecessary trait, or experience, of many branches of the Church and many missionary societies," writes McGavran (p. 48). The author, Dean Emeritus and Senior Professor of Mis-

sion at the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, is an Arminian, and this detracts a great deal from the value of the book as far as the Reformed missionary or student of missions is concerned. What the Arminian refuses to see is that the Church is throughout the ages in every nation. By the power of God through the means of preaching, the Son of God gathers that Church unto everlasting life.

This is not to say the book has no value. It does. To the author's credit he conceives of the church's mission task in terms of discipling the nations. Social action may not be first. McGavran also makes the point which we must not forget in our Protestant Reformed Mission work: "In any increase of the Church, the activities mentioned and God's sovereign pleasure are of immense importance. Yet if any one thing is certain, it is that churches in the varying cultures of Africa and Asia do *not* grow in the same way as in the wealthy,

educated, individualistic Protestant populations of Europe and America. The gospel is surely one, and the church is one; but the visible churches which God creates in every corner of the world differ enormously one from another. Some speak Mandarin and others Tagalog. Some exist as tiny minorities oppressed by the powerful, others as the power structure itself. Some are literate, healthy, and fat; others illiterate, sick, and hungry. Some have highly paid professional ministers; others untrained, unpaid laymen. The processes of growth which cause these differences are themselves extremely different" (p. 83).

Finally, the fifth part of the book, "Special kinds of Church Growth" (pp. 269ff.) and especially chapter 19, "Indigenous Church Principles and Growing Churches" (pp. 373ff.) are must reading for any missionary, mission committee, or student of Missions.

THE PARABLES OF JESUS, by Simon Kistemaker; Baker Book House, 1980; 301 pp., \$10.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

In this treatment of the parables Dr. Kistemaker treats not only the sayings of Jesus which are generally accepted as being parables, but also many of the parabolic sayings. For that reason, the treatment of the parables is quite brief and oftentimes somewhat superficial and shallow. Nevertheless, for a concise treatment of the parables and for a brief summary of their teaching, this book will be of considerable help.

We were not always happy with the contents of the book, however. We mention briefly a few points. Where the parable being treated appears in more than one gospel record, Kistemaker will often make much of differences between the records and the significance of these differences so that there is

more attention paid to technical details than to the meaning of the parable. In this connection Kistemaker does not do full justice to the divine inspiration of Scripture. I do not want to enter into a quarrel with Dr. Kistemaker on this point (as happened once before when I criticized him for this); but the fact remains that one could wish that he would give as much attention to the truth that God through the Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture as he gives to the so-called "secondary authors." E.g., he writes on pp. 274, 275:

Of course, the evangelists recorded the parables of Jesus, and in their work of writing the Gospels they show their own individuality. Differences in wording in the parallel accounts of the same parables clearly reveal the hand of the individual evangelists. Besides, the fact that Jesus taught His parables in the Aramaic, whereas the Gospels present them in the Greek language, is sufficient to prove that the recovery of the very words of Jesus remains problematic. The question of origin, not authority, in regard to specific wording in a given parable is not always easy to answer. If a parable has been recorded by only one evangelist, the authenticity of Jesus' words need not be debated. But when a parable occurs in parallel Gospel accounts and shows variations in wording, the question of editorial work of the individual evangelist is real. Matthew, Mark, and Luke display their own characteristics and inclinations as they record the parables of Jesus.

Further, when the author involves himself in the question of the relation between election and the free offer of the gospel, he not only strays from the Reformed faith but misinterprets the parables involved as well. This also comes to expression in his treatment of the sovereign purpose which Christ has in teaching in parables as described in Mark 4:11, 12.

NOTICE!!!

According to the decision of the Synod of 1980, the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, was appointed the calling church for the 1981 Synod. The Consistory of Holland hereby notifies our churches that the 1981 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America will convene, the Lord willing, on Wednesday, June 3, 1981 at 9:00 A.M. in the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, 290 E. 18th St., Holland. The pre-Synodical service will be held Tuesday evening, June 2, 1981 at 8:00 P.M. Rev. John A. Heys, President of the 1980 Synod will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the Consistory before the service. Delegates in need of transportation from Grand Rapids or lodging in Holland should contact Mr. Erv Kortering, 253 E. 19th St., Holland, Michigan 49423. (Phone 616-396-4966).

Erv Kortering, Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 14, 1981, the Lord willing, our parents, MR. AND MRS. GERALD BOUWKAMP will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren, thank our heavenly Father for giving us God-fearing parents who brought us up in the fear of the Lord. It is our prayer that God will bless and keep them in His care in the years to come.

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

Henry and Shirley Bergman

Barbara, Thomas, Julie, Daniel

Gary and Rachel Bouwkamp

Ruth Bouwkamp

Kathy Bouwkamp

David Bouwkamp

Carol Bouwkamp

Lora Bouwkamp

News From Our Churches

Along with the report of Classis West—which you read in the last issue of S.B.—Rev. Engelsma sent the following account of activities that preceded the sessions of Classis West: "On Tuesday afternoon and evening before Classis, the delegates held an officebearers' conference in the Loveland church building. The subject was 'Preaching the Law and Gospel'—a continuation of the discussion at the previous conference in Pella. An introduction in the form of a list of propositions and questions was provided by the conference chairman and committeeman, Rev. W. Bekkering. Several members of the Loveland congregation also attended and participated. Discussion was lively and profitable. 'Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend' (Proverbs 27:17). The men appointed Rev. R. Cammenga to replace Rev. R. Miersma on the committee for conferences and instructed the committee to plan another conference at the time of the Fall Classis on the subject of the duty of the elders to see to it that the exhortations of the pulpit are carried out in the life of the congregation. Both at the conference and at Classis, the women of the Loveland congregation graciously and abundantly served meals and refreshments."

Following the decline of Rev. Koole to their call, our Redlands consistory formed a new trio consisting of Reverends Bekkering, Bruinsma, and Van Baren.

We remind our readers of something that was written in the March 15 news column, namely, that since February 15 our Southeast Church of Grand Rapids has made each issue of the *Standard Bearer* available on cassette tape. Those interested in receiving these tapes on a regular basis should contact Mr. Michael Engelsma, 2720 Madison Blvd., S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507.

It is much appreciated when those who send me their church bulletins pass along additional bits of

news. Such is the source of the following news about our Faith congregation in Jenison, Michigan. Their January 25 bulletin announced the baptism of twin infants on that Sunday morning. The additional information that was supplied revealed that this was the *fifth* set of twins born to this recently established congregation. We were further informed that this was the third set of twins baptized by Rev. Bruinsma in the past two years. We can rejoice with them in this concrete evidence of the covenant faithfulness of our God in their midst.

I was recently a bit confused when I read a letter handed to me by our business manager, Mr. Vander Wal. The letter was written on Reformed Free Publishing Association stationery; but what was confusing was the fact that it was *addressed to* a Vander Wal and also *written by* a Vander Wal. On the back side of that same piece of stationery was a letter of response with the same problem. At first glance one might think that our business manager was writing letters to himself, but closer examination revealed that a Vander Wal from California was expressing an appreciation of our stand for the truth and requesting some publications from our business manager. If we care to draw a conclusion from this, maybe we could say that it appears Mr. Vander Wal has finally met his match.

The following "thoughts of contemplation" were reaped from South Holland bulletins:

"Just as unbelief discourages men, so that they sink down into inactivity, so faith inspires both body and mind with vigor for the effectual discharge of their duties." John Calvin

"When the law is written in the heart, it is copied out in the life." Robert Traill

"The best and most efficient method of inculcating the performance of any duty is to be exemplary."

John Calvin

C.K.