

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Demanding repentance and faith of dead sinners may seem foolish to us, but when we remember that God in Christ speaks through the preaching with the same power by which He created the worlds, then we can understand how the preaching can be the means to produce fruits of repentance and faith in the elect.

See "Election Preaching and the Demand
for Repentance" — page 90

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MEDITATION

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Rev. C. Hanks

Ques. 46. What doth the resurrection of Christ profit us?

Ans. First, by His resurrection He has overcome death, that He might make us partakers of that righteousness which He had purchased for us by His death; secondly, we are also by His power raised up to a new life; and lastly, the resurrection of Christ is a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection. Lord's Day 17, Heid. Catechism.

Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes.
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.
He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

This song of victory, which we sing with all the exuberant joy that fills the church of the new dispensation, strikes the keynote of this Lord's Day.

"By His resurrection He overcame death." That fact of Christ's triumphant resurrection stands out

as one of the great events, one of the mightiest wonders of God in all of history.

Three such events live before our consciousness. In six successive days God spoke and by the word of His power created the heavens and the earth. At each word of His command a new creature came into being, until man, the highest of the earthly creatures, was formed from the dust of the earth. Let unbelief deny this. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:2).

As if this were a small thing with God, the resurrection of Jesus Christ proves to be an even greater wonder. When our Lord arose, God did not merely create a new life, but brought forth life from the dead. The Son of God entered into our death when He took on Himself our human nature from the virgin Mary. He met death as His enemy in a final combat during the three hours of darkness on the cross. He challenged death by surrendering Himself to its power, and thus destroyed that power, first by bearing the torments of hell, then by dying our physical death and arising as Victor on the third day. In our stead our Lord overcame death and merited for us eternal life. He opened the way for us to pass through death into heavenly perfection, both as to body and soul. Therefore He is now ascended to heaven and seated at the right hand of God to prepare a place for us and to prepare us for that place, that we may be where He is in His glory.

From this follows that we expect still a third wonder, the resurrection of our mortal bodies and life eternal with Christ in the new creation.

Christ is the mighty Conqueror. His resurrection is His and our eternal victory.

That is the sole point of view in this Lord's Day. One may wonder why such an important subject receives such a brief treatment in our book of instruction, one short question with a very short answer. The fathers might have discussed the fact that Christ arose and the events related to the resurrection. There are many today, even in "Reformed" circles, who openly or deviously deny this wonder. The fathers might have referred to the evidences that God gives to explain the wonder. (I prefer to speak of evidences rather than proofs. Unbelief accepts no proofs. Faith needs no proofs, for "It is written." But we do need evidences that interpret this wonder for us.) Our Catechism passes these by in silence to focus all our attention on the profit, or benefit of the resurrection for us. And now we marvel that so much is said in such few words. Three benefits are mentioned: our justification, our spiritual renewal, and the pledge of our blessed resurrection. Every Sunday we begin a new

week by celebrating the resurrection of our Lord as our victory over sin and death and as a pledge of the rest that remains for the people of God.

We are partakers of Christ's righteousness.

Christ "overcame death that He might make us partakers of that righteousness, which He had purchased for us by His blood." Unbelief may sneer at that. Boastfully they declare that all things remain as they were from the beginning of the world. Christ has come and gone, but nothing is changed. What benefit does anyone derive from a "risen" Jesus? Even our flesh questions the power of the resurrection in our daily lives. We are still in this body of sin and death. Sin still wars in our members and death lurks wherever we turn. The believer, as well as the unbeliever, suffers pain, sickness, diseases, loss of dear ones, and the anguish of death. We have gained nothing; misery is still our lot. Faith refutes that vain language with a very definite: Nay! "Nay, but in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:27). And how we enjoy being refuted!

How do I know? If you should ask me, "Were you there when they crucified our Lord?" I would answer, "Yes, I was there, not as one who deplored His bitter suffering, but as one who was *in Him*, one with Him as completely as if I had atoned for my sins in my own body. In God's eternal mercy I belong to Jesus. There on the accursed tree, almost two thousand years ago, my Savior paid the stupendous debt of the guilt of my sin and merited my righteousness."

Righteousness! Blessed word. How can we guilty sinners ever be righteous in the sight of God? The answer lies in the fact that, in a sense, righteousness and Christ are synonymous. Christ is our righteousness. God delivered Him over to the accursed death of the cross because of our transgressions. God raised Him up because He merited for us our righteousness (Rom. 4:25). The living Savior Himself assures us through His Word and by His Spirit in our hearts that we are righteous in Him. Just as emphatically as when He was among us on earth, He now from heaven declares to us, "Go in peace, thy many sins are forgiven thee." Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God Who justifies. Who is the condemner?

A new life.

There is a second benefit of Christ's resurrection. "We are by His power raised unto a new life." This new life stands in contrast to the "old life" which we received at birth from our parents. We were spiritual still-births, born in sin. That accounts for the sins that incessantly arise within us, character sins, cherished sins, deliberate and inadvertant sins, evils that arise within me, evils that result

from my failure to do my duty. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). Yet how wonderful that we may add, almost in the same breath, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (vs. 25). That thankfulness, as well as the consciousness of our depravity, arises from the *new life* which Christ implants in us as our resurrected Lord. This new life has become a spiritual reality for us. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Powerful Word! I am crucified with Christ. The guilt of my sins was nailed to the cross. When Christ died I died. I died to sin, the power of sin is broken. Yet, amazingly, I live! No, it is no longer I that live. I have the new life within me, and that new life is Christ. Christ lives in me! He is the power, the directive of my life, even the goal. Clinging to Him, relying on Him, I find all my salvation in Him. It is true, I still have my old life, my old nature. That old nature does not improve with age, as one might think or hope, but it becomes, like a weatherbeaten tree, old and gnarled. But grace abounds, so that I am driven to seek my strength and refuge ever more completely in Christ. Like a tempest swept tree I drive my roots ever deeper into Christ. The powerful, risen Lord teaches me to confess, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

As a pledge of our blessed resurrection.

This is the third benefit of Christ's victory over death, dying with Him we rise with Him. Christ's resurrection was a bodily resurrection. The tomb stood vacated. Nothing remained except the grave clothes that had enveloped His body. The undisturbed grave clothes are a mute evidence of that bodily resurrection.

It was the same body that had been placed in the tomb, but now risen. Besides the fact that the grave clothes were left intact, Jesus showed to His disci-

ples the nail holes in His hands and the wound of the spear thrust in His side. No doubt was left in their minds but that Jesus was no longer dead, but lived.

It was a real body. Their first impression was that they saw a spirit taking form before their eyes. But Jesus assured them, "I am I." He proved this by eating food. We may wonder about the fact that the resurrection body still bore scars and could partake of earthly food. Part of the solution lies in the fact that this was an appearance. For the rest, this must remain a mystery for us.

Jesus arose in the same body, a real body, yet changed. Mortality had put on immortality. The earthly had become heavenly. Death was swallowed up in victory.

This is a pledge of our blessed resurrection. How could it be otherwise? We already have the beginning of eternal life within us. Every time the sacrament of holy baptism is administered in the congregation we are reminded that we are buried with Christ in baptism. We die to the world in Christ. And God raises us up in newness of life within God's church and covenant. We are new creatures in Christ with our citizenship in heaven. Our hope is fixed on our heavenly home and perfection. When finally this body sleeps in the Lord and is laid away like a seed in the earth, our souls go to be with Christ in heaven, and we wait for that moment, when at the sound of the trumpet Christ will appear to change our vile bodies into the likeness of His glorious body by that power whereby He subdues *all things* to Himself! (Phil. 3:21).

At Jesus' tomb God says: "Behold, I make all things new!"

Within our hearts He testifies, "Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

Soon we shall see the new heaven and the new earth, in which we will be with the Lord in His glory, and that forever and ever! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

EDITORIAL

Non-Functional by Editorial Decree?

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Whether you agree with him or not, the Editor of *The Banner* writes some interesting editorials. Partly, I think, because of a somewhat abrasive style,

those editorials tend to capture the attention of the readers, as is evident, too, from the sample of responses which appear in "Voices." Attention, of

course, does not necessarily imply agreement; but also those readers who do not agree with Editor Kuyvenhoven nevertheless pay attention to what he writes.

I do, too.

And when I read the editorial in the issue of October 26, 1981, I must confess I rubbed my eyes in disbelief.

In a Reformation Day editorial, the Rev. Kuyvenhoven writes on the subject of "the Church and the Churches." In the course of his remarks he also deals with the subject of the true and the false church, after having pointed to the fact that, according to him, "the great disadvantage of the Reformation has proved to be the splintering of the church," and that while "the church had an artificial unity before" the time of the Reformation, "it has suffered a genuine disunity ever since." Concerning the subject of the true and the false church, Editor Kuyvenhoven writes as follows:

Two of our confessions date back to the time of the Reformation. Therefore they reflect the Reformers' belief in the one universal church that has always existed in the world and shall always continue to exist, because this holy assembly has an eternal King. The Reformers, and our confessions, do not think of the one holy and universal church as a thing that is hidden from human eyes and known to God alone. No, they said that the one true church was visibly present. There is also a false church, they said. And they meant the Roman church. Believers don't belong in it, they warned. It is our duty to join ourselves to the true church ("and outside of it there is no salvation"). Nor is it impossible to discern the difference between the true church and the false church: where the true gospel is preached, where the sacraments are rightly administered and discipline is exercised, there is the church. There is no excuse for those who have the Bible and who say they cannot find the true church. "These two Churches (the true and the false) are easily known and distinguished from each other." (See Belgic Confession, Articles XXVII-XXIX and Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. 21.)

So far, so good. Though very brief, the above is a fairly accurate summation of the Confession.

But then the Rev. Kuyvenhoven continues:

The views of the Reformers are no longer ours. And the kind of thinking about the church that is recorded in the Belgic Confession is no longer functional in the Christian Reformed Church. How could it be! If we took it literally, we would not only have to confess that our own little church is the true church, but that all other churches are false. All Christians in the United States and Canada would be in default for not joining our church, because it is Christ's church. None of us makes such claims. To be sure, there are a few, even smaller Reformed churches, that on the basis of the Belgic Confession declare every church except

their own a "false" church; but such reasoning under today's historical conditions leads to "extreme arrogance," as Calvin would say.

It is especially the first couple of statements in the above paragraph which moved me to rub my eyes in disbelief when I first read them. "What is the Editor saying?" I asked myself. "Is he really saying what I think he is saying?" I even went to others to ask their opinion, lest I should be reading into these sentences something that is not there. But these others assured me I was reading correctly.

Notice, in the first place, the Editor—and he speaks not only for himself but also for his church—parts ways with the Reformers and their views concerning the true and false church. Now that, of course, is his good right. The views and statements of the Reformers are not necessarily correct in every instance; and they certainly do not constitute binding doctrine in any Reformed church. Nevertheless, to part ways with the Reformers is a very bold and audacious step to take. It should not be taken lightly, and certainly not without careful study and examination. But here no grounds are even offered. We have simply the bold statement, "The views of the Reformers are no longer ours."

But the second statement is terribly serious: "And the kind of thinking about the church that is recorded in the Belgic Confession is no longer functional in the Christian Reformed Church."

That this "kind of thinking" is no longer functioning in the CRC, for the most part, I could well believe. This would mean that many do not believe and actually maintain what the Confession teaches on this subject. Probably there are many who do not know or care. Ignorance of the creeds today is simply appalling!

But the Rev. Kuyvenhoven does not say that. He says that the kind of thinking recorded in the Belgic Confession is no longer "functional," that is, serving a function, in his denomination. By editorial fiat he simply writes off an entire segment of the Confession, and he does so not only for himself but for the entire Christian Reformed Church!

I ask: how can this be?

In the first place, how can this be in the light of the fact that the Rev. Kuyvenhoven has undoubtedly signed the Formula of Subscription? Does that subscription mean anything, or is it an empty formality?

In the second place, is the procedure of gravamen no longer necessary? I am aware of the fact that a few years ago there were some changes made by the Synod of the CRC in the gravamen procedure. But certainly the Synod did not declare open

season on the confessions without any necessity of a gravamen procedure whatsoever.

But, in the third place, not only is the procedure of gravamen passed by; but the matter is simply decided—without procedure, without study, without synodical decision. Simply by editorial decree!

I think Calvin would call that popery! Let alone "extreme arrogance!"

Meanwhile, I would call attention to the fact that even Calvin himself was not guilty of the kind of absolutist thinking about the true and the false church which is ascribed to him and to others sometimes. Editor Kuyvenhoven does not name the few Reformed churches of whom he says that on the basis of the Belgic Confession they declare every church except their own a "false" church. The so-called "Liberated" churches, both in the Netherlands and in Canada, sometime seem to entertain that idea. Other than that, I do not know who holds that view. I recall that a Liberated spokesman in the time of our differences concerning the Declaration of Principles once flatly called us the false church. The strange thing was that several years later the same man told me in conversation that he could very well go to the Lord's table with me, but not with those ministers who had left us for the Christian Reformed Church. However that may be, Calvin himself does not unqualifiedly and absolutely write off the Romish Church. This is plain from the following paragraph in the *Institutes*, Book IV, Chapter II (Allen Translation):

XII. While we refuse, therefore, to allow to the Papists the title of the Church, without any qualification or restriction, we do not deny that there are Churches among them. We only contend for the true and legitimate constitution of the Church, which requires not only a communion in the sacraments, which are the signs of a Christian profession, but above all, an agreement in doctrine. Daniel and Paul had predicted that Antichrist would sit in the temple of God. The head of that cursed and abominable kingdom, in the Western Church, we affirm to be the Pope. When his seat is placed in the temple of God, it suggests, that his kingdom will be such, that he will not abolish the name of Christ, or the Church. Hence it appears, that we by no means deny that Churches may exist, even under his tyranny; but he has profaned them by sacrilegious impiety, afflicted them by cruel despotism, corrupted and almost terminated their existence by false and pernicious doctrines, like poisonous potions; in such Churches, Christ lies half buried, the gospel is suppressed, piety exterminated, and the worship of God almost abolished; in a word, they are altogether in such a state of confusion, that they exhibit a picture of Babylon, rather than of the holy city of God. To conclude, I affirm that they are Churches, inasmuch as God has wonderfully preserved among them a remnant of His people, though miserably dispersed and dejected, and as there still remain some marks of the Church, especially those, the efficacy of which neither the craft of the devil nor the malice of men can ever destroy. But, on the other hand, because those marks, which we ought chiefly to regard in this controversy, are obliterated, I affirm, that the form of the legitimate Church is not to be found either in any one of their congregations, or in the body at large.

Editor's Notes

Special Issue. The December 1 issue will be the first of our special issues in the current volume-year. It will be devoted to a description of our publishing efforts — *The Standard Bearer*, our RFPA Publications and others—complete with pictures. Watch for it!

New Publications. We have received word that our newest RFPA publication, Prof. H. Hanko's *We and Our Children (The Reformed Doctrine of Infant Baptism)*, will be out this month. I have seen a preview of this book, and it is one of our most attractive paperbacks, both in appearance and in content. The regular price of this book will be \$3.95. We have also been promised that our paperback reprint of Rev. Herman Hoeksema's *In The Sanctuary (Expository Sermons on the Lord's Prayer)* will be ready and available before Christmas. This was the very first of Rev. Hoeksema's works which was

published originally by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. in the 1940s. It has long been out of print, and it is well worth obtaining. The contents are not just a repetition of the material found in *The Triple Knowledge*, but this little book is full of practical, spiritual instruction. The price of this book is also \$3.95.

Book Club Reminder. For the umpteenth time I remind you that if you are an RFPA Book Club member, you can obtain all our books at 20% discount and without the bother of specially ordering them; they will come to you automatically. How do you become a member? You must be a *Standard Bearer* subscriber, and you must agree to accept every new publication at the special Book Club discount. Write to: RFPA Publications Committee, P.O. Box 2006, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Letter to Timothy

November 15, 1981

Dear Timothy,

I have written to you at some length about the evils of wrong criticisms of one's pastor and his preaching. In writing about these things, I called your attention especially to what the Word of God says in Hebrews 13:17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." There are a few more passages in Scripture which speak of this matter and which are profitable to discuss, even though briefly. The first of these is found in this same chapter, verse 7: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." There are a few ideas in this text which we ought to notice.

1) That the apostle here refers especially to ministers of the gospel is plain from the fact that he describes them as those "who have spoken unto you the word of God." They are those who have been entrusted with that responsibility—to speak the Word of God.

2) They are called here, "those that have the rule over you." This is a good translation all right; but the word which is used here is a word which really, basically, means, "leaders." We speak of our rulers in government sometimes as leaders. This is the idea here. Those who bring to us the word of God are our rulers, but they are our rulers from the viewpoint of their being leaders. They, so to speak, lead us through the pathway of life according to the directions of the Word of God. And, in leading us, they teach us to follow Christ Himself Whom they too follow.

3) We are "to remember" them. The idea is to keep them in mind, to hold them before our thoughts, to be aware of them and the position they occupy in the Church of Jesus Christ. This can, of course, refer to a number of things. It can refer to the need to see to it that their earthly needs are provided for. It can remind us of our calling to show honor and respect to them. But, surely, it also means that we must remember them in our prayers to God. It is so easy to sit back and criticize the

minister. It is so easy to be dissatisfied with his preaching and to complain about the quality of his sermons. It is so easy to grumble that we are not being fed and to push the blame for our failure to worship on the minister. But the question is very important: Do we pray for our pastors and remember them before the throne of God's grace? Do we pray for them every day of the week while they are preparing their sermons? Do we pray for them on the Lord's Day before and after we enter the church? Do we pray for them with our families at mealtimes? That is quite another question. And it simply remains a fact that no man has any right to bring any criticism of his pastor unless he makes it a continual practice to bring his pastor to the throne of God's grace.

4) In this same verse the apostle says, "Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." Perhaps somewhat more literally we could translate this, "Whose faith imitate, observing carefully the conclusion of their walk in life." The apostle has in mind the fact that faithful ministers of the gospel must be examples to the flock. They must be such examples in the whole of their life so that every minister dares to say, as Paul said, Imitate my life. But this passage simply assumes that ministers do live this kind of life. And now he admonishes God's people to imitate their pastors, imitate the faithfulness of their walk and make their walk and conduct a model for you in your walk. But especially, so says the text, observe carefully that their walk of faith ends in a glorious death. They live in faith, complete their work in hope, and die in the confidence that they shall presently be with the Lord. Paul writes to Timothy, without boasting, just before his death: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

It is a sign of our respect for our pastors and our willingness to be instructed by them in the Word of God that we make them our models for our own life. We do this because we know that Christ is in

them and comes to expression in the Word they bring and in the life they lead.

It is in connection with this latter idea of honor that I want to call your attention to several other texts which emphasize this point. In I Thessalonians 5:12, 13 we read: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." This same idea is found in I Timothy 5:17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." And this is repeated in Philipians 2:29: "Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation." The reference in this latter verse is to Epaphroditus through whom it is possible that Paul sent this letter to the church at Philippi. Epaphroditus was a fellowlaborer with Paul; a companion in labor and fellow-soldier—as Paul calls him in verse 25. The Philippians must receive him in the Lord with happy hearts and hold him in reputation, i.e., in honor.

We need not say very much about these verses other than to point out that this is exactly the requirement of the fifth commandment. When, therefore, we fail to hold those who are our pastors in honor we violate the fifth commandment. This is very serious and a great sin against God. It is a commandment the violation of which brings with it its own kind of punishment. The relationship of authority and obedience upon which this commandment are based are fundamental. If these relationships are violated, the structures and institutions in which these relationships exist disintegrate and disappear. If, e.g., the obligations inherent in authority and obedience in the home are not met, the home is destroyed. If authority is not exercised and obedience is not practiced in the state, the state destroys itself. If in the Church the fifth commandment is violated, and honor, love, and respect are not shown to those in authority, the Church is destroyed. God destroys because God punishes those who violate His law. But God destroys in such a way that those who violate His law destroy themselves. These institutions can only exist by a keeping of the fifth commandment. The relationships of authority and obedience are woven into the warp and woof of these institutions so that they cannot be destroyed without destroying the institutions themselves. So honor those who are ministers of the Word.

Finally, there are some passages of Scripture which speak of our calling towards ministers of the Word from a slightly different perspective. They look at our calling from the viewpoint of the Word of God which pastors bring. After all, in the final

analysis, one's attitude towards the preaching is decisive. If one submits to the preaching, one will honor the preacher. If one allows himself to be led in the green pastures of the Word, He will also give proper respect to him who leads. The preacher and his message can never be separated.

Some of the texts to which I refer are the following. In James 1:19-21 the Scriptures teach us: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." This same idea which James expresses here so graphically is even in the Old Testament. In Proverbs 10:19 the wise king of Israel instructs us with the words: "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise." This is, of course, a general precept which applies to the whole of life. People who talk too much will surely sin with their lips. This is unavoidable. The wise man does not talk so much. He restrains his lips. He is quiet and keeps his tongue from running away with him. This is always true; but it applies also to our attitude towards the preaching. That is why James tells us to be *swift* to hear, but *slow* to speak. That this is indeed the idea is clear from a more direct passage in Ecclesiastes 5:1, 2: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." That is about as clear as it is possible to make it.

All of this surely does not mean that there does not come a time when the believer must, for the sake of the Church of Jesus Christ and for the welfare of the cause of God, speak up. And sometimes that speech must indeed be in defense of the truth and on behalf of the honor and glory of God. If Luther had bowed before Rome and refused to open his mouth in criticism there would have been no Reformation. Church reformation comes about through the office of believers also. The truth is greater than all and the honor of God more important than any man. But this surely is not the point. James, in telling us to be slow to speak, certainly suggests that there may come a time when we have to speak. In receiving the engrafted Word which is able to save our souls, sometimes the necessity of speaking is forced upon us. But the fact remains that we must be swift to hear and slow to speak. We must refrain our lips. Our heart must not be hasty to utter anything before God. After all, God is

in heaven and we upon earth. Our words ought therefore to be few.

The whole point is that we must go to Church to hear the preaching. We must go to hear Christ. We must go determined to hear and not to speak. If then, we pray for our pastor, if we honor him for his office's sake, if we go to church to hear Christ speak through him, and if we are a people who

guard their lips before the face of God, then we will receive a blessing.

It is my earnest prayer that this spirit may prevail in our Churches and in the Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then and then only will our Churches continue to be blessed.

Fraternally in Christ,
H. Hanko

FROM HOLY WRIT

The So-called Proof-texts of Postmillennialism

Rev. G. Lubbers

Chapter X

There is a text in the Old Testament prophecies to which Postmillennial advocates repeatedly and almost without fail refer to, in order to sustain their teaching that the Kingdom of Christ will be universal, including all the nations of the world, "christianized" by the power of the preaching by the Holy Spirit.

The texts which they quote are then merely cited, referred to, but they are not carefully and exhaustively exegeted, so that we have Scripture thoroughly interpreting Scripture. Sad to say, it is in this hiatus of teaching, this exegetical vacuum, that their presentation of the Postmillennial reign rests. In a word, it thus becomes virtually foundationless, unScriptural, unBiblical; it raises more questions than it answers.

The key-texts which are supposed to support this Postmillennial view are found in both Isaiah 2:2-5 and Micah 4:1-7. It is a remarkable fact that the Holy Spirit caused two holy men to be moved to speak and write these words. They must be doubly important, indeed. And we are reminded of Jesus' words in Matthew 24:15, "whoso readeth, let him understand." Words of warning and of encouragement to the exegete!

We will here quote these two passages in part. They read as follows:

"The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hill, and all nations shall flow to it" (Verses 1, 2).

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and the people (peoples) shall flow unto it" (Micah 4:1).

These two sections are the verses to which we will limit our explanation and exegesis in this Chapter. We shall not weary the reader with a lot of detailed refutation of the Postmillennial position. We shall rather simply exegete the text and see whether good exegesis will needs force us to place a Postmillennial construction in the text. Basically, we are interested in what the Spirit says to the churches here, for we are really dealing with the more sure prophetic word, which shines as a light in a dark place, both in the Old Testament and New Testament dispensation. And ever the prophetic word must be such that it is as the morning-star which proclaims the hope of the perfect day (II Peter 1:19). Our interest is that we, the church, may live in the blessed hope of the glory of God's tabernacle with man (Rev. 21:3).

Let us then attend to our text(s).

The things which are here spoken of are realities concerning Judah and Jerusalem which shall be in the "last days." These things are such that "they shall come to pass." These are great and precious promises of God; they are the word of God Whose promises are all "yea in Christ and in Him, Amen, to the glory of God the Father" (II Cor. 1:18-20). God is faithful to His own Word. And this suggests very, very strongly that these are the things which relate to the sufferings to come upon Christ and the "glory" to follow. Thus Peter writes in his first Epistle to the Gentile Christians in Asia Minor. This

glory is the final glory, which we will see in the great manifestation of the Son of God glorified in the last day, when we shall have a new heaven and a new earth (I Peter 1:4, 5). All now is ready to be revealed in the last time!

We are certain that Isaiah "saw" what was going to befall Judah and Jerusalem in this "last time." Do not forget that all the prophets from Jacob (Gen. 49:1) till Malachi (4:2-6) saw the end of time spoken of in II Peter 3:13: "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." That is what Isaiah "saw." Isaiah and all the other prophets saw really two things, which we here point out particularly:

1. That this final glory of the city of Jerusalem, Zion, is connected with the King of Zion, the Son of Man, Who must suffer to enter into His glory. Thus Jesus Himself interprets the Scriptures to His disciples after His blessed resurrection. We read: "and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." This means that if we do not understand Isaiah to have "seen" the Christ in this vision concerning the glorified Jerusalem, we do not understand the Scriptures here. We have cast away the key of knowledge (Luke 24:25-27). Then we shall be the fools, who are slow of heart to understand "all" that the prophets have spoken. No one really preaches the Gospel in the prophecies, who does not preach the "suffering servant of Jehovah." For Zion is only glorified in her glorified God in Jesus Christ (John 13:31, 32).

2. That the prophets understood one point very clearly, one and all when they prophesied concerning Jerusalem's glory in the "last days." These things were not spoken to the prophets merely and to their time. Peter writes and says, "Unto whom (the prophets, G.L.) it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us (you) they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." The prophets were, one and all, fully aware that they were indeed speaking things concerning the glory of Jerusalem as it would be manifested in Christ's death and glorification at God's right hand.

From the foregoing follows, as is clear from all the Scriptures, that in these last days Jerusalem shall be glorified in *heavenly* splendor. The days of the *earthly* Jerusalem shall be ended forever. There will be no more earthly "house of God" in an earthly Jerusalem anymore. Now this is not *explicitly* stated here in Isaiah 2:2, or in Micah 4:1! It is very clear that in this entire passage in Isaiah 2:1-5

we are dealing with a great, grand, and glorious "Theme" which is unfolded wonderfully in the entire prophecy here in Isaiah. We may call Isaiah the great Gospel of Christ's death and resurrection, and of His ascension and glorification in the church. This is borne out in Isaiah 52:13-15 in a nutshell; and in Isaiah 53:1-12 we have a panoramic view of the glories of Calvary, Easter morning's mysteries, and the passing of Jesus through the heavens to sit at God's right hand, to gather the entire seed of Abraham, both in the old and new dispensations. It would not take much effort to prove this, citing page and paragraph. Indeed, Isaiah here gives us the grand theme of hope of the future glory of Judah and Jerusalem. Such is the implication of the exultant and joyful cry "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city.... Shake thyself from the dust; arise and sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion..." (Is. 52:1, 2). For here we see the perspective of the "Gospel" to all nations, Jew and Greek. And we hear the beautiful strains of the prophet's anthem "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings..." (Is. 52:7).

Such is the implication of the grand theme in our text which is exhibited in all its glory in the most lofty and exalted prophetic utterances, which are the pure poetry of heaven!

Hence, Isaiah "saw" a great future for Zion, for Jerusalem, the city of the living God.

To this city the New Testament church has "come" (Heb. 12:22).

The text both in Isaiah and in Micah says that the prophets see Jerusalem "exalted" very high. Now this is really glad tidings of hope for the suffering saints in the days of Isaiah as they will be carried away to Babylon. The city of Jerusalem was in a very sad estate in the days of these prophets. They will be soon in captives' bands; Rachel will weep for her children in Ramah and will not be comforted (Is. 52:2; Jer. 31:15; Ps. 137:1-3). But now dry your tears, O Zion. Better things are in the offing. God Who speaks in divers times and manners in the Old Testament prophecies by prophets, will in the "last days" speak in a Son. In this Son *all* will be better: a better covenant, better promises, better priesthood, better temple, a new and living way into a better and heavenly temple, not made with hands. All will be better, and it will be glorious for Judah and for Jerusalem.

That is the grand "theme" here in these passages in Isaiah and in Micah. Is not this glory of Jerusalem connected in Micah with the birth of the One Who is to be a "ruler in Israel" and Who will

be born in Bethlehem-Ephratha, and Whose outgoings are from eternity? (Micah 5:2).

Yes, now shall Judah and Jerusalem be "on the top of the mountains." And it will not be a mere display of topological position of earthly Jerusalem in the midst of earthly mountains. Jerusalem, as an earthly mountain, never excelled over the heights of Bashan. This is expressed by the Psalmists. However, the glory of Zion was that she is beautiful for situation, the joy of all the earth. And this situation is her place in God's counsel, in God's decree (Ps. 2:4-7). When the nations imagine vain things against Zion and her king, the Lord of heaven laughs at such puny "raging"; He declares His decree and He executes it.

And that is the great future here in Isaiah 2:1, 2.

Yes, Isaiah has seen Zion in her low estate. She is like a cottage in a vineyard, and as a lodge in a cucumber patch, as a besieged city. There is really no hope left. She is a sinful nation, a desolate

country; the cities are burned with fire, and strangers devour Israel's land in their presence; it is desolate, overthrown by strangers.

And now a glorious future is predicted for Zion!

This future is far beyond the building of the city and temple in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah, when the remnant according to election are like those that dream when they return to Zion. It refers (this glorious exaltation of Zion) to the entire dispensation of the fulness of times, as this shall be perfected in the unification of all things in Christ, as under one head (Eph. 1:10).

Then shall Zion be glorious under one Shepherd, David's Son.

Yes, then it shall be one fold and one Shepherd! (John 10:16; Ezek. 37:22). The Gentiles too shall be brought into that glorified Jerusalem into the house of the Lord. For my house shall be called a house of prayer of all people (Matt. 19:46; Is. 56:7; Jer. 7:11).

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

Missionary Methods (8)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

As we continue our studies of the Scriptural method or methods of performing mission work we will devote our attention to what has been and still is a very significant little book on Missions. The book is entitled: *Planting And Development of Missionary Churches*. Dr. John L. Nevius, a Presbyterian missionary to China in the late 1800s, authored the book. Dissatisfaction with the old methods of doing mission work led Dr. Nevius and his colleagues in China to re-think missionary methods in the light of Scripture. The result is what has come to be called the "Nevius method or plan." This plan first appeared in a series of articles in the *Chinese Recorder* in 1885. Later this material was published in book form. In 1958 the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. published this book in paperback. (It is available at the Seminary Bookstore.) In the preface to the fourth edition of this book Bruce F. Hunt, an Orthodox Presbyterian missionary in Korea, has this to say: "In 1890 Dr. John L. Nevius, a Presbyterian missionary working in China, received an invitation to Korea from a group of seven young missionaries who were just beginning their work in that little peninsula off the east coast of Asia, which until then had been closed

to missionaries. They asked him to give them two weeks of instruction in the missionary methods which he had first set forth in a series of articles in the *Chinese Recorder* in 1885.

"To these two weeks of meetings and to the application of those principles set forth in that series of articles, later collected in this little booklet of ninety pages, many missionaries in Korea attribute much of the rapid growth of mission work in that country. There were only 100 communicants at the time these principles were adopted, but today (1958) there is a full grown, self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing church of 800,000 members. However, these same missionaries, as well as Dr. Nevius himself, would be the first to insist that to God and to God alone belongs the glory for all that has been wrought in Korea. As both believed the methods were God's, so they also believed that the results were God's. Dr. Nevius, a seasoned missionary, always criticized existing methods of mission work in the light of God's Word, and at the same time sought to find in God's Word the principles which should direct all missionary activity...."

What is the "Nevius method"? Nevius gave this answer: "These two systems may be distinguished in general by the former (the old method, R.D.D.) depending largely on paid native agency, while the latter deprecates and seeks to minimize such agency. Perhaps an equally correct and more generally acceptable statement of the difference would be, that, while both alike seek ultimately the establishment of independent, self-reliant, and aggressive native churches, the Old System strives by the use of foreign funds to foster and stimulate the growth of native churches in the first stage of their development, and then gradually to discontinue the use of such funds; while those who adopt the New System think that the desired object may be best attained by applying principles of independence and self-reliance from the beginning. The difference between these two theories may be more clearly seen in their outward practical working. The Old uses freely, and as far as practicable, the more advanced and intelligent of the native church members in the capacity of paid *colporteur's* (distributors of religious tracts and books, R.D.D.), Bible agents, evangelists, or heads of stations; while the New proceeds on the assumption that the persons employed in these various capacities would be more useful in the end by being left in their original homes and employments" (p. 8). The rest of the book is really an expansion of this general distinction. As we continue our study we shall have to answer the question: "Does the Nevius method meet the test of Scripture?" Nevius himself insisted that it did. It was for this reason that, according to Nevius, there was such abundant fruit on the work in both China and Korea.

According to Nevius the old method involved extensive use of paid workers. The missionaries would look for and train young men from among the natives for the gospel ministry or to work as assistants to the missionaries. These native evangelists and ministers would preach and teach at the various mission stations. It was the contention of Nevius that this old method seemed the natural way to do mission work. The slogan in those days was: "China must be evangelized by the Chinese." It was only natural to seek as many native preachers as possible too because the missionary was eager for fruit upon his work. Not only that but the sending church was also as anxious to hear of fruit as the missionary was to report on the fruit of his work! This method found ready acceptance among the Chinese as well. Because of the dense population and the sharp struggle for existence which it necessitates, the Chinese found it difficult to find ways of earning a living and providing for their families. Those converts gifted with the necessary qualifications for the ministry saw it as a way

out of poverty. In fact they saw the ministry as the way at least to approximate the higher standard of living enjoyed by the foreign missionary.

It was especially at this point that Dr. Nevius found the old wrong and even detrimental to the cause of the gospel in China. It was common, and to a certain degree it is common today, for the American or European church to send missionaries to a foreign field. They would construct a mission headquarters in some strategically located place. Native converts would be hired and trained and paid to go out and preach the gospel. The money would flow like water to help the poor, build chapels, support preachers and evangelists, and for many other causes. The natives are left with the impression that the missionaries and the church which has sent them (a foreign institution, remember) have money in abundance and are ready to give that money liberally. The very real danger is that the well-intentioned sending church and its missionaries not only leave the wrong impression but actually create a situation in which people are tempted to follow Christ merely for bread rather than food for their souls. This, in fact, has happened frequently. Men sought the ministry and later proved unfaithful to the gospel. They were interested only in the money. This method also creates a native church which stands in an unhealthy dependent relationship with the mission and sending church. About this we shall have more to say later.

Nevius lists six specific objections to the old method. These may be found on pages 12 - 18. These are: 1) "Making paid agents of new converts affects injuriously the stations with which they are connected." A man, knowledgeable in the gospel and influential in the community, "is one who can be ill-spared." Removing him from his occupation and home and putting him to work as a minister of the gospel can have serious, harmful effects. The author cites the example of four promising young men who while "working with their hands in their several callings" bore testimony to the truth wherever they went. They were instrumental in provoking great interest in the gospel and church in their own neighborhoods. One by one they were hired by the mission and sent to various stations, with the result that the interest in the gospel in their own neighborhood waned. Nevius claims that many other similar examples could be cited. But this is only one aspect of the problem. By making use of paid native preachers, evil is introduced. Envy, jealousy, and dissatisfaction with one's lot come into play. Those who are not hired by the mission resent those who are. Others who do not qualify for the ministry think they should be hired in some other capacity. The interest that once was

in the gospel now shifts and the topics of conversation are "place and pay." The native preachers are no longer regarded as spiritual leaders interested in the spiritual good of their flocks, but as those who are after money.

2) "Making a paid agent of a new convert often proves an injury to him personally." Some of these men who were formerly shopkeepers, farmers, or laborers find themselves unsuited for the ministry. Others become puffed up with pride. For these and other reasons they lose the respect of their neighbors. About this Nevius remarks: "Here again I am not theorizing, but speaking from experience, and could multiply cases—as I presume most missionaries could—of deterioration of character in both directions above indicated." (p. 13)

3) "The Old System makes it difficult to judge between the true and false, whether as preachers or as church members." Not a few fall away after they have become preachers. Many more fall away when they learn they are not going to be employed as preachers. Better it is, claims Nevius, to leave the people in their own occupations.

4) "The Employment System tends to excite a mercenary spirit, and to increase the number of mercenary Christians." The danger under the Old Method is simply this that men will come to the church, be baptized, confess their faith, and seek the ministry simply for the money. When that influence enters the church, Nevius contends, it spreads with destructive, divisive results.

5) "The Employment System tends to stop the voluntary work of unpaid agents." The convert reasons: "If others are getting paid to preach, why not I?"

6) "The Old System tends to lower the character and lessen the influence of the missionary enterprise, both in the eyes of foreigners and natives." In Nevius' day new converts in China were almost universally branded, "Rice Christians," by their unconverted neighbors. Training and hiring and paying converts to preach only fosters this attitude rather than denying it. The church is seen as a foreign institution and is viewed with suspicion. This obviously makes the work just that much more difficult.

ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

"Dear Ann Landers"

Ann Landers is known by most who read the newspapers. She gives advice to the lovelorn. Some of her advice is a matter of simple common sense. Much of it is based not on the morality of Scripture, but the "morality" of natural man. The writer of that column recently took a position as "pro-choice" in the abortion issue. The term, "pro-choice" is deceiving. One might rather term the position of these "pro-choicers" as being "pro-murder" (within stipulated limitations). Ann Landers' public stand generated much response. One lengthy response appeared in *The Christian News*, September 21, 1981, written by Rev. Earl A. Bielefeld. He responds:

I read with interest your two columns on abortion and want to take strong exception to your assertion that "The questions were good but Dr. Ryan's answers were better...."

...The doctor asserts that the HLB (Human Life Bill, ed.) "would present great difficulty for obstetricians to provide health care to women who are pregnant." I would ask what, besides medically unnecessary abortions, would this bill prohibit? He mentions tubal

pregnancies and cancer, presumably of the uterus. These, of course are life-threatening medical conditions which are expressly allowed....

The good doctor feels that the fetus is "biological life" but not a human being. Later he says that the humanity of the life is not a scientific question but philosophical, moral, and theological. If this biological life is not human, what is it? Canine? Feline? Bovine? Equine? Its genetic code with 46 chromosomes is found only in humans. The fetus proceeds from human intercourse and takes its temporary residence in the sustaining environment of a human womb. I think the good doctor is confusing "humanity" with "personhood" under the constitution. The latter is indeed a matter of legal opinion. ...The Roe vs. Wade decision (of the Supreme Court) has an ominous precedent from 1857, namely, the Dred Scott decision. You'll recall that our august Supreme Court then decided that although blacks were humans, they were not "persons" under the law and were therefore not covered by the constitutional guarantees of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."...

...The doctor says that "genetic screening programs represent a great advance in diseases such as Down's

syndrome." He fears that should the HLB become law this would become irrelevant as he could no longer "offer the woman a choice." The term "choice" sounds very appealing to a freedom-loving American, but the thought must properly be completed. Freedom to choose what? In this case what is being sought is the freedom of a woman to kill her unborn child. Are you aware that some of this "genetic screening" is being used to identify children of an unwanted sex so that they can be terminated? Are you aware that mentally and defective newborns are being actively and passively killed by doctors who brag of this in prestigious medical journals? Wake up and smell the coffee, Ann. The holocaust didn't end with the death of Hitler in 1945; its been reincarnated in a segment of the American medical profession today.... If America ultimately swallows this measure of fascist eugenics, I don't doubt that somewhere down the road we'll get around to putting all mentally and physically defective persons "out of their misery." I can just see some bureaucrat heading some such "better late than never program".

In your second column we perhaps get to find out what really makes Dr. Ryan tick. It's economics. "Instead of a single cost of \$125 for an abortion, we will pay \$1,000 to \$1,500 for a delivery and at least \$100,000 to support these welfare children until they reach maturity. This is a commitment of about 40 billion dollars every year." Could you please inquire as to how many of those \$125 fees Dr. Ryan collects per year? Doubtless he pays some rather hefty income taxes which may explain his distaste for helping support poor people on welfare. Clearly, Dr. Ryan is a materialist who places a dollar value on human life, especially the lives of the poor whom he could terminate for income and avoid helping with his taxes.

...So pro-lifers are o.k., if they merely disapprove of

abortion and preferably keep it to themselves. But some seek to actually defend the lives of the innocent unborn and they become dangerous to democracy by asking their elected officials to pass laws to that effect. But most people oppose theft, murder, rape, slavery, and cruelty to animals on religious grounds. Should we appeal those laws that are so fatally flawed by religious motivation?

The humanity of the unborn and the wrongness of abortion has been a given in western civilization since the time of Hippocrates. Scientific advances in fetology and perinatology in recent years have increasingly confirmed the individual humanity of the unborn. The fact that Scripture (Ps. 51:5; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:44; Is. 13:18 et al.) also regards the unborn as individual humans should strengthen, not negate, this view....

The letter continues by warning against that same attitude as was evident in Germany before and during World War II and the "wanton slaughter of millions of innocent but unwanted members of society." And the warning had better be taken to heart. It is certainly true that "Pro-choice" can quickly be applied to families who must deal with very aged and infirm members. Ought they too not have the "right" of "choice" whether or not they terminate the lives of the infirm and handicapped—which otherwise they must support at great financial sacrifice? Does not "pro-choice" also imply that one ought to have the right to do with his body as he would—including the commission of suicide? Let it be clearly understood—this is not a matter of "pro-choice" but "pro-murder." It is the viewpoint that one has a right, under limited circumstances, to take the life of another, though his own life is not endangered. That is violation of the sixth command.

The Author of Genesis

In *Christian News*, September 28, 1981, there is a report of a computer study of the book of Genesis to determine whether its author is one—or whether there are several. The leading theologians of the past century have boldly asserted that there are more authors than one to the first five books of the Bible. The view is held even within such "conservative" schools as Hope College of the Reformed Church in America. The view is in direct conflict with the clear teachings of Scripture and must rest upon the theory that the Bible is not infallible.

Liberal theologians, who reject what the Bible and Jesus Christ teach about the authorship of the first five books of the Bible, have long argued that these books were compiled from various sources designated by them as J-E-D and P.

Now the September 28 *Newsweek* reports in an article titled "Did One Person Write Genesis?": "The coldblooded precision of technology may seem to be at odds with the mysteries of religion. But in a computer study of the Bible called the Genesis Project, the twain have met—and surprisingly, the Good Book has won a vote of confidence from the soulless machine.

"At issue is the authorship of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. Traditionally, Jews and Christians alike considered the Pentateuch to be the work of Moses. But for the past hundred years, liberal theologians have generally agreed that the books of Moses are the work of a variety of writers."

Newsweek says that "Two narrative strains that scholars have long considered distinct because they employ different words for God turned out to be

linguistically indistinguishable when methodically compared by the computer." *Newsweek* quotes project coordinator Yehuda Radday: "It is most probable that the book of Genesis was written by one person."

...Orthodox Christian scholars believe that one person is the basic author of Genesis because this is what the Bible and Christ teach. Their position is not based on the results of any computer study....

It is indeed interesting, if all the above is correct, that the learned "theologians" of our day, who have so long sought to undermine the faith of many in the trustworthiness of the Bible, are exposed by

the scientific ingenuity of natural man. The child of God needs no computer to convince him of the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture. Yet when natural man points out the absurdities of these "theologians," the Christian can only rejoice that the foolishness of man becomes exposed even already on this earth. But, of course, one can hardly expect that the learned "theologians" will agree with this study—for it is rather traditional in this camp to accept only such scientific findings as seem to support their own positions.

Double Standards

The *Presbyterian Journal*, September 30, 1981, presents an article which points out the inconsistency of those who fault the "new right" for attacking "pluralism" in American life. It states:

Critics of the New Right, including the Moral Majority, are charging conservatives with doing exactly what they have been doing for years, according to Rep. William L. Dickinson (R-Ala.).

Mr. Dickinson was referring to charges made by such liberal organizations as Americans United for Separation of Church and State, that the New Right attacks "pluralism" in American life by insisting there is but one "Christian" position on various issues.

"My own church, the United Methodist, has done the same thing," Mr. Dickinson said. He said the denomination had tried to intimidate him, as a member of Congress, for not holding to the denomination's stand on abortion.

Quoting a "chastising letter" from his church, the Congressman said, "An intimidating section in the letter stated, 'On behalf of all United Methodists, many of whom are voters in your district, I urge you, a United Methodist member of Congress, to evaluate

your denomination's thoughtful position on this sensitive issue.' "

The writer continues by pointing to a Mr. Gaddy, senior minister at the Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, who accused the New Right of perverting politics. He said, "Religious freedom is being eroded by a disregard for pluralism." But the writer of the article points out the double standard which is being used:

About such attacks, Mr. Dickinson said, "The hypocrisy is that the critics are among those who have most actively 'used religion for their own political purposes.' The attacks on evangelicals have come from radical elements of the mainline Protestant establishment at the national level which for years have been deeply involved in various political actions and causes.

"They operate together on a coordinated basis from elaborately financed church offices in New York, Washington and other locations. In many instances, their local churches at the 'grass roots' don't even know how their money is being spent," the Congressman said.

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Chapter VIII — Of Christ the Mediator

Rev. Ron Van Overloop

In the eight sections of this chapter the Westminster Confession treats the office and work of Christ as the Mediator of His people. Let us recall that the Confession has already taught that God from eter-

nity unconditionally elected some men and angels in Christ unto salvation and glory out of His free grace and that God has foreordained all the means to that salvation and glory (Chapter III).

In this issue we consider the first four sections.

1. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man;^a the Prophet,^b Priest,^c and king;^d the Head and Saviour of His Church;^e the Heir of all things;^f and Judge of the world;^g unto Whom He did from all eternity give a people to be His seed,^h and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified and glorified.ⁱ

- a. Isaiah 42:1; I Peter 1:19, 20; John 3:16; I Timothy 2:5.
- b. Acts 3:22.
- c. Hebrews 5:5,6.
- d. Psalm 2:6; Luke 1:33.
- e. Ephesians 5:23.
- f. Hebrews 1:2.
- g. Acts 17:31.
- h. John 17:6; Psalm 22:30; Isaiah 53:10.
- i. I Timothy 2:6; Isaiah 55:4,5; I Corinthians 1:30.

2. The Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father did when the fulness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature,^a with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin;^b being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance.^c So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one Person, without conversion, composition, or confusion.^d Which Person is very God and very man yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.^e

- a. John 1:1-14; John 5:20; Philippians 2:6; Galatians 4:4.
- b. Hebrews 2:14,16,17; 4:15.
- c. Luke 1:27,31,35; Galatians 4:4.
- d. Luke 1:35; Colossians 2:9; Romans 9:5; I Peter 3:18; I Timothy 3:16.
- e. Romans 1:3,4; I Timothy 2:5.

3. The Lord Jesus, in His human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure;^a having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;^b in Whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell;^c to the end, that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth,^d He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator and Surety.^e Which office He took not unto Himself, but was thereunto called by His Father;^f Who put all power and judgment into His hand, and gave Him commandment to execute the same.^g

- a. Psalm 45:7; John 3:34.
- b. Colossians 2:3.
- c. Colossians 1:19.
- d. Hebrews 7:26; John 1:14.
- e. Acts 10:38; Hebrews 12:24; 7:22.
- f. Hebrews 5:4,5.
- g. John 5:22,27; Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:36.

4. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake;^a which that He may discharge, He was made

under the law,^b and did perfectly fulfil it;^c endured most grievous torments immediately in His soul,^d and most painful sufferings in His body;^e was crucified, and died;^f was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption.^g On the third day He arose from the dead,^h with the same body in which He suffered;ⁱ with which also He ascended into heaven,^j and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father,^k making intercession;^k and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.^l

- a. Psalm 40:7,8; Hebrews 10:5-10; John 10:18; Philippians 2:8.
- b. Galatians 4:4.
- c. Matthew 3:15; 5:17.
- d. Matthew 26:37,38; Luke 22:44; Matthew 27:46.
- e. Matthew 26 and 27.
- f. Philippians 2:8.
- g. Acts 2:23,24,27; Acts 13:37; Romans 6:9.
- h. I Corinthians 15:3-5.
- i. John 20:25,27.
- j. Mark 16:19.
- k. Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24; 7:25.
- l. Romans 14:9,10; Acts 1:11; 10:42; Matthew 13:40-42; Jude 6; II Peter 2:4.

The first section speaks of the eternal appointment of Jesus Christ as Mediator and it identifies the office of Mediator.

We read first that God was pleased to ordain Jesus to be the Mediator between God and man. It was the good pleasure of the Triune God to do this. He gave to the Mediator a responsibility and calling to fulfill, namely, to save those people God gave Him. The Confession teaches that God's eternal purpose logically began with Christ, the Mediator, for it speaks of the fact that to Him Who was already ordained Mediator, God gave a people. God's eternal purpose also ends in Christ, for He is the Heir of all things. "All things were made by Him *and for Him*" (Col. 1:16b). In all things He has the preeminence and in Him all fulness dwells. No wonder He is called the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending (Rev. 1:8).

A mediator is one who comes between two disagreeing parties for the purpose of making reconciliation. In such a way this term is used today, for example, in a labor union contract dispute. However, Christ's office of Mediator is essentially different. He is not an unbiased and separated third party, for He comes from God, one of the disagreeing parties. He is ordained by GOD to stand between GOD and man. In perfect harmony with the Scriptures the Confession shows that salvation is completely of the Lord: beginning, middle, and end. In another very important way does Christ's office of Mediator differ from other mediators. He does not merely persuade in order to reach agreement, but He *makes* peace. He has the power to make peace, not just beg for it. He does not seek a

compromise, for His power is His cleansing blood and efficacious grace.

His work as Mediator requires that Jesus Christ function as Prophet, Priest, and King. He fulfills this not as three separate offices, but as three related functions of the one office of Mediator. For example, He is a priestly and kingly prophet.

"Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in His revealing to the church, in all ages, by His Spirit and word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation" (Larger Catechism, q. 43).

"Christ executeth the office of a priest, in His once offering Himself a sacrifice without spot to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of His people; and in making continual intercession for them" (Larger Catechism, q. 44).

"Christ executeth the office of a king, in calling out of the world a people to Himself, and giving them officers, laws, and censures, by which He visibly governs them; in bestowing saving grace upon His elect, rewarding their obedience, and correcting them for their sins, preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings, restraining and overcoming all their enemies, and powerfully ordering all things for His own glory, and their good; and also in taking vengeance on the rest, who know not God, and obey not the gospel" (Larger Catechism, q. 45).

It is Christ, in these functions of His office, Who is the Head and Savior of His Church. Not only is this Mediator biased because He comes from God, but consider how intimately He unites Himself with the other party. He becomes their Head and Savior.

Not only is He Lord of His people, but also He is Lord of all things: Heir of all things and Judge of the world. He rules both the church and creation according to His redemptive purpose (Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18). Christ's judging all things is also treated in chapter 33.

* * * * *

Section two speaks of the Mediator's two natures (divine and human) and their relationship to each other.

Ever since Christ was on earth there have been assaults which deny either that He was truly God or that He was real man. Other related heresies have confused the relationship of these two natures.

That Jesus is very God was proven in chapter two, section three. In this chapter the Confession reiterates that when we speak of the Mediator we

are dealing with the Second Person of the Trinity, Who is very and eternal God.

Jesus was also a true man. Being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary, He took upon Himself the flesh and blood of His brethren (Heb. 2:14). In body and soul He was like us. In that human body and soul He experienced the infirmities common to man. He had to eat and drink and sleep. He grew in knowledge and wisdom, loved and wept, and shrank from suffering as a man. Yet in all of His humanity He was without sin.

As perfect God and real man He is one person, for these two complete and distinct natures are inseparably joined. They are not mixed or confused into one conglomeration. Also, the uniting of these two natures did not make any change in them; both remained complete. On the other hand, the fact that they remained distinct and complete does not imply any separation. Rather than being divided into two composite parts, they were and are inseparably united. No farther does the Confession go in explaining and describing this mystery, and wisely so.

The Mediator is very God and also real man, united in the one Person of the Son of God. So the Scriptures reveal our Mediator to be. Truly He is ordained of God, for such a Mediator could not be the conception nor creation of man. To God be the glory.

* * * * *

Section three shows us how Jesus was "thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator."

The union of the human and divine natures did not deify the human nature and thus cause it to cease to be human. To fulfill His office, therefore, it was necessary that He be furnished by God. To that end He was anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure (John 3:34). His very name "Christ," which means "anointed," signifies this. As anointed He is authorized and qualified to perform and accomplish His task of reconciling man to God. He needed the Holy Spirit to enable Him to accomplish the work of redemption.

The Confession makes clear that Christ was appointed to His office by God. He was "called of God" (Heb. 5:10). Christ says that He was "sent by the Father" (John 5:30). Also He says that the works He did and words He spoke were not His, but the Father's Who sent Him.

Even as God called Him to the office, He voluntarily took it upon Himself. "I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:18). Even in His death "He gave Himself" (Galatians 2:20)

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Section four gives the details of how Christ voluntarily discharged His mediatorial office. He did so by going down the steps of humiliation and up the steps of exaltation.

The Confession begins the details of His humiliation with His birth, which it describes in the language of Galatians 4:4, "made under the law." Voluntarily and as our representative He came under the law and all of its demands of perfection. And this He did by rendering perfect obedience to every point of the law. He fulfilled it vicariously as our obedience. Another part of His humiliation was the experience of most grievous torments in His soul and most painful sufferings in His body. As grievous and painful as these were they were as nothing when compared to the wrath of God which He experienced on the accursed cross. As mediator He had to die and be buried to accomplish salvation for His people. His burial showed that He tasted death in all of its parts. However, while buried, un-

like any other man, His body experienced not even the beginning of decay and corruption.

Christ performed His work as Mediator also in His exaltation. He, the Mediator, human and divine, arose from the dead. It was the same human body that was buried which arose, only now it is exalted. In that body He also ascended into heaven and sits at God's right hand. Thus He shall return to judge at the end of this world.

Each of the steps of humiliation and exaltation were voluntarily taken. At the same time each was divinely prescribed and was necessary unto the redemption of all those whom the Father had given to Him. It was out of love for His own that He walked this way. He is the "Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

May we ever retain the consciousness of such a great love, to the end that we may live to serve Him in eternal gratitude and praise.

GUEST ARTICLE

Election Preaching and the Demand for Repentance

Rev. Ronald Hanko

As the doctrine of divine election by the most wise counsel of God, was declared by the prophets, by Christ Himself, and by the apostles, and is clearly revealed in the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, so it is still to be published in due time and place in the Church of God, for which it was peculiarly designed . . .

Thus do the Canons of Dort (I, 14) teach the necessity of election-preaching from the examples of the apostles and prophets and of the chief cornerstone Himself. For the most part, however, the doctrine of election is treated with silence, even among those Churches which subscribe to the Canons. To excuse such insolent conduct over against the confessions of the Church and the Scriptures, all sorts of objections are made against the doctrine of election. One very common objection is that the preaching of sovereign election leaves no room either in the established Church or on the mission field for the call to repentance and to faith in the saving power of Jesus Christ. So, it is said, the doctrine is useless and even dangerous in that it encourages carelessness in Christian living.

On the other hand, there are those who claim to be firmly committed to the doctrine of election, who demand that it be preached, and who claim to find all their comfort in it, but who at the same time object to the Gospel call for repentance and confession of sin. Sometimes their objection is that of the antinomian against the preaching of the Law of God with its sharp call for the mortifying of the old man of sin and the quickening of the new man in Christ. Or it may be the objection of the fatalist who hears in the call to repentance overtones of Arminianism or free-willism. More often it is simply a practical objection by way of self-justification when the demand for repentance is brought by the Church through her officebearers to those who walk in sin. The evil of these objections is that they give occasion for slander against the doctrine of election and against the sovereign God of election.

It might seem from this, however, that election-preaching and a sharp, clear demand for repentance cannot be reconciled: that sound, biblical preaching of election does away with the Gospel call for repentance, since election means nothing else than that God's elect will infallibly be lead to

repentance and faith by the sovereign hand and irresistible grace of their God. Or, it might seem true that when the Church comes to the sinner demanding repentance, she is not taking the doctrine of election seriously—not taking into account the fact that the sinner, as long as he continues in sin, has not received the irresistible grace of God which alone can lead him to repentance, and that his continuing in sin is according to the sovereign decree of God Himself.

What are we to say to this? Is it true that election preaching and the demand for repentance are unable to stand together? Is one or the other unscriptural?

It is interesting, to say the least, that wherever and whenever the truth of sovereign predestination has been preached these objections have arisen from one side or the other. Always there have been those who sought to set the Gospel-call and the doctrine of sovereign predestination at odds. Already in the early Church, Augustine, that great defender of the faith, was moved to write a treatise with the title, *Concerning Rebuke and Grace*, in answer to those who used the doctrine of predestination to say:

"Wherefore is it preached and prescribed to us that we should turn away from evil and do good, if it is not we that do this, but 'God Who worketh in us to will and to do it' "? Chapter 4.

John Calvin, too, had to defend the doctrine of predestination against "another impudent and malicious calumny . . . that it destroys all exhortations to a pious life" (Institutes, III, 23, xiii). Nor were the fathers at Dort free from such charges, as is evident from Canons 1, 13; III, IV, 17; and V, 13, 14.

That both the doctrine of sovereign election and the call to repentance are *Scriptural* is not difficult to show. The Apostle Paul who writes so powerfully of election in Ephesians 1 is the same Paul who preached in Ephesus "both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). And in doing so, he only followed the example of his master. Jesus did not hesitate to preach election. He said that He had come to lay down His life for none other than the sheep which His Father had given Him (John 10:14, 15); and He knew His sheep so well that He could tell the unbelieving Jews, "Ye believe not because ye are not of My sheep" (John 10:46). Nor did He have any scruples about the call to repentance, but in the days of His ministry came "preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel' " (Mark

2:14b, 15).

It must be admitted that on such grounds there is not the least possibility of setting the two in conflict. If both are Scriptural, both can and *must* be preached. The only question is, then, *how* are the preaching of sovereign election and the demand for repentance to be reconciled according to Scripture and the Confessions? A careful examination of this question will lead to the conclusion, perhaps a surprising conclusion, that not only are the two to be reconciled, but that they are inseparable. Election-preaching without an accompanying call to repentance and faith is empty and useless, and likewise, the demand for repentance is a voice in the wilderness apart from the doctrine of election. The explanation lies in a proper understanding of the nature of Gospel preaching.

The preaching of the Gospel, including both the doctrine of election and the demand for repentance, is, by the ordinance of God Himself, the means which God sovereignly uses to bring to pass His eternal counsel of election. That is, God uses the demand for repentance, as it is brought by the Church through her ministry, to bring His elect to repentance. In the same way He uses the command to believe to lead them to saving faith in Jesus Christ, and the demand for conversion and good works to produce in His elect those fruits of their election. Thus He graciously gives what He demands, even while He demands it, and that is what we mean when we say that the preaching of the Gospel is a means of grace to God's people.

We understand, of course, that the preaching of the Gospel is not a means of grace mechanically, but that it is powerful and effectual through the inward operation of the regenerating Spirit. Nonetheless, the Spirit does not work arbitrarily, but in and through the preaching of the Gospel. Salvation by sovereign grace according to the election of grace and the preaching of the Gospel as a means of grace cannot and may not be separated.

That was Augustine's answer to those who misused the doctrine of predestination. He says,

Let then that damnable source be rebuked, that from the mortification of rebuke may spring the will of regeneration (i.e., the willing activity of the regenerated heart, R.H.), —if, indeed, he who is rebuked is a child of the promise,—in order that by the noise of the rebuke sounding and lashing from without, God may by His hidden inspiration work in him from within to will also. *Concerning Rebuke and Grace*, chapter 9.

He makes it clear in another place in the same treatise that this in no wise involves a denial of predes-

tination:

Let men then suffer themselves to be rebuked when they sin, and not conclude against grace from the rebuke itself, nor from grace against the rebuke . . . so that if he who is rebuked belongs to the number of the predestinated, rebuke may be to him a wholesome medicine; and if he does not belong to that number, rebuke may be to him a penal infliction.

Calvin's answer to his opponents is essentially the same:

Let preaching then have its free course, that it may lead men to faith, and dispose them to persevere with uninterrupted progress. Nor at any time let there be any obstacle to the knowledge of predestination, so that those who obey may not plume themselves on anything of their own, but glory only in the Lord. (Institutes, III, 23, xiii.)

Nor does the answer of the Synod of Dort differ in the least particular from that of either Calvin or Augustine.

. . . The supernatural operation of God, by which we are regenerated, in no wise excludes, or subverts the use of the gospel, which the most wise God has ordained to be the seed of regeneration, and the food of the soul. Wherefore, as the apostles and teachers who succeeded them, piously instructed the people concerning this grace of God, to His glory and the abasement of all pride, and in the meantime, however, neglected not to keep them by the sacred precepts of the gospel in the exercise of the Word, sacraments and discipline; even so to this day, be it far from either instructors or instructed to presume to tempt God in the Church by separating what He of His good pleasure hath most intimately joined together. *For grace is conferred by means of admonitions* (Italics mine, R.H.); and the more readily we perform our duty (with respect to the use of the gospel, R.H.), the more eminent usually is this blessing of God working in us, and the more directly is His work advanced; to Whom all the glory both of means, and of their saving fruit and efficacy is forever due. (Heads III, IV, 17; cf. also V, 14)

It might well be added here that the preaching is not only the means by which God's counsel of election is realized, but also the way in which He sovereignly works out the decree of reprobation. The Word preached is not only a savour of life unto life, but also of death unto death, and a means of hard-

ening (Isaiah 6:9, 10 and II Corinthians 2:14, 15).

The Word of God, according to the prophet Jeremiah (23:29), is like a fire and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. It is this both to the elect and the reprobate alike and as a fire and a hammer it must be preached also. To the reprobate who hear the preaching it is like a hammer which beats upon and hardens their consciences and as a fire which has for them the smell of the fires of hell. In the elect it is also a hammer which breaks in pieces the work and dominion of sin, which cracks hard hearts, and breaks the rebellion of stubborn wills. In them it is like a fire which burns away the dross of sin until only the pure gold of God's own work of grace is left incorruptible, undefiled, and imperishable.

It ought to be obvious, in this light, that the objection which says that election-preaching leaves no room for the call of the Gospel is the objection of the Arminian, and that it is only part of a vicious attack upon the whole doctrine of sovereign grace and a vile attempt to cast the sovereign Lord down from His lofty throne. What is perhaps not so clear is the fact that this error of the Arminian is connected with a wholly unscriptural view of the preaching. The Arminian customarily makes the Gospel nothing more than an offer of salvation on God's part to all men—an offer well-meant but dependent for its fruit upon the activity of man. The Arminian is blind to the sovereignty of God in election and blind to that same sovereignty in the preaching. Therefore, having changed the very nature of Gospel preaching he also has an excuse to discard the truth of predestination.

The error of the fatalist with respect to the preaching is essentially the same. He too fails to recognize God's sovereign right and power in using the preaching as the means of grace. So concerned is he (at least on the surface) to preserve the sovereignty of God in election and salvation that he denies not only the possibility of active obedience on the part of the unregenerate sinner but also on the part of the regenerated child of God. This lies at the root of his rejection of the Gospel call to repentance. He mistakenly supposes that the demand of the Gospel for repentance implies some ability on the part of the sinner to comply with that demand and conveniently forgets that God works in His people both the willing and the doing of repentance.

The objection of the antinomian to the call for repentance is rooted in his antagonism to the law. He cannot believe that the preaching of the law can be a means of grace to the believer. He confuses the doctrines of justification and sanctification, and fails to see that, although the law is powerless and useless for our justification, nevertheless it is by

God's grace a lamp to guide our feet in the way of sorrow for sin, and conversion, that it is, in other words, a means of grace for our thankful sanctification. Both the antinomian and the fatalist turn the grace of God into an excuse for licentiousness with their objections. And it is not surprising that their objections are usually found among those who neglect and despise not only the means of grace, but also the institute of the Church and the authority of the offices in the Church.

We must be clear, then, that the demand for repentance, and for faith and conversion, does not imply any ability on the part of the unregenerate to seek after God, but does imply that God-given and God-worked ability on the part of the believer. He alone has the spiritual ears to hear that call and the heart to obey it, and it is to him and for him first of all that the call to repentance comes. The office-bearers of the Church must bring that demand, therefore, in the confidence that God will use it to do whatever He has pleased. They must not obscure its sharpness by pleading or arguing with the sinner but must say to him, "Thus saith the Lord."

Demanding repentance and faith of dead sinners may seem foolish to us, but when we remember that God in Christ speaks through the preaching with the same power by which He created the worlds, then we can understand how the preaching can be the means to produce fruits of repentance and faith in the elect. The preaching of the Gospel today is no more foolishness than Ezekiel's preaching to the dry bones in the valley of vision. Just as the Spirit of God Who was present there in the wind did not work apart from the preaching, but by the Word of the prophet brought the dry bones together and clothed them with living flesh, so also does the Spirit work through the preaching today to clothe the spiritually dry bones of dead sinners with living and obedient flesh.

Nor is the fact that the Gospel does not save many an argument against what we have said. It simply illustrates the fact that the Word is a two-edged sword which always accomplishes God's purpose in one way or another and never returns to Him void. It shows us that the power of the preaching cannot be separated from the sovereign operation of the Spirit and from the power of God Himself. Those who do not obey are those who do not have the ears to hear and the hearts to understand, and the preaching of the Gospel with its hammering demand only serves to deafen those ears and harden those hearts according to the just judgment of God. Making the Gospel over into an offer does not change those ears and hearts, it only makes God a liar who offers what He has no intention of giving.

The demand for repentance, then, must be an integral part of the preaching of the Gospel, and it must be brought sharply and clearly. That means nothing less than preaching sin, and preaching sin as transgression of God's own law, committed against His everlasting holiness. God's people must not only learn about sin, but must learn to see their own sins in the light of God's glorious perfection. Only then will their repentance be specific and real. In other words, the "must" of the Gospel, which is the "must" of the Law, ought to be heard so clearly that it cannot be escaped. Only then will the Word be a fire and a hammer both on the mission field and in the institute of the Church.

Nor must repentance toward God ever be preached apart from the doctrine of election. But the doctrines of election must also be preached according to the Scriptures, which means the preaching of SOVEREIGN election, election which is unconditional, which separates between man and man, and which is the fountain from which flow to the child of God all the blessings of salvation, including heart-felt repentance and sorrow after God. Nor must election be preached grudgingly or rarely, but as the heart of the Gospel of grace. Only then will the grace of obedient repentance be ascribed to God and the glory given to His majestic name.

All this teaches us, finally, that the spiritually healthy child of God is one who searches out the pure preaching of the Gospel and who actively, faithfully, and studiously uses it on the Lord's Day and other occasions. He finds in it food for his soul that he may grow in grace, in the knowledge of sin and sorrow for sin, in faith and hope and love, and in the obedience of faith; and thereby he also learns the comfort of his eternal election. He is an enemy of truth, be he a wicked heretic or a wayward child of God, who attempts to set the teachings of Scripture in disorder, by bringing a Gospel which is not a fire and a hammer, or by separating election-preaching and the preaching of repentance toward God which God Himself in His good pleasure has joined together. Let us "not conclude against grace from the rebuke . . . nor from grace against the rebuke."

*Take time to
read and study
The Standard Bearer*

Book Reviews

LETTERS OF PAUL, HEBREWS AND THE BOOK OF PSALMS, The Arthur S. Way Translation; Kregel Publications, 1981; 483 pp., \$12.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

This translation of a part of the New Testament and the book of Psalms was first published in 1919—before the proliferation of Bible translations of our modern era. It has been reprinted by Kregel.

In the Preface, the author describes his work:

I might describe it as an attempt, not to present everywhere the verbal equivalent of what the Apostle said, but to convey what he meant. To take one instance—where Paul has used a metaphor, condensed, or implied in the use of a certain word (e.g., 'grow,' 'build,' 'run'), I have generally expanded it, remembering that the hearers' thoughts would instinctively fill up the picture, familiar to them, evoked by a word whose bare lexicon-equivalent has not the same force for us.

Still, I would deprecate the name of 'paraphrase' for my version, since my aim has been to follow the original closely, trying to bring out the full meaning, and even suggestion, of each word, deviating only when, to convey the significance of a passage, some expansion seemed advisable; my object being to do away with the necessity for explanatory notes by making the translation sufficiently full to carry its own explanation. However bold some of these connective interpolations may seem, they, in almost every instance, simply embody an explanation or develop a hint given by some commentator of commanding authority. The link of transition consists, in most cases, of a very few words, the principal exception being at the commencement of chapter ix of I Corinthians, where the sequence of the Apostle's argument has been a well-known *crux* of commentators.

As is true with many new translations, this one too sheds light upon some rather obscure passages of the KJV. While it certainly gives the author's own idea of a passage, in many instances the suggested (and expanded) translation is helpful; but this means that we have *commentary*, not translation.

There are, however, weaknesses. The purpose of a new translation, it would seem, would be to put the "archaic" language of the KJV into more modern (and, therefore, more understandable) language. Perhaps because this translation was prepared in the early part of the Twentieth Century, it does not succeed in giving us an up-to-date version. We need not, I think, belabor this point. One quotation will demonstrate what we

mean. The author's translation of Romans 8:2 is: "For the Law of the Spirit, which breathes a life absorbed into that of Messiah Jesus, has emancipated me—the erewhile thrall—from the law of sin, of death." I doubt whether any one would consider this clearer in meaning than the KJV.

Secondly, the translation is not very accurate. I can give only a few instances, but they should prove the point. Romans 8:28-30 reads: "And sure am I, that, on those who love God, all things are with one purpose working to bring blessings—yes, on those to whom, according to His providential plan, He has cried 'Come ye to me!' Long ere this He knew our hearts, long ere this He claimed us (as a man claims property by setting his landmarks thereon) as those whom He should mould into the very likeness of His own Son, so that He should have many brothers, Himself the firstborn. And to us whom so He called He gave righteousness: and us, to whom He has given righteousness, He has crowned with glory too." Another example is found in Romans 9 where the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is translated as: "He confirms in their stubbornness." Perhaps one more example will illustrate the point and, at the same time, give some of the flavor of the translation. This is Hebrews 11:1-3: "Faith is that attitude of mind which is the foundation-rock on which hope stands, that which satisfies us of the reality of things as yet beyond our ken. It was through their exercise of this faith that the men of old had God's witness borne to their righteousness. It is through faith that we discern that the epochs of our earth's development were moulded by the fiat of God, that it was not His design that the world which we now look upon would be the outcome of a mere process of evolution—evolution from nothing but matter palpable to our senses."

The Psalms are not really translated, but put into metrical and rhyming verses. They are more on the order of our *Psalter* versifications than translations.

While we are talking about translations anyway, there are two remarks that should be made about the proliferation of translations which really do not have anything to do with the accuracy of a translation as such. The first is that, it is to me beyond question that the many translations now offered are more confusing than helpful. If, e.g., one consults the various translations of a given text which he is studying, the result can only be confusion as to the meaning of the text in many instances and an almost total inability to learn what the Word of God

is really saying. We must be on our guard against this, for it is destructive of true Bible study rather than helpful. Whatever translation one uses, and I still prefer the KJV, one ought to stick to *one* translation and not bother himself with a multitude of others. And one ought to be sure that the translation one does decide to use is an accurate one.

The second remark has to do with memorization of the Bible. It is important that the child of God become thoroughly acquainted with the whole Scriptures. This is important for his calling to defend the faith, to teach his children the Word of God, to carry that Word with him in his heart and mind so that the Word may be a lamp to his feet and a light on his path, and to know the Scriptural basis for the truth he believes. But when he allows himself to make use of many different translations, he will know none of them and will not be able to quote from or refer to any of them. And, committing the Scriptures to memory is still easiest from the KJV, for its rhythmical cadences are the most easily learned of all the translations. I have tried it myself from the NIV; and, while I know this was not a completely fair test because of my familiarity with the KJV, it proved almost impossible for me to commit the NIV to memory successfully.

One other word of criticism about this translation and many others. Oftentimes, ostensibly for purposes of clarification, the key concepts of Scripture are not used. I refer to such terms as regeneration, justification, election, propitiation, reconciliation, etc. These terms have been used by the Church of Christ since the beginning of her New Testament History and, in some cases, even from earlier times. They carry with them a particular connotation, a definite "freight" of thought and meaning. They are often themselves Scriptural terms. They are essential for anyone to understand the truth and maintain the faith. If they are discarded, even in the interests of greater clarity, a very great and precious heritage is lost and the re-education of the Church becomes a necessity. This is dangerous business and results inevitably in a generation of doctrinal illiterates. And when the saints no longer know the truth, the heritage of the faith is lost, with all the dire consequences which result from it.

PHANTASTES and LILITH, by George MacDonald (with an introduction by C.S. Lewis) Eerdmans, 1981, \$3.95, paper (Reviewed by Gertrude Hoeksema)

Born in 1824 from a line of Scottish Calvinists, MacDonald became a preacher when he grew up. Early in his ministry, however, he ran into trouble in his congregation because of heresies in his preaching; for he had left the Calvinist doctrines of

faith and turned to neo-orthodoxy. In 1853 he left his troubled ministry and began to lecture and to write.

Many of his books are fairy tales or myths. Both *Phantastes* and *Lilith* are myths and are written for adults. In *Phantastes* the author takes the name of *Anodos* and begins a trip through fairy land. Throughout his trip he sees and senses this fairy land in other dimensions than those on this earth. His adventures and sensational rescues are believable because of the author's natural and straightforward way of fantasizing. When the friendly tree-spirits befriend him, when the Shadow (the power of evil) dogs his footsteps, and when the marble fairy statues become alive, it all seems natural in fairy land. In *Phantastes* as well as in *Lilith* the conflicts and battles with evil occur at night; for fairies and demons are night creatures.

Lilith, a night creature who was at times a princess and at times a spotted leopardess, takes her name from the Hebrew word in Isaiah 34:15 which in English is translated as "screech owl" or "night monster." The book is the story of Mr. Vane, who walks through an old mirror in his attic into another world. There he meets Mr. Raven, who at will becomes either a bird or a man and who later reveals himself as Adam. Mr. Raven guides his adventures through fairy land and leads him to the Little Ones who are kind, gentle folk, and then to *Lilith*, the evil princess of the corrupt city of Bulika. War breaks out between the forces of good and evil, wars which could take place only in fantasy land, ending in victory for the Little Ones.

These two books are more than mere fantasy. Throughout are symbolism and allegories, always

NOTICE!!!

ADMINISTRATOR NEEDED

Covenant Christian High School will be in need of an Administrator beginning with the 1982/83 school term. Applicants should contact the Chairman of the Education Committee by December 1, 1981:

Mr. David Ondersma
6761 Brookwood Drive, S.W.
Grandville, Michigan 49418
(616) 457-1417

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Aid of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to one of our members, Mrs. John B. Lubbers in the passing of her brother, DR. HENRY KLOMP.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 116:15).

Rev. G. Van Baren, Pres.
Mrs. Geo. Hoekstra, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses their sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Hilbert Kuiper, Sr. in the loss of her father, MR. JOHN VANDE WEERD.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him." (Psalm 103:17).

Rev. G. Van Baren, Pres.
Mrs. Geo. Hoekstra, Sec'y.

relating to Biblical ideas of good and evil, life and death, the tangible and the intangible. For example, the Shadow represents the devil, and Lilith seems to be the personification of evil in the world. The Little Ones are those of whom Christ said in Mark 10, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little children, he shall not enter therein." In *Lilith* the author presents his own erroneous views of death as soul-sleep and the view that

through that sleep the heathen are eventually converted.

At times his symbolizing and allegorizing become so heavy and detailed that the reader almost loses the thread of the story. However, if you are a reader who enjoys an interesting fantasy with Biblical and philosophical overtones which make you ponder deeper issues, you will enjoy these books.

News From Our Churches

Our missionary in Birmingham, Alabama, Rev. R. Van Overloop, declined the call extended him from Redlands, California.

At this writing, numerous Reformation lectures are planned by our churches around the country: Rev. Engelsma of South Holland, Illinois plans to speak in Kalamazoo, Michigan on the topic, "Christian Piety and the Reformation." "Upholding the Truth," is the topic of a lecture to be given in South Holland by Rev. Bekkering of Houston, Texas. Hope College Chapel in Holland, Michigan is the site of a lecture entitled "Reformation—A Declaration of Freedom" to be given by Rev. R. Miersma of our Holland Church. And Rev. Houck of our Lansing Mission will speak on "Historic Calvinism" in Wyckoff, New Jersey.

At the annual R.F.P.A. (Reformed Free Publishing Association) meeting in September, John N. Dykstra, Cornelius Pastoor, and Robert Garvelink were elected to the R.F.P.A. Board for three-year terms. Rev. Bruinsma of our Faith congregation in Jenison, Michigan spoke on the theme, "The Role of the Standard Bearer in Church Extension." In the course of his speech Rev. Bruinsma mentioned that the *Standard Bearer* has served to place us in contact with many individuals as well as some churches, and also that it has been used as a follow-up to initial contacts. If I may digress just a little: that's something our readership could well keep in mind! It doesn't have to be quite as spectacular as sending a gift subscription from Singapore to Scotland as mentioned in our last column. In your case it could be a 10-for-2 subscription sent to someone across town or your neighbor across the street.

Speaking of promoting the *Standard Bearer*, the following announcement from a Hull, Iowa bulletin shows one way they do it: "'Christ on Trial,' 'Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches

1981,' 'Letters to Timothy,' 'The Spirit of our Age,' 'Yielding Ourselves Up to Jesus Christ,' these are just some of the articles in the August issue of the *Standard Bearer*. Have you read them?"

A dual celebration took place in our Hudsonville, Michigan Church on October 30, as is evident from this Hudsonville bulletin announcement: "This is a reminder of the important event of the celebration of the anniversary of our pastor's 25 years of faithful ministry as well as the celebration of Rev. and Mrs. Van Baren's 25th wedding anniversary."

Some of our readers with good memories will remember the "Did you know" method used on occasion in this column by Mr. "See you in Church" Faber. If he doesn't mind, I'd like to borrow that method from time to time, starting right now: Did you know....

- That our Wyckoff, New Jersey church has been receiving building fund gifts all the way from Australia?
- That Rev. Heys was laid up for several weeks due to severe back pain?
- That our Kalamazoo church sponsors a Question Hour radio broadcast?
- That the last debt of the Randolph church building has been paid?
- That members of our Kalamazoo congregation take turns cleaning the church?
- That October 12 marked the 40th anniversary of the ministry of God's Word for Rev. Heys?
- That Rev. Veldman recently baptized his great-grandchild in our Southwest Church?
- That as of January 11, 1981, Rev. Kamps was still missing the navy blue dress hat that disappeared at a singspiration in Edgerton, Minnesota?

We close with a quote from a Holland, Michigan bulletin: "If a church wants a better pastor, it can begin by praying for the one it has."