

The **STANDARD BEARER**

— A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE —

. . . Persecution does not come to you as a matter of course, simply because you *say* that you are a Christian. The world can easily tolerate those who are content to *say* that they are Christians, but whose lives reflect only minor differences. Persecution, reproach, scorn falls upon those who *live* their Christianity.

See "Signs of the Times" — page 470

CONTENTS

Meditation—	
Israel's Passage Through the Red Sea	458
Editorials—	
More Suggestions About Our	
Synodical Meetings	461
The "eodem modo" Rejected in the	
Conclusion of the Canons (4)	462
The Lord Gave the Word—	
Missionary Methods (14)	464
Guest Article—	
Creation? or Evolution?	466
From Holy Writ—	
The So-called Proof-texts of Postmillennialism .	468
Signs of the Times—	
The Church of the Present Day	
and Persecution (1)	470
Bible Study Guide—	
Paul's Letter to Philippi (1)	472
The Day of Shadows—	
By Hunger Driven	475
Translated Treasures—	
A Pamphlet Concerning the Reformation	
of the Church	477
News From Our Churches	480

THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August.

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.
Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

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

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

Editorial Office: Prof. H.C. Hoeksema
4975 Ivanrest Ave. S.W.
Grandville, Michigan 49418

Church News Editor: Mr. Calvin Kalsbeek
1313 Wilson Ave. S.W.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504

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

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

Business Office: The Standard Bearer
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.
P.O. Box 6064
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506
PH: (616) 243-2953

New Zealand Business Office: The Standard Bearer
c/o Protestant Reformed Fellowship
B. Van Herk, 66 Fraser St.
Wainuiomata, New Zealand

Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$10.50 per year. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order, and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

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

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

MEDITATION

Israel's Passage Through the Red Sea

Rev. H. Veldman

"By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned."
Hebrews 11:29

Indeed, the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men. How foolish it may have seemed for Israel and Moses to keep the Passover that night in the land of Egypt. Yet this feast of the Passover was Israel's deliverance. The king had commanded them to leave, and the Egyptians had laden them with gifts of silver and gold as remuneration for all the years of hard labor and bondage.

This same truth is also held before us in this Word of God. How unbelievably foolish appears to be the course which Israel took! Is it any wonder that Pharaoh must have thought that Moses was beside himself? A more foolish course could not have been selected by this leader of the Hebrews! However, one vital matter must be borne in mind. Notice what we read in Exodus 14:4, 8 and in verses 17 and 18. Hence, at least three times we

read of the hardening of the hearts of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. God, while delivering His people, deliberately leads Pharaoh and his host to ruin and destruction, because He would make His power known.

Apparently Foolish

Israel's passage through the Red Sea — is there anything, in all the annals of history, comparable to this incident? Where, in all the pages of history, do we read of the migration of an entire people out of one land into another, and then through a sea and a river and a waste howling wilderness? As far as this amazing incident is concerned, it is apparently utterly foolish.

How true is the Word of God as stated in 1 Corinthians 1:25! The foolishness and weakness of God (regarded by the world as such) are indeed wiser and stronger than men. How this is verified throughout history! Was it not thus in the days of Enoch, that mighty witness of the Lord and preacher of righteousness before the flood? Do not the days of Noah speak to us of the same truth? Is it not thus throughout the ages? Are not, apparently, all the advantages with the wicked world? Are not the people of the Lord hopelessly outnumbered? Is not the church of God always a little flock? Do not the children of this world have access to all the resources of this world? Is not, therefore, the position of God's little flock in the midst of the world one of utter hopelessness and helplessness? Yet, that mighty world will be destroyed and that little flock of the Lord will be saved. And the same truth is held before us in this text. On the one hand, we have here the power and wisdom of the world, represented by Pharaoh and Egypt, the mighty world power of that time and age. And, on the other hand, we have here the power and the wisdom of God. We might think that Pharaoh would have learned his lesson, having suffered when Jehovah devastated his land with ten mighty and dreadful plagues. However, the Lord hardens his heart, also the hearts of the Egyptians; He leads them in the way of utter folly and destroys them in the Red Sea.

Indeed, apparently how utterly foolish is Israel's course as set forth in this history! First of all, what an agonizingly slow procession departs out of the land of Egypt. Some two million souls there were, and Psalm 105 informs us that there was not one feeble one among them. Imagine: not one feeble one among them, and this in spite of the terrible bondage to which Israel had been subjected! And what a foolish route! One would think that a procession of this nature would at least take the short route to Canaan, in a northeasterly direction through the land of the Philistines. But such is not the case. Israel is commanded by the Lord to turn

southward and march along the western shore of the Red Sea. Hence, the word is brought to Pharaoh that the Israelites are hopelessly entangled in the land, are in a predicament from whence they cannot escape. How hopeless is Israel's position! To the north of them they see the advancing Egyptian army. To their left is the Red Sea, and it they cannot possibly cross. Before them and to the west lie the mountains and the wilderness. Indeed, Israel is hopelessly entangled in the land. Is it any wonder that the king of Egypt resolves to set out after them? Remembering the ten plagues, how he hated Israel!

Secondly, what a folly confronts them as they must pass through the Red Sea! O, it may appear that it was safe for Israel to proceed. Had not a riverbed been made dry for them? Yet, also this passage appears to be utter folly. First, the Red Sea is about six to seven miles wide at this spot. What a long way for such a procession! Secondly, would not the Egyptians be able to do so, travel much faster than they and hem them in? However, we must also bear in mind the following. Had the Lord simply made this pathway through the Red Sea, and was He, visible to all, holding up these waters so that they would not come cascading down upon them, all would have been simplified. But Moses had stretched out his rod and an east wind had come up and had blown all that night. What assurance did Israel have that that east wind would continue to blow? Yes, the wonder was that that east wind had blown when Moses stretched out his rod. But, to Israel it all must have seemed rather natural. Only a few saw Moses stretch out his rod. All that Israel perceived was an east wind that blew into their faces. And, if Israel believed only this, this is not so strange, is it? Do not the unbelieving critics say the same thing? How they claim that this is only a natural phenomenon! How hazardous it seemed to be for Israel to "take the chance" because of this east wind! What if it stopped blowing?

Thirdly, is our position in the world, apparently, less foolish? We are called to be God's people in a wicked world, far greater and stronger than we. We seek a city we cannot see; we hope for a glory that is humanly impossible; we long for everlasting life beyond the grave, and our only hope is simply the Word and promise of the Lord, the fulfillment whereof is humanly absolutely impossible. Suffering and persecution and ridicule and mockery here below; glory and life beyond, on the other side, humanly impossible and unattainable.

Wondrously Wise

First, salvation must be of God alone. God has willed for His people and places them in impossible situations. He has willed for us a mountain of guilt

which no man can possibly pay. He has willed for us chains of sin which we cannot possibly break, a pathway through sickness and death with which we cannot possibly cope. Salvation must be of God alone. His right arm and hand must bring salvation. Man must never have the opportunity to ascribe salvation to himself. All attention must be focused forever upon the living God, the God of our salvation.

How strikingly this applies to Israel here! How desperately hopeless was Israel's position! Mind you, this was deliberately of the Lord. Jehovah commanded Moses to lead Israel along this impossible route. Imagine: two million souls, including children and babes, with all their cattle, threatened from the rear by the mighty Egyptian host, flanked on their left by the Red Sea, hemmed in by mountains and the wilderness! All this because salvation must come solely from the Lord. Notice what we read in Exodus 14:13-14. Indeed, Israel shall do nothing. The Lord alone will fight for them.

Secondly, Pharaoh and his host must be destroyed. On the one hand, this applies to Israel's route. Notice, first, that Israel's route is directed by the Lord. The Lord directs and commands Moses to lead Israel along the western shore of the Red Sea instead of taking the short route through the land of the Philistines. And Jehovah hardens Pharaoh's heart. This is repeated in verse 8. Indeed, that king could and should have known better. He certainly should have had every reason to remain at home. Had the Lord God of Israel not devastated his land with ten mighty plagues? But the Lord hardens his heart. Sovereignly Jehovah works in Pharaoh that he wants to pursue Israel. He is no stock and block (and this is emphasized by "heart"), but it is all of the alone sovereign God of Israel. Then, on the other hand, this occurs at the Red Sea. The Lord commands Moses to stretch forth his rod over the Red Sea and then causes an east wind to blow all that night. What is the implication of this? O, if the Angel of the Lord had appeared visibly to Pharaoh and his host, then the king and his host undoubtedly would have refused to follow Israel into the sea. But now the Lord causes that east wind to blow. Pharaoh saw only the east wind and attributed it to the passage through the sea. Again we read in verse 17 that the Lord will harden their hearts. Only now

we read of the hearts of the Egyptians. Perhaps this host had hesitated, not trusting the situation. But the Lord hardens their hearts. They see only the east wind. And in their spiritual hardness and blindness and hatred against God and His people, they plunged into the sea after Israel, are led to their everlasting destruction. Indeed, the foolishness and weakness of God are wiser and stronger than men. And this occurs throughout the ages.

Possible Only By Faith

By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land. This was possible only by faith.

Of course, not all the Israelites believed, as we read in 1 Corinthians 10:5. Indeed, with many of them God was not well pleased. This was true at the time of Moses and it is true throughout the ages. This faith applies undoubtedly to Israel from the viewpoint of the remnant according to election. Only they believed, and all the rest of them simply went along with them.

Israel believed. Indeed, everything appeared to be an insurmountable obstacle. It surely seemed that the way they travelled would never lead them to Mount Sinai or to the promised land of Canaan. But, they believed. And this faith, also here, is the evidence of things unseen, the substance of things hoped for. Israel must go forward, forward, if you please, into the sea. The object of their faith is not what they see. Presently, the wind blows, a path is struck through the sea, some five to six miles long, and they go on, believing that they will be delivered from the Egyptian host following them. They will be saved. The Egyptians will be drowned (literally: swallowed down) by the waters which will close over them.

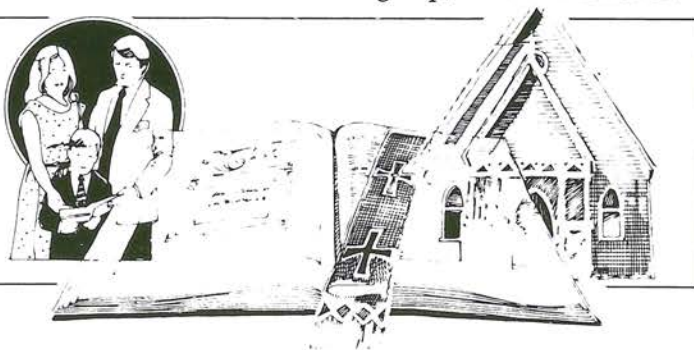
And does this apply to the church throughout the ages? We must and do believe in the foolishness of preaching, in the cross which is the foolish content of this preaching. The world will continue to hate and ridicule us. Nevertheless, we believe; that cross will never fail us. It is the power of the living God unto salvation. We shall be saved, now and forever.

God's ways are impossible ways.

We, however, shall be saved.

Unto the Lord be all the glory, now and forever.

*The Standard Bearer
makes a thoughtful gift
for many occasions.*



EDITORIALS

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

More Suggestions About Our Synodical Meetings

We promised some more suggestions with a view to the improvement of our synodical gatherings.

One of these is rather minor, but would nevertheless serve to improve the manner and the efficiency of Synod's work. It concerns the time of our meetings and the rather arbitrary manner in which this time — sometimes on very short notice — is changed. Our synodical rules call for Synod to meet from 9 A.M. to 12 Noon and from 1:30 P.M. to 5:00 P.M., unless otherwise determined by Synod. At this year's Synod the time of meeting was rather arbitrarily changed on more than one occasion on very short notice. Once the noon recess was extended after an overtime morning session. On another occasion a late afternoon decision resulted in a lengthy evening session. And at the very conclusion of Synod's meetings, as previously mentioned, Synod suddenly and without even an official decision extended its afternoon session well into the early evening hours.

Now whatever one may think of the standing rule in this matter, the fact is that these sudden and arbitrary changes are not conducive to orderliness, in some cases are not conducive to good work, and for some delegates work a hardship. As far as the last item is concerned, it should be remembered that there are other activities going on besides Synod. This is especially true for local delegates, that is, delegates from the area in which Synod is meeting. Some are business and professional men, who have to use spare time in the evening to pay a little attention to their business affairs. In other instances, there is congregational work to be attended to between sessions. Frequently there are school graduation programs while Synod is meeting; some have to speak at these programs and others want to attend because members of their families are involved. Besides, it is questionable whether Synod even does good work and efficient work at such extended sessions after having already concentrated for a whole day on matters requiring careful attention. And, finally, the way our sessions were extended and changed at this year's Synod on the spur of the moment, no delegate can plan his activities even for a day at a time.

Now what can and should be done about this?

In the first place, Synods ought to abide by the rule. The rule does not mean that from day to day and arbitrarily a Synod can change the time of meeting, sometimes even on the spur of the moment. The rule means that ordinarily Synod shall meet at the stated times unless this be otherwise determined at the very beginning of Synod. Thus, for example, at its opening session a Synod could determine that it is not going to convene until noon on Monday, or that it is going to convene at 8:30 every morning and adjourn at 5:30 every afternoon.

In the second place, I think Synod could save some time and avoid evening sessions for the most part if it would do two things: 1) Convene more promptly at its stated times, and especially after coffee breaks (which sometimes become much longer than the stipulated fifteen minutes). 2) Change the stated time of its sessions to 8:30 A.M. to 12:00 Noon and 1:15 to 5:30 P.M. In the course of a week's meetings this would add the equivalent of almost a full day's sessions to the time available for Synod's work. Perhaps this could be done especially in those years when Synod must spend considerable time on examination of candidates. I do not think, however, that it would be wise to fill such a lengthened day with examinations; our students already find the examination schedule rather gruelling. On examination days Synod could either adhere to the present schedule of 9-to-5, or it could spend some time on committee reports if any of the advisory reports is ready.

In the third place, Synod could consider setting itself a program of business. Other Synods or general assemblies do something of this kind. For example, it could determine that on such-and-such a day (or days) it will devote its attention to the report of Committee I, and on the next day it will begin with Committee II, etc. With such a program, in case a given report has not been completed, it would either be given extended consideration by special motion or consideration would have to be postponed to a later session. But something of this kind — provided it does not put Synod in a bind —

would nevertheless serve to keep Synod "on the ball." Of course, an efficient chairman can do much — both by word of gentle prodding and by enforcing the rules of order — to "keep Synod's nose on the grindstone," even without an officially adopted program.

My next suggestion has to do with subsidy requests. This was also mentioned on the floor of Synod at the time when our 1982 Synod was deliberating on the various subsidy requests. The suggestion, however, is for the consistories and classes rather than for Synod. It has to do with the fact that every now and then a subsidy request furnishes insufficient financial data, or data that is not clear, or data in which there is an apparent contradiction. Down through the years this has been more or less of a perennial problem. From time to time Synods have even revised the subsidy request form in order to get a clearer picture of a subsidized congregation's true financial needs and in order to insure that a request is equitable. But repeatedly it has happened at synodical meetings that a question arises or that attention is called to an apparent conflict in the data, but no one at Synod is able to answer the question or resolve the conflict. Besides, it must be remembered that a consistory's voice concerning its subsidy request is through the request-form signed by the president and clerk of the consistory — not through an individual minister or elder who happens to be a delegate to Synod. The same is true of the Classis' decision concerning that request: the voice of the Classis is through the official decision appended to the request and published in the Agenda, not through any individual delegate from the Classis who happens to remem-

ber (or not to remember) what may have been stated on the floor of Classis. Hence, two things must be remembered in this connection:

1) A consistory requesting subsidy should make its request as clear as it possibly can. It should check the data for accuracy and consistency. And, if need be, it should add explanatory notes if there is anything unusual about the request. Oral explanations on the floor of Classis, it should be remembered, do not get through to Synod.

2) A Classis should not routinely approve, or rubber-stamp, subsidy requests. It is the Classis — not the Synod — that has the duty to go over these subsidy requests with a fine-toothed comb. It belongs to the jurisdiction of the Classis to question and to resolve any apparent inequities. Should a Classis deem a request exorbitant, it should state this — with reasons, of course. Should a classis deem a request too low, or should it find that the minister's salary appears to be inadequate, the Classis should take this up with the consistory and possibly advise a larger request. The reason for this is plain: Classis deals directly with the consistory and is in a much better position to inquire and to advise on these matters than is the broadest assembly, Synod. In the past our Classis used to appoint a special advisory committee on subsidy requests and to give them careful attention. This good practice should be followed today by both of our classes. It would make the work of Synod easier and expedite it. And it would resolve problems which Synod frequently cannot solve.

Next time I will have a few words of critique about some of the actions of our last Synod.

The "eodem modo" Rejected in the Conclusion of the Canons (4)

[In our discussion of this subject we called attention, first of all, to the meaning of this expression and to the fact that it was an Arminian calumny, or slander, directed against the Reformed doctrine of reprobation — a slander rejected and repudiated by the fathers of Dordrecht in the Conclusion appended to the Canons (May 15 issue). Then, in the June and August issue we called attention to the misuse of this rejection made by modern Reformed theologians both in the Netherlands and in America. Now we are up to our positive discussion of this matter.]

What Is The Correct Understanding?

The correct understanding of this expression in the Conclusion is very simple and can be readily understood. Actually there is hardly any need of

explanation, if only this expression is read in the context of the rest of the Conclusion, in the light of the Canons themselves, and in the light of the history of the Arminian controversy.

As we said, this expression must be understood in the light of and as being in harmony with what the Canons themselves say about the doctrine of reprobation. That this is true and that the Conclusion must not be understood as a kind of modifying appendage to the Canons is in harmony with what the Conclusion itself states; and it is also historically accurate. In the first place, it should not be over-

looked that in this very Conclusion the Synod of Dordrecht begins by re-affirming the doctrine of the Canons. The very first statement is this: "And this is the perspicuous, simple, and ingenuous declaration of the orthodox doctrine respecting the five articles which have been controverted in the Belgic churches; and the rejection of the errors, with which they have for some time been troubled." How strange it would be if in that same Conclusion in the very next paragraph the Synod would nevertheless back off from and modify that "perspicuous, simple, and ingenuous declaration of the orthodox doctrine" respecting one of those five articles. And how illogical that would have been on the part of the very theologians who are sometimes criticized for their stringent logic and even called "scholastic" by some. In the second place, this is confirmed by the fact that the Conclusion of the Canons was not adopted in separation from the Canons proper and as an after-thought. Not at all. The Acts of the National Synod of Dordrecht tell us that in the one hundred thirty-fifth and one hundred thirty-sixth sessions all five heads of doctrine, along with the Conclusion, were once more read and finally adopted, and that then each chapter was separately subscribed to by all the delegations. How strange it would have been if at the very sessions in which the delegates once more explicitly affirmed the doctrine of reprobation as taught in Canons I, they would also deliberately have adopted and affirmed by their signatures a Conclusion which was designed flatly to contradict that doctrine. No, the only explanation is that what is stated in the Conclusion is in perfect harmony with what was first stated in the body of the Canons.

Besides, the simple fact is that here in the Conclusion the Synod was not adopting a doctrine, nor even rejecting an error. That part of Synod's work was finished. Here the Synod is merely calling attention to various calumnies, slanders, false charges, which the Arminians brought against the Reformed truth. Concerning these, which the Arminians tried to impute to the Reformed churches, the Conclusion says: The Reformed Churches not only do not acknowledge these ideas, but even detest them with their whole soul.

And then we must remember that the particular calumny of the Arminians which we are discussing will never be registered against any other view of reprobation than the Reformed doctrine of *sovereign reprobation*. The moment you change reprobation, as Daane and Berkouwer do, to a so-called judicial response of God to man's sin, no Arminian will ever bring this charge against your doctrine: it would neither be necessary nor would it make sense. It is the same with this doctrine as with the doctrine of justification by faith and the

doctrine of sovereign election. Against the doctrine of justification by faith the charge is brought: this doctrine makes men careless and profane. As soon as you would change the doctrine to one of justification by works, no one would bring this charge. Against the doctrine of sovereign election, the same charge is brought: this doctrine makes men careless and profane, or makes men carnally secure (Canons I, 13 and the Conclusion). As soon as you change the doctrine to one of election on the basis of foreseen faith (conditional election), no one will register this charge against your doctrine. So also here, the charge is that the doctrine of sovereign reprobation means that reprobation is the cause of unbelief and impiety *in the same manner* that election is the fountain and cause of faith and good works. As soon as you would change the doctrine to one of conditional reprobation or reprobation as a mere judicial response to sin, this charge will not even be brought against your doctrine. This is so true that the very fact that such a charge is brought against your doctrine is a pretty good indication that you are doctrinally on the right track!

Now let us note carefully the specific point of this slander and its repudiation. It has nothing whatsoever to do with election and reprobation themselves being "in the same manner," as Dr. Daane contends. No, but the Reformed Churches are slandered as teaching that "reprobation is the cause of unbelief and impiety *in the same manner* in which election is the fountain and the cause of faith and good works." What is the point here? It is as follows:

- 1) The Arminians acknowledge that the Reformed teach that election is the *cause* in the sense of being the fountain of faith and good works. And this is correct, according to Canons I, 9.
- 2) The Arminians accuse the Reformed of teaching that reprobation is the *cause* of unbelief and impiety *in the same manner*, that is, the *cause in the sense of fountain*.
- 3) In other words, this comes down to the old charge that the Reformed teach that just as God is the Author of faith and good works, so He is the Author of unbelief and impiety. Just as a fountain is known by the water that flows forth from it, so that sweet and good water flows from a sweet and good fountain, while bitter and foul water flows from a foul and bitter fountain, so it is in the spiritual sense of the word. From a good fountain flow forth faith and good works. From a foul fountain flow forth unbelief and impiety. And the Arminians accuse the Reformed of teaching that just as God's election is the good fountain of faith and good works, so God's reprobation is the foul fountain of unbelief and impiety. This is the point of their "in

the same manner."

Now what is the Reformed answer to this? It is as follows:

1) In the first place, we certainly acknowledge and believe that God's election is the cause and *fountain* of faith and good works. The electing God is the Author of all our salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. This is the plain teaching, as we said, of Canons I, 9.

2) Secondly, we detest with our whole soul that God's reprobation is in the same manner the *fountain* of unbelief and impiety. This was already plainly stated in Canons I, 15: the doctrine of reprobation by no means makes God the author of sin. God is the overflowing fountain of all good, never the fountain of evil. No, the foul fountain of unbelief and impiety is sinful man's own wicked and perverse heart.

3) Thirdly, this by no means places unbelief and sin outside of the decree of reprobation. Article 6 plainly states it, that some do not receive the gift of

faith proceeds from God's eternal decree. God is not the Author of their unbelief, but it is nevertheless according to His decree that they are unbelieving. And Article 15 plainly states that the decree of reprobation by no means makes God the author of sin, but it also insists that the decree of reprobation (both as a decree of preterition, passing by, and as a decree of condemnation) proceeds out of God's sovereign, most just, irreprehensible and unchangeable good pleasure. Reprobation is not *because* of sin. No, the reprobate are sovereignly appointed to be vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction. And the damnation to which they are eternally and sovereignly appointed is a damnation *in the way of* their own sin and unbelief, that is, in the way of the sin and unbelief of which they themselves are the authors and of which their own evil heart is the fountain.

Thus there is perfect harmony between Articles 6 and 15 of the First Head of Doctrine and this rejection of an evil Arminian slander in the Conclusion.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

Missionary Methods (14)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

While there are many commendable features of the missionary methods proposed by Nevius which can and ought to be implemented by our own missionaries both at home and abroad there is one very serious weakness, namely, the lack of preachers and preaching. Whatever the details of methodology employed by the missionary, preaching must be at the heart of it. This will become even more apparent as we continue our study of the book, *Planting And Development of Missionary Churches*, by John L. Nevius.

The stations (groups of converts, potential churches) of the Presbyterian mission were approximately two hundred miles from the homes of Dr. Nevius and his fellow missionaries. Why the missionaries lived so far from the field Nevius does not say. It would seem that this would rather seriously affect the work. Much better it would be if the missionaries lived among the people so as to have direct, daily contact with them. Perhaps there was good reason for this, but, as was said, Nevius does not say. The fact that they were so far from the field made thorough instruction by the missionaries im-

possible. On their periodic visits in the spring and fall they were able to give only general instructions and direction. Hence, writes Nevius: "To secure thorough and methodical teaching, no plan has been found practicable but that of a select number of learners coming to us in Chefoo. These have been organized into classes which have formed a kind of Normal School" (p. 39).

The missionaries selected the "more advanced church members" for these classes. These were neither employed nor paid by the mission. They remained in their regular occupations. Students came with the understanding that what they learned in these classes they were to teach others upon their return to their homes. The classes ran from six to eight weeks. Travel and living expenses were supplied by the mission for those who were unable to meet these expenses. Food and lodging were also provided. The studies were mainly in the Scriptures. In addition there was some elementary and basic instruction given in astronomy, geography, history, and "general knowledge." Concerning the method of instruction, Nevius writes: "Here, as in

the stations, lessons are carried on catechetically, and what is taught one day is the subject of examination the next. Much attention is also given to rehearsing Scripture stories" (p. 40). One hour per day was devoted to instruction in vocal music by Mrs. Nevius. As much as possible the same students came year after year. Large sections of both the Old and New Testaments were covered. Many of the students studied the material several times. Nevius estimated that the knowledge of his pupils would compare favorably with that of intelligent adult classes in Sunday Schools in the churches in America. The hymns which they sang were translations of familiar English hymns, in the same meters as the originals, and sung to the same tunes. They were taught to sing by note, and some, Nevius reports, read music very well.

The fruit of all this was considerable. Illiteracy in the rural districts where Nevius worked was high, somewhat greater than in China as a whole. "Not more than one out of twenty of the men can read, and not one of a thousand of the women" (p. 41). By way of contrast, according to Nevius: "Among our Christians, nearly all the children and most of the adults of both sexes under fifty years of age learn to read. Some have made remarkable progress in the study of the Scriptures. A large proportion of them have committed to memory the Sermon on the Mount and many other select passages of the Bible. Scripture ideas and phrases have entered into the language of every-day life. Persons of advanced age, though themselves unable to read, take great pleasure in relating Scripture stories and parables, and in teaching others less instructed what they have learned" (p. 42).

Turning to the subject of the "Manner in which Stations are Propagated," Nevius informs us that the original stations were formed as the fruit of the preaching of paid evangelists. These continued under the guidance of an unpaid "leader" (p. 42). New stations of the Presbyterian mission were for the most part established without the help of paid evangelists. The way in which this happened is interesting. Nevius writes: "When a man becomes a Christian the fact is known through the whole circle of his acquaintances, male and female, far and wide. It is generally believed that his mind has lost its balance. He is shunned for a time, but before long his friends visit him either from sympathy or curiosity. They find him in apparently a normal condition and working quietly in his shop or on his farm, and are curious to know what this new departure means. An opportunity is thus afforded of presenting the claims of Christianity as not the religion of the foreigner but the true religion for all mankind. The visitor goes home and thinks about the matter and comes again, attends service

on Sunday, is interested in the truth, makes a profession of Christianity, and in process of time his home becomes a new propagating centre. Stations started in this manner have the advantage of a natural connection with the parent station, and they are nourished and supported by it until they are strong enough to have the connection severed and live and grow independently" (pp. 42, 43). Nevius reports that the Baptist mission tried both methods (paid agents and the self-propagating). As a rule the stations which began under the labors of a paid agent were comparatively weak and unreliable and some even fell away. Those begun under the self-propagating method "have generally maintained a healthy, vigorous growth" (p. 43). Consequently the Baptists, instead of increasing the number of paid agents as the number of church members increased, reduced the number by nearly one half.

The Nevius plan was and to a certain extent still is almost revolutionary. Common practice was, and for the most part still is, that missionaries in addition to preaching the gospel train converts for the ministry. These are then at least in part supported by the sending church. As was pointed out in previous articles Nevius had only two such "paid agents" among the one hundred fifty stations which must have had several thousands of members. It comes as no surprise to find him writing: "I have often been asked, 'why do you not employ and pay more native agents?' I reply by another question, Why should I? The only men I could employ are exerting what influence they have for good where they now are. My paying them money and transferring them from one place to another would not make them better men nor increase their influence. It might have the opposite effect. During the past few years I have in fact frequently been inclined to attempt to enlarge and hasten the work by selecting and employing native agents from my stations, and have requested money appropriations from our society to enable me to do so. When the time has come for carrying out this plan, however, I have refrained from taking the proposed step, fearing that it would do more harm than good. I am asked again, 'Do you intend never to employ native paid agents?' My reply is, I leave this question to be determined by the circumstances and in the light of the future. If suitable men are found and it is clear that employing them as paid agents would do good, I should be glad to see them employed, and the more of them the better" (pp. 43, 44).

That the missionary should strive to establish an indigenous church which is self-supporting, self-governing (in the Biblical sense), and self-propagating is certainly correct, Biblical methodology. With this no one ought have any quarrel. The problem

with the Nevius plan is that it nearly totally ignores the chief means of grace, the preaching of the Word. Not only is preaching the chief means of grace, but because it is that, it is also the chief mark of the church of Jesus Christ! In the light of passages such as Romans 10:14 ff. and Ephesians 4, it is certainly legitimate to ask: how can the church be gathered apart from the preaching of the Word?

There is more. The apostles, especially Paul, did not proceed through Asia Minor and the rest of the Mediterranean world establishing "stations" which remained "stations" for a number of years. They instituted the church in each place. They ordained elders. These congregations had preachers, Timothy for example. That these churches were indigenous, self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating is abundantly evident from the New Testament, especially the Book of Acts.

The Bible Classes or "Normal School," it would

seem, would be the best means of finding those whom the Lord calls to the ministry. Certainly there must have been in those classes young men whom Dr. Nevius and his fellow missionaries could have trained for the ministry. These could then have labored in the field preaching and teaching others. How could this possibly harm the work? How could this in any way at all detract from the indigenous character of the church in China or in any other place? How could it diminish the zeal of the converts or stifle their desire to witness to and teach others?

We quite agree with Dr. Nevius, however, that these native preachers ought not be in the employ of and paid by the sending church and its missionaries. That is harmful indeed for all the reasons cited by Nevius. The people among whom Nevius worked were for the most part farmers, shopkeepers, craftsmen, etc. These could have supported preachers. So it should be also today.

GUEST ARTICLE

Creation? or Evolution?

Rev. Ronald Cammenga

The church has always confessed the truth of the creation of the universe by God. In one of the oldest of its creeds, the Apostles' Creed, in the very first article of that creed, the church sets down her faith in "God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." We believe in God Who is an almighty and sovereign God. And the one great work that reveals God's almighty power and sovereignty is His creation of the heavens and the earth. The truth of creation is a basic and fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion. It belongs to those things which are necessary for every Christian to believe.

It is especially our purpose in this article to consider the truth of creation over against the denials of this truth by the error of evolution. Our one source in setting down the truth of creation and opposing the error of evolution will be the Bible. Since the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God, the Bible is "profitable for doctrine" (II Tim. 3:16). Also for the doctrine of creation the Bible is "profitable." Because we believe the Bible to be "the only rule of faith" (See the Belgic Confession of Faith, article VII), also as regards our view of the origin of the universe, we insist that that

view be derived from and be in harmony with Holy Scripture. To be sure, the Bible is no detailed science textbook. The Bible is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, the Savior of His people (Heb. 1:1, 2). Nevertheless, when the Bible does speak on matters that concern science, it speaks infallibly and authoritatively (II Pet. 1:20, 21).

Just exactly because the creation account is part of God's inspired Word, it is necessary for a man to possess faith in order to be convinced of the truth of creation. Only the man who has faith, faith worked in his heart by God Himself, receives the Bible as the Word of God. And since the truth of creation is a part of the Word of God, faith is absolutely necessary if a man is to be convinced of the truth of the Scriptural doctrine of creation. This is exactly what the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says in Hebrews 11:3: "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." Receiving the truth of creation is not a matter of being convinced only that creationism is philosophically more acceptable than evolution. Receiving the truth of creation is not simply a matter of being

convinced that creationism is the best explanation of various scientific facts and discoveries. One cannot be convinced of the truth of creation on purely rational grounds. But receiving the truth of creation is a matter of faith. Apart from faith in God and in God's Word, we cannot hold to the Scriptural doctrine of creation. This means that the reason why a man rejects the teaching of God's Word concerning creation is that that man does not possess faith. The only reason is unbelief.

The doctrine of creation is denied by the theory of atheistic evolution. This is far and away the most common view that is being taught in the schools and universities of our land today. Most of the textbooks used for the various branches of scientific study are written from this evolutionary perspective. The vast majority of history textbooks view the history of the world in the context of the theory of evolution. The evolutionary "theory" is confidently presented as the unassailable explanation of the origin of all things. And anyone who might possibly arise to challenge the claims of the evolutionists is derided as unscholarly, unscientific, and simplistic. By most men this evolutionary "theory" is actually viewed, not as a theory at all, but as established fact.

The theory of evolution was first publicized by the English naturalist Charles Robert Darwin (1809-82). Darwin first presented his views concerning the origin of all things in his well-known book, *The Origin of the Species*. In this book Darwin aimed to show that every species is a development from previous species, which clearly implies that man himself has evolved from earlier and different forms of life. Darwin believed that all life is involved in a fierce and unrelenting struggle for existence, in which struggle only the fittest survive. He concluded that there exists a process of "natural selection" which, over the course of thousands of years, produces the remarkable variety of living creatures, through this process of evolution. This is the view that is popularized today. The only difference is that, whereas Darwin spoke of the evolutionary history of the universe in terms of thousands of years, men today speak in terms of millions and billions of years.

On the very face of it, the Christian rejects this view of atheistic evolution. His faith in the Word of God compels him to do this. For several reasons we reject this view. In the first place, we reject this view because it is a view that rules God completely out of the picture. It is essentially atheistic. Its explanation of the origin of all things does not begin with God and faith in God's Word. We are not swayed by Darwin's claim to be a Christian. Nor are we moved by the claim of many today, who hold to similar views, that their theories are com-

pletely compatible with Christianity. The theory of evolution is fundamentally atheistic and anti-God. Those who hold to this view must necessarily reject the opening words of the Bible, "In the beginning God..." (Gen. 1:1). The origin of the universe is not within itself, which is the necessary implication of the theory of evolution. Matter did not bring forth matter. One creature did not give rise to another creature. But all things had their beginning in God. Before the world was, He existed. The Psalmist declares in Psalm 90:2: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." The world and every creature in the world has the origin of its existence in God. It is God Who has made all things.

In the second place, we reject the theory of atheistic evolution because it is a fundamental rejection of the authority of the Word of God. This only follows, of course. Because the atheistic evolutionist denies God, he must also go on to deny God's Word. On what, we ask, did Darwin base his views? On what do evolutionists today base their views? What is the source of their theories? The answer is: The theory of evolution is based on man's explanation of so-called scientific facts and discoveries. The authority of the Word of God on the origin of all things is completely set aside and ignored. And though the Bible tells us very plainly about the origin of all things, men turn to geological, archeological, and astronomical discoveries in order to arrive at an explanation of the beginning of the universe. The Christian objects to this. We do not mean to imply that scientific discoveries actually contradict the teaching of God's Word about the origin of the world. Nor do we mean to imply that the creation itself does not evidence the truth of its original creation by the hand of God. What we are objecting to is the whole question of method. For the believer, be he scientist, farmer, factory-worker, or house-wife, the source of our knowledge is first of all the inspired Word of God. First we turn to God's Word. And then, in the light of that Word, we turn to the creation around us. We do not turn to the creation itself first of all in an effort to arrive at an understanding of the origin of all things. Our views are not molded first of all by *our* discoveries and *our* interpretation of various facts. This is fundamentally nothing but rationalism, man's mind being made the standard of all truth. But our views are molded by the teaching of the Word of God. We regard it, and nothing in the place of or alongside of it, as the standard for our faith and practice. And the teaching of that Word of God is, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). In Psalm 33:6 we read, "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made;

and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." In II Peter 3:5 the apostle Peter tells us that men are willingly ignorant of the truth that "by the Word of God the heavens were of old." And John 1:3 tells us that "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."

In the third place, on the basis of Scripture we reject the very idea of evolution. We reject the idea that the creation derived its existence out of itself and develops along the lines of a natural selection in an ever increasing ascendancy. The very idea of such a process of evolvement is denied by the Word of God. This is exactly what the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says is NOT the explanation of the origin of all things. Not only does he affirm in Hebrews 11:3 that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, but he specifically says, "so that things which are seen were *not* made of things which do appear." Yet, this is exactly what the evolutionist says. It is exactly his position that

things which are seen were made of things which had already appeared. His position is in flat contradiction with the Word of God. Besides, the Word of God knows nothing of an ever increasing ascendancy in the creation, as the theory of evolution teaches. Things are not getting better and better. The Word of God teaches something quite different. In Romans 8:20 and following, the apostle Paul speaks of the creation being made subject to vanity on account of the sin of man. He speaks of the creature being subjected to the bondage of corruption and the creation groaning under this bondage. This bondage of corruption is not something that the creation shall itself overcome by means of a process of evolution. But this is a bondage from which the creation shall be delivered only when the Lord Jesus Christ comes again at the end of time.

Our conclusion? "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." The man who confesses this truth must also necessarily reject the false view of atheistic evolution.

FROM HOLY WRIT

The So-called Proof-texts of Postmillennialism

Rev. G. Lubbers

The Exalted Man of God in Perfection (Chapter 14)

We have now come to our last chapter in these essays on Postmillennialism. Thus far we have repeatedly noticed that it is the teaching of the Postmillennial writers that God intends to Christianize the entire world and every nation under the sun. Every facet of human life is to be Christian due to the power of the Gospel by the Spirit, that is, in their political, social, economic, and religious life. Such is to be the leaven of the kingdom of heaven. Everything in this world will be under the Christian motif before Jesus returns to claim His kingdom publicly.

It ought, however, to be kept in mind that not every Postmillennialist bases his teaching on the same considerations for such a world-dream of a Christianized, perfected world. Some think of this perfected kingdom in terms of the power of the Holy Spirit by the preaching of the Gospel. This too we have noticed repeatedly and we have shown that the Bible passages referred to do not teach this

when exegeted according to sound rules of interpretation. Others in our day speak of this perfection of the Kingdom in terms of the so-called Cultural Mandate, which they then elicit from Genesis 1:26. In this passage we read, "And God said, let Us make man in Our image, after Our own likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowls of the air, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

It was under the energetic leadership of the late Dr. Abraham Kuyper that the adherents of the theory of Common Grace (*Gemeene Gratie*) teach that Genesis 1:26 speaks of a Cultural Mandate to Adam, and in him to the whole human race, to subdue the earth. And it is then pointed out that God adds the words, "Be fruitful and replenish the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28).

This theory of Common Grace holds that this same Cultural Mandate is still in effect after the fall of man, after the entire world has become dead in trespasses and sins, incapable of doing any good

and prone to all evil, except they be born again by the Spirit of Christ. The natural man is not as evil as is spoken of in Ephesians 2:1-4. There are still in him the glimmerings of natural light. And, therefore, by virtue of this restraining influence, non-regenerative influence, of the Holy Spirit the natural man can still fulfill the Cultural Mandate of Genesis 1:26. In our day this Cultural Mandate is so connected with Common Grace that the world and the church work together, and so subdue the world in all spheres: cultural, educational, aesthetic, political, and economic, yea, even in a religious sense.

Both church and world fulfill the creation ordinance of Genesis 1:26. Fact is, this latter is acclaimed as being the very genius of Calvinism. When the church does this she is doing so as the regenerated man, and the world does this by virtue of the restraining power of Common Grace.

Now a careful reading of the text will show that the main thrust of Genesis 1:26 is summed up in Genesis 1:27, where Moses writes, "So God created man (male and female) in His own image, in the image of God created He him...male and female created He them."

The *chief* point in this creation narrative in Genesis 1:26 is not what man is *obligated* to do; the real crux is how God created man, and to what high estate He exalted him in the earthly creation: lord over all. He was lord over all under God. Yes, God created man in His own image and likeness. This does not merely mean that man has "dominion," as teach the Arminians concerning the image of God in man; however, the text basically teaches the exalted position, his divinely given and increased dignity above the animals, the moving creature, the animal world in sea, land, and air, and also far above sun, moon, and stars. However, it must not be willfully forgotten that man stood thus in dignity only as long as and as far as he stood clothed in true righteousness and holiness, serving his Maker and Creator. No Cultural Mandate can be fulfilled in the spiritual, ethical sense of the word apart from the obedience of love. A hateful world, hating God and the neighbor, no longer can or will subdue the world and all things in God's Name and to His glory.

We should notice that in the state of original righteousness Adam is to:

1. *Replenish the earth.* The entire earth must be peopled (Gen. 1:28). All nations are out of one blood. Yes, God has determined the times before appointed and the bounds of the habitation of all the nations. But when God still had man subdue the world, and all nations are gathered and scattered in all the earth, it is in the deep way of *Sin and Grace*. That is, indeed, the watchword of Scripture.

It was the word which was written in the "banner" of the war-flag of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America. I repeat that the way now is not "nature and grace" but "sin and grace" in the natural. Yes, then the natural is first, but it is there *to serve* the spiritual and the heavenly. And this will be accomplished through the death, resurrection, and glorification of Christ.

2. Man stood in paradise, not merely as a moral rational creature, but he stood there as the "Man of God." He was a son of God, man of God, image of God, God's prophet, God's priest, and God's king. It is, therefore, a begging of the question, exegetically, to speak of a mere "cultural" mandate in Genesis 1:26. It was basically a "covenant" mandate for Adam with the law of God in his heart. Adam is to have *dominion* over fish, fowl, and every creeping thing. He is not yet so perfected that he also has dominion of the powers and principalities in the heavens. That is indeed the perfection of Adam and the human race in the one man, Jesus Christ. But that was not yet. However, the creature is there to serve man, his needs, his dignity under God. We see that, once more, when Noah is assigned such dignity over the animals and all creation (Gen. 9:5). Even the beast that kills a man must be put to death as God's vengeance.

3. And thus the earth must be replenished and subdued. The term to subdue in the Hebrew text is "*Kabash*"; it does not mean to subdue like an enemy is subdued in battle (Judges 3:30; 8:20), but it means the ultimate sovereignty of man over all creation. For Adam this meant the earthly creation. He was of the earth, earthy (I Cor. 15:47). God gave the earth to man; it is the natural habitat of the first Adam. However, man was really driven from his high estate. This was only at the tree of life. But the cherubim of God drove him from the holy place of God. He no longer has sovereignty. He is a fallen man, and creation fell in him and was subjected to vanity because of him. Now the song is in order: vanity of vanities, all is vanity. It is a vicious circle until Christ came to save the world, and to make a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness shall dwell.

However, all things are subject to vanity in hope of being delivered from the vanity of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:20). And in this sense we can understand that profound word of Christ, "For God sent not His Son to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). And so there is not merely a saving work of Christ to save sinners, but there is also a cosmological extent to this work. The entire creation, heaven and earth, will be subjected under the last Adam. All shall be placed under one Head, in heaven and on earth

(Eph. 1:10).

And thus we come to the Man of God, the Seed of the Women, Christ in His church Head over all things (Eph. 1:10). And thus Christ is really the One, as the Firstborn of all creatures, Who has the dignity and the preeminence over all things. The words of God, spoken as a soliloquy (God said by Himself: let us make man) surely come to pass. The great design and plan of God in these words was not frustrated by sin. In the way of "sin and grace" this is brought to a high glory and luster so that now man is not only lord of the earthly, but he is Lord over all things.

Mere *cultural mandate* fulfilled here in the earthly? Not at all. Yes, we begin to see a bit of this in the church. God has brought forth a church by the Word of truth to be "some firstfruits of His creation." Firstfruits! This beckons presently a full harvest. But we must remember that the church is *saved in hope*. It is not yet seen — this putting under Christ's feet of all things (Heb. 2:8, 9). And we never shall see this in this life. This will not be till the regeneration of all things, not till this earth and heaven are consumed by burning heat, the elements are burned, and we shall receive the new heavens and the new earth which we earnestly look for; yea, for which we press the gates of heaven in earnest hope (II Peter 3:10-14; Matt. 19:28).

There is one point which we must not overlook. It is that the saints in the sphere of their life are the light of the world, a city on a hilltop which cannot be hid. The fact that we are "some firstfruits" of God's creatures implies that we begin in hope to live as kings and priests on the earth under Christ. So we do have Christians who are doctors, lawyers, professors in learning and science. We have talents which we may not and must not bury in the ground. And we must really labor while it is day to the highest of excellency. God does not need our

"learning," it is said — correctly said, if rightly understood. Nor does God need our slothful ignorance; He does not use spiritual — ethical dullards either. He needs and uses and prepares and molds men to His service in every field by the Word of truth, which is profitable for reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, that the man of God be thoroughly prepared unto every good work (II Tim. 3:16, 17).

However, that is not the perfection of the "cultural" mandate, but it is the fulfillment of God's law in every sphere of life, *including also the cultural*, in a man who has been saved from sin, and who looks in hope for a world which is to be completely delivered from the vanity of the curse of the Fall into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And, therefore, to teach a perfected world here of the nations, is like that of a thirsty man looking for a well of water in the thirsty and dry desert, and as he stumbles along sees only a fleeting mirage in the desert. Let us not be deceived by vain talk. The "cultural" (if so we may speak of it for convenience sake) mandate will be when the Christ is "perfected" in the glory of His kingdom, that is, when He and His church are exalted to the highest pinnacle of dignity, the very effulgence of God's glory, the expressed image of His being, above the angels.

This kingdom is now here in principle in the church. Truly all things are now *Pro Rege*. Yea, all things are already laid at Christ's feet. He is subjecting all things now. The great Consummation will be when Christ enters into the eternal Kingdom, consummated in the heavens above in the ages to come.

That will be the Man of God. All things will be subjected under His feet, He is the Lord of lords, and the King of kings forever. Lift up your heads, O, ye gates, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, He is the King of glory!

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The Church of the Present Day and Persecution (1)

Rev. K. Koole

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
II Timothy 3:12

The striking thing about the text quoted above is that Paul states it as an absolute rule. He does not

allow for any exceptions. He says not simply that the church will have much persecution in the New Testament age, or that many of the church will know what persecution is, but that *everyone* who

will live godly (piously, reverently) *shall* suffer persecution. Such is the fact.

These words are in harmony with Christ's words: "but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:19b, 20). Persecution is part and parcel of the life of every Christian who bears Christ's Name in sincerity, his walk being consistent with his confession.

It is my intention to consider how these words apply to us who are living in the last half of the twentieth century. If there is one thing that seemingly is foreign to our experience it is persecution. This is not to say that there are not members of the body of Christ in this present day who are now suffering bodily persecution at the hands of godless men and threats against their person because of their confession. Tales trickle out from behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains of those who have been imprisoned and disfigured for Christ's sake. Indeed, persecution of Christians through inquisition has not been irradiated by man. But as for our own persons, persecution seems to touch us very little, if at all. Persecution? What is that?

Exactly because at the moment persecution seems so far removed from us personally, it is well to consider this matter now and again. It is well to consider it because of what the future holds for the church of these last days — almost certainly for some of us personally, namely, bitter, bodily suffering. The Great Tribulation is, as we know, a sign of the imminent reappearance of the Lord. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened.....And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:29, 30).

There are those who challenge this and speak of these words of Christ as having been fulfilled at the time of the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). Or they speak of a rapture whereby the Lord catches His people up into heaven before the Great Tribulation, which shall be directed at the Jews primarily. Such is, however, a false doctrine and can only have evil consequences. Such instills a false hope in the hearts of members of the church. It shall result in a final falling-away. Those who nourish this false hope will be able to submit to every law Antichrist legislates, which will declare, "Obey this or be counted a rebel and bear the consequences." After all, they will reason, our Christian faith was not to put us into this predicament. Had they not been

promised that, because they believed on Jesus, they would not have to suffer bodily persecution? So they will justify their denying the Name of Christ and engaging in various unbiblical practices. Indeed, as Christ says in Matthew 24:10, "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." It is one thing to confess that Jesus is Lord when there is little cost for one's person in so doing, and quite another when the blistering heat of persecution relentlessly beats down on one. To survive such times one must be truly rooted in Christ Jesus. Those who are not will fall into the category of what one might call "shallow-soil hearers." "But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the Word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended" (Matt. 13:20, 21).

What these texts make clear for our purposes is that he who is not preparing himself for the fierceness of the persecution will wither away and be exposed as not having been firmly rooted and grounded in Christ as the Pillar of all truth. Those who take these words seriously prepare themselves. How well prepared are *you*? What are you doing to prepare yourself?

Especially pertinent to our discussion is the matter of persecution at the present. It is my contention that even at the present time children of God are the objects of a form of persecution. This should not surprise us. Revelation 12 speaks of the casting of Satan out of heaven into the world by the ascended Christ at the beginning of the New Testament age. Satan is there portrayed as a great dragon persecuting the woman, who represents the Old Testament church (vs. 13). In verse 17 we read, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." The whole of New Testament history is one of Satan engaging in war against the elect remnant, in enmity seeking out the seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal. That war still continues today. That we must keep in mind. There is no truce. To think that there is is to be deceived yet again. This war in which Satan is constantly engaged, which is ultimately to the death, must always reveal itself in persecution of some form or the other. That includes today.

Persecution does not always come as a direct threat of violence upon one's person in response to one's stand. It can also take more subtle forms. Remember always what Satan's ultimate goal is, to remove from this world the witness of the church to the Sovereign God, to His truth in Christ, and to

Christ's Kingdom. He wants to silence the church's testimony against the lie. To accomplish this purpose, other means less severe in nature than that of bodily injury can be used — means, nonetheless, whereby pressure is brought to bear upon the Christian to compel him to compromise his godly way (opening the way for the next generation to forsake it completely), and to cease his militant stand against that which is false and evil. Such means are much in evidence today. And especially what I have reference to is that which has come to be called "peer pressure."

Peer pressure is the pressure to conform to the standards set by some dominant group as that affects one's attitudes and behavior, the whole of one's life style. Everything is governed by "What will people, especially those my age, think?" We become more conscious of their judgments than of God's. The man who resists conformity is threatened with being excluded and scorned.

We commonly think of this in terms of young people, the teenage years, when peer pressure means so much, molding so much of their behavior, determining everything from the kind of socks they wear, to the way they cut their hair, to the music they listen to. But we are mistaken if we imagine that peer pressure is something with which only the teenage has to contend. It is just as intense and unrelenting for the adult. This pressure is especially acute upon young couples as they must make crucial decisions in determining the pattern of their home life. To what extent is it going to conform to the current norms and practices of society? Are we going to "wait" to have children until we have "adjusted" to each other and "established" a good home environment (as though courtship has nothing to do with becoming "adjusted" to each other), or are we going to pray for covenant seed from the very beginning? I can tell you what the "wise" of this world would counsel, but at the same time I would be at a loss to tell you what book of the Bible such "wisdom" comes from, unless it's Hezekiah. That seems to be the favorite book of most modern "Christian" counselors these days. But more about these matters later.

Peer pressure, practically put, translates into reproach and ridicule for not conforming to society's world and life view. And, you understand, this way of life is not determined by any synodical decision, but by the advertisers of Madison Avenue. It is the world that determines the climate, the way of life in which the Christian finds himself. And the child of God must decide either to adapt himself to that way of life, going by what is currently acceptable, making various compromises as Lot did, in order to smooth the way for himself; or he must resolve to swim against the current, so to speak, and follow a different course, one which is counted peculiar at best, and downright stupid and irresponsible at worst. "Where is your common-sense?" one is asked. Who could be so dense! Indeed, to resist the way of "common sense," as the world defines it, in order to pursue the way of righteousness takes an "uncommon" grace. One must be willing to stand alone. Few such can be found. As Christ states, "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

Such is the form persecution takes today. It is not overt and physical, but indirect, and leaves not a mark on you, that is, on your body. But it can and has left very definite marks on the outlook and walk of members of the Christian church. We must consider some of these threats next time, D.V.

In parting I remind you that Paul says, "All that will live *godly* (or *piously*) shall suffer persecution." Persecution does not come to you as a matter of course, simply because you say that you are a Christian. The world can easily tolerate those who are content to say that they are Christians, but whose lives reflect only minor differences. Persecution, reproach, scorn falls upon those who *live* their Christianity, upon men governed by the principles of God's Word rather than by popular opinion. Such the world despises and the false church hates. But see how easy it is to avoid derision? Be a Christian in name only, compromise a few principles. Such is the temptation. Is it a temptation to which you are yielding, or which you resist? Be ye not conformed, but transformed!

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Paul's Letter to Philippi (1)

Rev. J. Kortering

Upon reading this letter, it soon becomes apparent that it is different from the other letters that Paul wrote in that it is impossible to draw out of the

letter one general theme which the apostle is making for the church of Philippi. In this, one of his most personal letters, he touches on many subjects

which are of importance for the Philippians as well as the church today.

THE CHURCH OF PHILIPPI

While on the second missionary journey, Paul, Silas, and Luke were called by the Holy Spirit to labor in the Church of Philippi. Having gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the Word in Asia. They turned instead to Bithynia, and even there the Holy Spirit suffered them not to preach (Acts 16:6, 7). The direct word came to them at Troas when the Macedonian man appeared to Paul in a vision, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16:9). After two days' journey by ship, they came to Neapolis and then overland for eight miles they came to Philippi. There the need for help became apparent. Since Paul's custom was to preach to the Jews first, he sought out the place where they gathered. The Jews were too small in number to have their own synagogue, hence they assembled by the River Gangites. It was here the Holy Spirit led Lydia and her household to true faith (Acts 16:13-15). Subsequently, the Roman jailor and his household were converted after the earthquake at midnight (Acts 16:25-40).

From the evidence given us in the Bible, we conclude that the congregation at Philippi was composed mostly of Roman Gentiles. There is no reference to any Jewish opposition, which was so common throughout Paul's missionary work. This tells us that the potential Jewish membership was small to begin with. The names of the members of the church mentioned in this letter are Greek or Roman: Epaphroditus (2:25), Euodias and Syntyche (4:2), Clement (4:3). Since this was the first church established in Europe, it has special meaning for the Gentiles of all ages.

It is also interesting to note that the women of the church receive considerable attention in this letter. Looking back we are reminded that the initial contact with this church was through a group of women gathered by the river (Acts 16:13). The first convert was a woman (Acts 16:14, 15). Two women are mentioned in the letter as being in disagreement (Phil. 4:2). Specific reference is made to other women in the church (Phil. 4:3). This may be attributed to the great influence Lydia had upon the church.

Paul sustained a close and warm friendship with the church of Philippi. The members of the church were considerate of Paul and demonstrated their love for him repeatedly. Paul makes special mention of this to the Corinthian church: "Moreover brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their

joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality" (II Cor. 8:1, 2). On four different occasions the congregation of Philippi came through with money to help Paul in the hour of his need. Twice they sent him help just after he left them for Thessalonica (Phil. 4:15, 16). During his ministry in Corinth, he had material need and he refused to take it from the Corinthian congregation but gladly received it from the church of Philippi (II Cor. 11:8, 9). Now also, the Philippians had sent Paul help while he was imprisoned at Rome (Phil. 4:10). Paul reciprocated this love by visiting the congregation repeatedly. It seems that Paul chose to visit the church of Philippi whenever he had special need. With them he found comfort and solace. There was spiritual closeness. We may notice that Paul made the following visits to the church: after writing the First Corinthian epistle, he went to Philippi to await the response; after the riot in Ephesus, he retreated to Philippi; he celebrated the week of Easter A.D. 58; and after the first Roman imprisonment he retreated to Philippi. This letter also reflects upon this close fellowship which Paul enjoyed with this church. "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil. 1:4, 5). He extols their sincerity: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). The warmth of the love he had for them is expressed, "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord my dearly beloved" (Phil. 4:1). We can certainly conclude from this that Paul loved the church of Philippi and felt very close to them.

DATE AND AUTHOR

The apostle Paul designates himself as the author (1:1). By mentioning Timothy in verse one, he does not mean to tell us that Timothy wrote it in conjunction with him, rather that Timothy was present with Paul and also extended like greetings and sentiments to the church. There is no dispute over Paul's authorship.

In trying to determine the date, we are able to learn from the letter itself that it was occasioned by the generosity of Philippi in sending Epaphroditus to Rome. Evidently the Philippians had lost contact with Paul for some years. Nevertheless, when they heard that he was in prison in Rome they immediately reacted by sending Epaphroditus, perhaps their pastor, though we cannot be sure of his identity. He not only cheered Paul by his presence, but he also brought a love offering from the church. While in Rome, Epaphroditus became very sick, so

sick in fact that Paul feared his death and interceded before God for his life (Phil. 2:25-30). God spared him and he was about to return home to Philippi. This gave Paul opportunity to send this letter with him, a letter in which he could express his thanks to them for their love shown to him once again and also to encourage them to carry on the work of the Lord.

There is plenty of internal evidence that shows conclusively that the letter was written during the Roman imprisonment, more than likely after he wrote Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* sets forth seven reasons for believing this. We summarize them as follows:

1. At least four trips were made between Philippi and Rome, a distance of some 700 miles, before Paul wrote this letter: someone carried the news of Paul's imprisonment to Philippi, Epaphroditus brought the gift from Philippi to Rome, news of Epaphroditus' illness was taken from Rome to Philippi, and a letter of sympathy was returned from Philippi to Rome. This involved considerable time, since these trips were not made in immediate succession.

2. Paul makes reference in this letter (Phil. 1:13) to the fact that the gospel had been preached amongst the Praetorian (Roman) guards. This too must have taken some time.

3. In addition to this, Christ was preached extensively throughout the city of Rome. A church had been established there and already some party spirit had taken over this church (Phil. 1:15-17). One doesn't think of this taking place in a couple of years.

4. Luke was well known to the Philippians, yet he does not send his greetings in this letter and he surely would have done this if he were there. He was present when Paul wrote Colossians, as was Demas (Col. 4:14). Paul promised to send Timothy to Philippi, "since he had not one like minded" (Phil. 2:20). If Aristarchus, Luke, or Demas were there, Paul could not have said this. They were there when Paul wrote the other later prison epistles.

5. His prison conditions were worse than his first imprisonment. At that time he was in a hired house, had his friends around him, and he could preach freely. Now, he was confined and lonely.

6. Paul wrote as if his case would be decided soon, Philippians 2:23, 24. He was facing his final trial. This was not his expectation when he wrote the other letters.

7. Paul included in his greetings to the saints which are in Philippi mention of the bishops and

deacons, (Phil 1:1). This was characteristic of his later letters, hence this letter is linked with them.

This evidence carries weight and leads us to conclude that this was Paul's last letter to the churches. It is significant that his parting word should be to his beloved Philippi. The date stands then somewhere around A.D. 63 or 64.

THE MESSAGE

As we stated before, we cannot draw any one theme or central message from this letter. It is a personal letter from Paul to a dear congregation whom he loved and to whom he desired to express that love a final time.

This is not to say that there are not specific points that Paul desired to make in this letter. We can enumerate two of them (Tenney, *Bible Survey*).

First, Paul emphasized the importance of the *gospel*. There are nine references to the gospel: 1:5; 1:7; 1:12; 1:16; 1:27; 2:22; 4:3; and 4:15. It was his privilege to preach Christ crucified and risen (2:8), and by faith in this Savior the saints have righteousness before God (2:9). The apostle glories in this gospel to the very end.

Second, Paul sets forth this great theme with *joy*. The entire letter rings with the positive note of joy. This is remarkable in view of his imprisonment and imminent death. Over against these adversities, Paul is confident in the joy that flows from the gospel. He remembers the love of the Philippians with joy (1:3); he rejoices in that Christ is preached (whether in pretense or truth) 1:18; he expresses joy over the humility of the saints (2:2); he even says it is reason for joy if he become a martyr for the sake of the gospel (2:17); and finally he expresses joy that the Philippian church remembered him with their gifts while he was in prison (4:10).

What a lesson there is for us in this letter which we do well to read and study. We who have so much freedom and enjoy so much luxury, still do so much complaining. For shame! May our eyes be opened to understand that in the world we must expect tribulation, and even that experience is not for our destruction, but our salvation.

Not material prosperity, not worldly fame, but the gospel is the cause for our eternal joy.

*Take time to
read and study the
Standard Bearer*

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

By Hunger Driven

Rev. John A. Heys

Through the good counsel which Joseph gave him, the king of Egypt not only retained his kingdom, but he increased his wealth in material things as well. The coffers of his kingdom overflowed with money from the Egyptians, but also from the Canaanites. In real estate his holdings were extended beyond what any man would have imagined a few years before Joseph interpreted his dreams.

In the wisdom which God gave him Joseph advised the king to store up the surplus food during the seven years of plenty. When the seven years of famine came, the king had a vast store of food to sell. He had not stocked up luxuries which only a few would buy, but he had what every man in Egypt needed for his very life. He had stored up the necessities of life, namely, bread, without which no man can live. And so Egyptians, and Canaanites as well, bought with money, cattle, land, and their own bodies what Pharaoh had to sell.

Pharaoh could have lost his kingdom, for a kingdom without people is not kingdom. And without bread there would be no people left to rule. In due time Pharaoh himself would starve to death had God not sent Joseph and given him to know the meaning of the dreams and what to advise Pharaoh. The famine was a dreadful one. Genesis 47:13 says that, "There was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine." The dreams of the king also pictured a very grievous famine. The seven thin, ill-favoured kine ate up the seven fat kine, and you could not see any change in them. The seven withered, thin and wind-blasted ears of corn ate up the seven full, good ears of corn, but you would not know it by looking at them after they devoured these full, good ears.

But now Pharaoh's subjects live and the coffers of his treasury are being filled to overflowing in spite of the famine. In times of depression, or even recession, the governments today, as a rule, have less income in taxes because of less employment and financial power of the people. Not so here in Egypt in this day of the shadows. The people spent their last pennies for bread. Then they came to Joseph and offered their cattle. When these were

all Pharaoh's, they agreed to sell their land and even their bodies. The people became poorer and poorer, and the king became richer and richer.

Now, that they sold their bodies does not mean that they became vulgar and immoral. In verse 19 of Genesis 47 it is explained for us. They agreed to be servants of Pharaoh and give him the strength and labour of their bodies. Seeing that they were now Pharaoh's servants, he could and did remove them from their barren, useless land into cities where they could not only serve him but more easily be cared for as far as the need of bread is concerned.

In verse 22 it is pointed out that the one exception to all this was the priests of Pharaoh, which can mean the princes. But assume that the translation is correct, should we condemn Joseph for excluding them? For an answer we must go back to Genesis 41:40 where the king tells Joseph, "Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou." These priests were appointed by Pharaoh, and the decision to feed them without selling their cattle (which they did not even have) and land and bodies belonged to a decision of the throne where Pharaoh was greater than Joseph.

Without a doubt Joseph did not approve as a child of God. He had no desire to support idolatry and superstition, but he was as powerless to change all this as we are when our government taxes us for the murder of abortions, and declares tax-free institutions that serve and foster the antichrist and his kingdom. To withhold part of our income tax because we do not agree with these and other policies is not a case of serving God rather than man, but it is a case of not rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's. Rome promoted some very wicked programs. Yet Jesus told Peter to go and pay the taxes which Caesar demanded even of *Himself*, the Son of God in our flesh (Matthew 17:24-27).

And note that it is stated that, "The land of the priests bought he not." The occasion to buy it never presented itself to him. They ate at the king's table and did not need to come to Joseph to buy their food. What is more, the statement is negative. There is no positive statement that these priests were his friends, that he favoured them and made

an exception for them. What we read simply means that he complied with the king's wishes because there was no way to withhold food from these false priests. They ate of the king's portion, and Joseph could not in obedience to God refuse the king the amount of food he ordered. The priests were Pharaoh's friends, and were favoured by him, not by Joseph.

But the whole picture which is given us here is of a people driven by hunger, a people willing for the sake of life to give up what they could not eat. For them life was sweeter than land which they could not use, and money that could not satisfy that gnawing pain of hunger. Better, they reasoned, to live as servants than to die and lose all hope of getting a few material possessions later on after the famine had ended. Note also that they ask for seed with a view to the future.

The point to be noticed is that the people come to Joseph with the proposition that he give them bread in exchange for cattle, land, and their service. How different from the day in which we live, when men, also in the church, do all they can to keep all their luxuries, and sometimes even to add to them, by going to the deacons, or to the government for food stamps. How reluctant to give up any of their many luxuries and treasures they are for a relative who is in need, and how quick to contemplate expensive surgery or treatment if the deacons or the government will pay the bill, and they can continue to hold on to all their riches. Instead of using what God gave in the past, they think that the government and deacons owe them a living. They will go on strike, refuse to work while holding on to their jobs, and deny the employer the right to give it to another, and then apply for unemployment compensation! We had a man in our church years ago who changed jobs because he could make more money — even though he was getting paid far more than many in the congregation at his old job — and because of circumstances connected with the new job had to be out of work for one week. He came to the deacons for money for that week!

These lines are being written on the island of Jamaica where we are working and are surrounded by relatively poor people and people in abject poverty. There are people who think they have it bad because they look at those who have more luxuries than they. They may pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," but they do not mean it, and their actions show this. But there are those whose emaciated bodies show that they do not get enough nourishing food. And these often we find more content than those who have the average amount of this earth's goods in their corner of God's creation. But it cannot be denied that there are here those who go to bed with empty stomachs, and whose

best clothes we would have discarded long ago. Here too there is evidence of being driven by hunger to steal, to beg, to deal dishonestly to try to be sure of food tomorrow, and even to kill. Hunger is a painful experience. And we know so little of it because of our abundance and social programs — which in Joseph's day were nonexistent — as well as our high standard of living in America. If men will steal and kill in our land to get luxuries and conveniences, to get baubles and riches, we ought to understand the force that drove the Egyptians to the desperation of selling every earthly possession that they had to retain life, as well as take away that painful cry for food that issues forth from their stomachs and was to be seen in their emaciated bodies. Hunger is a cry for life. It stems from a desire to live. It is a strong uncomfortable awareness of need. And it can be stilled and satisfied only by food.

Now I would not wish physical hunger and a famine of earthly bread upon anyone. But would to God that our people would hunger more for the Bread of Life! That there is a famine of the Word today every serious-minded, sincere child of God will concede in spite of all the "preaching" and means of getting the "preaching" out to the multitudes by printed page and spoken word. To find good, sound Biblical preaching that builds up the faith in Christ is hard to find. The "seven years" of doctrinal richness and prosperity when joy was to be found in discussing and seeking instruction in rich doctrinal issues are long past, and the years of famine of the Word have begun.

Well do I remember the days of my youth when the retired men on street corners or stores could be heard discussing such profound, significant truths as infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism, or sovereign, eternal, unchangeable election, double predestination, and the like. Lectures on Biblically orientated subjects were so well attended that, unless one came long before the lecture begun, one would find standing room only. But today, even for church members, the worldly entertainment of the TV set, the games and sports of the world, the pleasures of the flesh so fill the souls that they know no famine of the Word. They are too busy with fleshly, earthly life to realize the chief requirement of the soul. Church attendance becomes more and more spasmodic. Sermons must become shorter and shorter, and men will flock to the preacher who will shorten things for him. The sermons must become more and more shallow; and political and social matters rather than sin and salvation must be the subject matter of the sermon. A moral pep talk must replace a spiritual consideration of man's true spiritual misery, his deliverance from it and how he may show gratitude to God for it.

A famine is a terrible experience. To be in the midst of a dire famine and not to feel hunger for bread is a worse tragedy. It means that one is insensible to the very necessities of his life. It means that he is either spiritually dead when he feels no hunger for the Bread of Life, or he is so drunken with the pleasures of this world that his soul cries for more worldly stimulants, rather than for food!

O that our people would be willing to give up their boats and trailers and latest model cars and luxurious homes when the need arises so that their children can have the spiritual food of the Christian school! O that they would first seek the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness with the assurance in their souls that with all that they need to seek that kingdom will be added to them! O that spiritual life meant more to them than earthly possessions! O

that spiritual food for them and their children would mean more to them than earthly life itself! O that they would gladly be servants of God, and not only give their bodies but their souls to His service! O that they would buy the truth and sell it not for that which glitters but is not the gold of God's kingdom! O that they by spiritual hunger would be driven to Christ and His cross and would be willing to lose all their earthly possessions, if need be, and would use them and spend them to provide the Bread of Life for themselves and God's people on far-flung mission fields!

Driven by spiritual hunger, we are driven to Christ. Driven by natural hunger, and being devoid of God's grace, we are driven to the antichrist. Count not the material cost. Count the terrible loss, if the Bread of Life is not your daily portion.

TRANSLATED TREASURES

A Pamphlet Concerning the Reformation of the Church

Dr. A. Kuypers

(Kuyper has talked about gradual church renewal in those churches which have not departed far from the Scriptures. He has described what must be done to bring them back. In the following paragraphs he talks about reformation in churches which cannot be reformed from within.)

55. Concerning Reformation By A Break With The Existing Church.

Covenant renewal by means of a spiritual awakening cannot be understood as reformation any more than church renewal. In a narrow sense, the term "reformation" has no other connotation than that of the historical reformation of the sixteenth century which took place under the inspiration of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin and which led to a break at that time with the existing church.

Anticipating a possible misunderstanding, we must make a sharp distinction between two very different cases. It is one thing to attack the existing church in such a way that this leads to a reforming of the old church in which one was born. It is something entirely different to depart from that old church and to establish alongside of or over against it a new church. Both these things happened in the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

In Amsterdam, e.g., and in London, just as in

Wittenburg and Geneva, the reformers did not sever their relationships with the church in which they were born in order to establish a new church, but they loosened their own old church from its relationship with other churches, called into existence a new and better church relationship, and purified the church from errors. On the other hand, as in Paris and Vienna, in Poland and Italy, people left the church in which they were baptized and established a new church over against the old.

Attention is rarely paid to this important difference. Men commit the error of considering as church only the one big common church as it was bound together in a unity under papal authority. And because our fathers in Paris as well as Amsterdam broke with the Romish hierarchy, people imagined incorrectly that also here in our own land and in London a new church was established. This was, however, not at all the case. As soon as the matter is considered, even the most backward of us knows enough to realize that the Reformation did not really call a new church into being in this land, but the church was only a continuation in purer form of the old Christian churches which began here in the sixth and seventh centuries. That which a part of us did in 1834 in the work of reformation is not at all the same as that which happened in

Amsterdam when Amsterdam became Protestant.¹ It would be the same if our fathers had succeeded in overthrowing in the churches the synodical hierarchy. The movement of 1834 can only be compared with the reformation in lands such as Poland and Italy where the old church continued to maintain itself and the new little churches of the reformation could sprout only as new little plants alongside of the condemned old church.

To be clear on this matter we shall speak respectively and successively of both forms of church reformation: of reformation by means of a break with the existing church in which the concern is for the reforming of the old church; then reformation by means of a break with the existing church which results in the establishment of another church alongside of the existing church.

A mixture of these two kinds of church reformation can also take place. In that case certain men succeed in purifying their old church through reformation of certain abuses, but the other churches with which they stand in denominational connection cannot be persuaded to join a similar church reformation movement. Then a clash takes place which necessarily leads to a destruction of the old and a construction of a new church connection. This is a mixture of the two kinds of reformation because people do not then establish a new church but a new denomination; and so, in so far as this concerns an individual church, it comes under the first category, while in so far as it concerns the denomination at large it falls into the second category.

This forces us, for purposes of clarity, to describe separately this mixture of the two kinds of church reformation. The result is that we shall now treat this whole subject under three different headings.

1) Reformation through a break with the existing church by means of which reformation succeeds in maintaining the existing church in her church connection.

2) Reformation by a break with the existing church by which a new church is set up.

3) Reformation through a break with the existing church by which one is obligated to form a new church over against the old.

Only by this threefold division is it possible to

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Society of South East Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to two of their members, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Feenstra, in the passing of Mrs. Feenstra's father, MR. HENRY MEULENBERG.

May they find comfort in the words expressed in Psalm 37:18, "The Lord knoweth the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be forever."

Rev. Carl Haak, Pres.
Mrs. Harlow Kuiper, Sec'y.

have a clear insight into the way reformation works.

"A break with the existing church" is the most common expression for all more or less radical reformation. But this break can take place either with the existing organization alone (congregation), or with the existing church connection (denomination), or, finally, not only with these two, but also with the existing church in its entirety.

There is not only a sharply defined distinction between these three, but also an ascent from the narrower to the broader.

The first break is only temporary, the wound which heals.

The second break is lasting, but concerns not the church but the denomination.

The third break involves the organization and denomination not only, but involves the church itself in its entirety.

The best known example of the first kind of break is to be found in the history of the reformatory movement of the Reformed at the time of the Remonstrants. In s' Gravenhage, Harlem and many other places, even in classes and synods, this led to a very definite break, but to a break which was healed again at the Synod of Dort and which since that time has entirely disappeared.

An example of the second kind of break is found in the reformation of Wittenburg, Zurich, and Geneva, in Amsterdam, London, and Copenhagen, in the sixteenth century.

The churches of the Afscheiding in our own fatherland are examples of the third kind of break.

It is also to be noticed that a break with the existing church is never understood by those who make the break in any other way than as being a break with a sham church or a false imitation of the church.

The justification or condemnation of such a break thus depends almost entirely on the question whether this characterization of a church as a sham or false church is just. And so we must turn to a discussion and careful consideration of the marks of the church by which this question is decided.

¹The reference is here to the Afscheiding under the leadership of De Cock, Van Raalte, and others.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 1, 1982, our parents, MR. AND MRS. MELVIN WIERSEMA celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

We are grateful to our Covenant God for these loving, God-fearing parents. May they experience God's richest blessings in future years.

Phil and Joanne Lotterman
Rich and Betty Heys
Bob and Dorothy Noorman
Bill and Marilyn Masselink

Marv and Melva Mastbergen
Carl and Linda Wykstra
18 grandchildren
6 great grandchildren

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Congratulations to REV. HERMAN VELDMAN who has now completed 50 years in the ministry.

We give thanks to God for him and for his wife, who together have served our churches faithfully these many years.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at day" (II Tim. 4:8).

Council of South West Protestant Reformed Church
Rev. M. De Vries, Pres.
Clarence Kuiper, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council of South West Protestant Reformed Church express their heartfelt sympathy to Elder Jay Boone and Deacon Daniel Boone in the death of a sister and aunt MRS. JEANETTE PLAS.

"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God; in Him will I trust" (Psalm 91:2).

Rev. M. De Vries, Pres.
Clarence Kuiper, Clerk

REFORMED FREE PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

South East Church, September 23, 1982 — 8:00 P.M.

Speaker: Rev. M. De Vries

Subject: "Holding on to the Sound Word"

Election of 3 Board Members: Tom Bodbyl, Vern Casemier, Phil Dykstra, Henry Kamps, Jim Koole, Stu Looyenga.

Board of the R.F.P.A.
P. Koole, Sec'y.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 11, 1982, the Lord willing, our loving parents, MR. AND MRS. CASE LUBBERS, will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

We pray that God will always continue to bless them and keep them in His care in the years to come.

"If thy children will keep My covenant and My testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall sit upon thy throne forever more" (Psalm 132:12).

Their loving children.
Robert Lubbers
Renaë Lubbers
Grand Rapids, Michigan

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

We the children, grandchildren, and great grandchild of REV. AND MRS. HERMAN VELDMAN give thanks to God that we may on September 9, 1982 celebrate both fifty years of marriage and fifty years in the ministry of the gospel in the Protestant Reformed Churches. We thank God for His care and keeping of them these past years and for the blessings He has given both to us and our churches through them. All praise be to Jehovah, our covenant God, Who daily sustains their lives in our midst.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

Cornie and Evelyn Den Ouden
Jack and Elaine Van Dyke
Jon and Joanne Huisken
11 grandchildren
1 great grandchild

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Aid Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sympathy to a fellow member, Mrs. John Kamps in the death of her young son, MICHAEL JOHN KAMPS.

May our God strengthen her and her family by His Word and Spirit.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help" (Psalm 121:1).

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

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On August 20, 1982, our parents, MR. AND MRS. GERRIT HOLSTEGE, celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren, thank our heavenly Father for blessing us with these God-fearing parents who have brought us up in the fear of the Lord. We pray that God will always be near them and bless them in the years to come.

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

Gary and DeVonna Holstege	Don and Nancy Vanderlest
Mical and Nathan	Nichole and Daniel
Doug and Mary Jane Prince	Joyce Holstege
Al Holstege	Sharon Holstege

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Faith, Hope and Love Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, IL expresses their Christian Sympathy to Mrs. Wilbur Bruinsma, Mrs. Barney Haak, Mrs. Claus Haak, Miss Henrietta Haak, Mrs. John Haak, Mrs. Dan Poortinga, Mrs. Dick Poortinga, Mrs. P.S. Poortinga and Mrs. Gysbert A. Van Baren in the loss of their brother and brother-in-law, MR. JAKE HAAK.

May God comfort the family by His Word and Spirit.

Rev. David Engelsma, Pres.
Mrs. Denise De Jong, Sec'y.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 6, 1982, our parents, MR. AND MRS. HENRY P. MEULENBERG will celebrate, the Lord willing, their 25th wedding anniversary. We, their children, thank our heavenly Father for the years He has given them together, and for their covenant instruction in the fear of His name. It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless them and keep them in His care.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

their children, H. Steven, Janna, and Paul
Houston, TX

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

On June 18, 1982, it pleased the Lord in His infinite wisdom to suddenly take from the midst of the church militant unto Himself in the church triumphant, our beloved brother and fellow member, MR. BUD VAN UFFELEN at the age of 55 years.

May the Lord comfort the bereaved wife and children and relatives by His spirit and grace.

Though the suddenness of his departure was a great shock, we wish humbly to submit to the will of the Lord which always is wise and good. May his sudden passing also teach us all to number our days and redeem the time.

The Consistory of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Redlands, California
Rev. K. Koole, Pres.
Charles E. Van Meeteren, Clerk

News From Our Churches

At this writing many of our young people are preparing to attend their annual Young People's Convention. This year's convention, planned by the societies of our Hull and Doon, Iowa and Edgerton, Minnesota churches, is being held in Northwest Iowa. The planned convention speeches are as follows:

Aug. 17, Rev. Kuiper, "Called to Obedience"

Aug. 18, Rev. Bruinsma, "Called to Moral Purity"

Aug. 19, Rev. Kortering, "Called to Faithful Church Membership."

A glance at the titles above leaves us with little doubt that much spiritual food is in store for our young people again this year.

Our calling churches have been very active during the past few months. Calls from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada to Rev. D. Kuiper of Lynden, Washington and Rev. R. Cammenga of Hull, Iowa have been declined. Edgerton, Minnesota has extended a call to Candidate Jon Smith following a decline of their call to Rev. Bekkering of our Houston, Texas congregation.

* * * * *

Back in January a Loveland, Colorado bulletin announced: "The Lord willing our congregation will celebrate our 25th anniversary in the year 1983. The consistory appointed a committee to arrange for appropriate ways to celebrate as well as prepare an anniversary book." Apparently the appointed committee is doing its work, for in May they informed the Loveland congregation that: "The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of our church in Loveland is just a year away and the committee has been busy planning a celebration. There will be two evenings of celebration. The first evening — June 22, 1983 - will be a program with refreshments afterward. We have asked each of our former ministers to have a part in the program. For the second evening — June 23 - we are planning a potluck dinner, with a slide show after."

The Wyckoff, New Jersey Church building project has progressed since February when we last wrote about it. The plumbers have "finished most of their work of installing water, gas and sewer lines in the basement," the steeple is finished, and "Mr. C. DeGroot has provided and installed a set of doorposts and a lintel for the front entrance of the church."

They have experienced some set backs, however, as is evident from a building progress report in Wyckoff's June 13 bulletin: "We have also had another disappointment; our request that we be allowed to install closed-circuit television rather than a ramp or elevator to meet the handicapped code was denied by the township. There is the possibility of appealing this decision, but there seems to be very little chance of success." Meanwhile, their June 20 bulletin reports, "We are unable to continue work on the inside since this installation may require some changes in one or the other of the stairways."

* * * * *

From a Southwest, Grand Rapids bulletin we have some wonderful news: "We rejoice with Mr. and Mrs. Lau Chin Kwee of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore in the birth of a daughter, Tabitha Liu, 6 lbs., 14 oz., on July 14. Both mother and baby are well." Funny thing though, while the Laus were still in the states, Chin Kwee was sure they were going to have a boy.

* * * * *

The following verse for thought was gleaned from a Loveland, Colorado bulletin:

Gossip is the most deadly germ
It has neither legs nor wings.
It is composed entirely of tales
And most of them have stings.

E.E. Opdyke

CK