

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

— A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE —

Above all, the AIDS epidemic is a call to holiness of life. Being a warning against sin, it is a call to holiness of life. To use the language of the Heidelberg Catechism in its explanation of the seventh commandment, AIDS teaches us "That all uncleanness is accursed of God: and that therefore, we must with all our hearts detest the same, and live chastely and temperately, whether in holy wedlock, or in single life."

See "AIDS: A Revelation of the Righteous  
Wrath of God" — page 207

## CONTENTS

Meditation —	
He Restoreth My Soul. ....	194
Editorial —	
The Sesquicentennial of the Afscheiding .....	196
Guided Into All Truth —	
Montanism and the Word .....	199
My Sheep Hear My Voice —	
Our Order of Worship .....	201
The Day of Shadows —	
A Tragically Worthless Success. ....	203
Taking Heed to the Doctrine —	
Preservation and Perseverance (1) .....	205
The Strength of Youth —	
AIDS: A Revelation of the Righteous	
Wrath of God .....	207
In His Fear —	
God is a Spirit. ....	209
Bible Study Guide —	
James, Evidence of a Living Faith (concluded) ..	212
Book Reviews. ....	214
News From Our Churches .....	216

## THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

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

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

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

*Department Editors:* Rev. Ronald Cammenga, Rev. Arie den Hartog, Prof. Robert D. Decker, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman C. Hanko, Rev. Ronald Hanko, Mr. David Harbach, Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. J. Kortering, Rev. George C. Lubbers, Rev. Thomas C. Miersma, Rev. Marinus Schipper, Rev. James Slopsema, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Herman Veldman.

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

*Church News Editor:* Mr. David Harbach  
4930 Ivanrest Ave., Apt. B  
Grandville, Michigan 49418

*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. PH: (616) 243-2953  
P.O. Box 6064  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

*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

# He Restoreth My Soul

Rev. H. Veldman

*"He restoreth my soul." Psalm 23:3a*

How tremendously comforting is this twenty-third psalm! It is called, correctly, the shepherd's psalm. Is a greater or higher glory conceivable than to have the Lord, Jehovah, the I AM, for one's shepherd?! It is generally accepted that David is the writer of this psalm, and that he wrote it, divinely inspired, toward the end of his life when he was fleeing from before the face of his rebellious son,

Absalom. This psalm, it is said in support of this contention, is rich in experience. Be this as it may, David is certainly referring to his life as a shepherd, and he does not hesitate to declare that the Lord is his Shepherd and that he shall not want, even then when fleeing before his rebellious and apostate son. I repeat: is a greater or higher glory conceivable than to have Jehovah as one's shepherd, to be a



sheep of Him Who alone is the living God, in Himself the all-sufficient One, the Rock, the Unchangeable One, of Whom and by Whom and through Whom are all things, to Whom be all the glory forever?

The heart and core of this beautiful psalm is surely verse 1. The *Lord* is my shepherd. The Lord here is the I AM THAT I AM, the Rock, the Unchangeable God, unchangeable in Himself and therefore also in His relation to His people. Therefore it is true that the Lord is my Shepherd. He never changes. Hence, it is not only true that He was my Shepherd, or that He *shall be* my Shepherd, but He *is* my Shepherd. Nothing can possibly change that fact. Indeed, do not overlook this small but tremendously significant word, this word "is." A sheep may turn its back upon its shepherd, but that shepherd remains its shepherd. The Lord is my Shepherd. And therefore it is true that we shall not want; never shall we lack anything; never shall all our wants and needs not be completely satisfied. It may be that we will suffer affliction, experience trouble; fact is, however, we will never be in want, we will always receive what we need, also as far as our troubles and afflictions are concerned. And of this wonderful care the inspired psalmist sings in the verses that follow in this psalm.

He restoreth my soul. One need not doubt the meaning of these words in the light of their context. We read in verse 2: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters." We interpret these green pastures and still waters as referring to the same truth, from different aspects, a picture of perfect rest. Here we see the shepherd as he leads his flock to that wonderful spot where his sheep can receive food and drink and relax, leading them from hot and barren fields to this wonderful oasis of rest and refreshment. Indeed, He restoreth my soul. If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink; if any man hunger; let him eat of My bread, the bread of everlasting life.

\* \* \* \* \*

My soul.

The soul here is the seat of our natural life; it does not refer merely to the body, but to my entire life, such as my willing, thinking, desiring, etc. Hence, the restoration whereof the text speaks is not merely an outward, external restoration, but an inner, spiritual refreshing — a refreshing, therefore, which is not limited to external things, is not influenced by these outward circumstances, but is a profound, an inner, spiritual experience. Whatever may be our outward circumstances, such as health or sickness, plenty or want, joy or sorrow, etc., the soul is my inner life, the water, shall we say, below

the surface, man as he is adapted in his creation to the living God and the fellowship of His covenant.

He restoreth my soul.

The English reads: He restoreth my soul; the Dutch reads: Hij verkwikt mijne ziel, or, He revives, refreshes, and so restores my soul. Literally the word means "to cause to return, to bring back." A soul that is revived, quickened, can be said "to be brought back." Before it was restored it languished, became weak, lost its life and vitality, appeared to be on the verge of dying. Such a soul is now brought back, restored, quickened, and revived. Such is the idea of this word of God.

Indeed, how necessary is this restoration!

The figure here is plain. The shepherd has been leading his sheep in a dry and thirsty land. Their strength was weakened; their spirits drooped and sagged; their vitality was disappearing, oozing away as it were. Now he leads them to green pastures and still waters. Here, at this oasis, they are revived.

Its spiritual application and reality?

The soul of man, we must bear in mind, is adapted to the living God, by virtue of its creation. Then do we live and experience joy and peace and life only when we may taste the love of God, the sweetness of His fellowship and communion, the joy of His love. That alone revives and restores and quickens my soul. But this also means that outside of the love and fellowship of the Lord nothing restores and quickens my soul. O, the natural man may attempt and does attempt to revive and quicken his soul with the things of this present time, but all these things of this present time are but empty husks. They leave him empty and destitute. And now we sojourn in a dry and thirsty land where no waters flow. Everything around me is that dry and thirsty land which has nothing in it that satisfies. All the pleasures and treasures of this world, including health and strength, can never satisfy, restore, and revive my soul. Man was created in God's image, adapted to His service, and in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Then, in Adam, my soul rejoiced in the perfect service of the living God. Then, in Adam, my soul was satisfied. But man sinned. In wilful and utter folly Adam turned his back upon the living God, sought the friendship of the devil, life in death, light in darkness, and his soul became utterly destitute, devoid of all life and joy — indeed, he found himself in a dry and thirsty land where no waters flow.

And then, how desperately hungry and thirsty we became when the Lord, by His grace and Spirit, regenerated our hearts and minds and understanding! By nature, of course, we know not our misery. We are blind but imagine that we see, are deaf and



imagine that we hear, are dumb and lame and imagine that we speak and walk, are bound, hopelessly bound, and imagine ourselves to be free. Such was also the boast of the wicked Jews when confronted by the Lord Jesus Christ. How they resisted the word of the Rabbi of Nazareth when told by Him that the truth would make them free, according to the Word of God in John 8! How could they be made free when they had never been in bondage to any man?! This is the spiritual folly of sin, characteristic of all men as they are of themselves. But when the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ opens our hearts and minds and souls; when He recreates within us the longing for the living God; when He opens our eyes so that we see that all life and joy are in God alone and in the blessedness of fellowship with Him; then we become hungry and thirsty — we long for the living God. And we cannot reach Him! We cannot pay for our sins and guilt, or satisfy the justice and righteousness of the Lord. We cannot break these spiritual chains of sin and darkness and death. The fellowship of God, which has become more precious than life itself to us, lies completely and hopelessly beyond our reach.

\* \* \* \* \*

He restoreth my soul.

How vain are man's efforts to restore and revive his soul! Indeed, he attempts to do this. How he loves a social gospel, a gospel that is geared to this world's society, to making this world a better place in which to live! How man strives to remove the results of sin without removing sin itself! How he would remove God's curse upon him and this world, while continuing to walk in sin! All such efforts are vain. The Lord will not be mocked. He will surely maintain Himself. Whoever forsakes the living God forsakes the only Fountain of living waters. Such an one will never find relief. Only misery will be his lot, now and forevermore.

He restoreth my soul.

We read in verse 2 of green pastures and still waters. In the old dispensation these green pastures and still waters surely refer to the operations of the

Holy Spirit as He operated in the people of God through and in connection with the shadows of that day, looking forward to that wondrous day when Jehovah, the faithful God of His covenant, would visit His people in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord. And this He did. The Bread of Life descended from heaven. He came Who gives us living water, of Whom we read in John 4:14: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." He became for us the Bread and Water of Life. He suffered and died atoningly for all those given Him of the Father. He paid for all their sins and guilt, merited for them everlasting life and glory. Whosoever eats of His broken body and drinks of His shed blood, whoever appropriates by a true and living faith His sacrifice of Himself upon the cross of Calvary, eats and drinks unto everlasting life.

He restoreth my soul! He does not merely provide this living bread and water for me, but He also gives it to me, makes me a partaker of it. He does not merely set it before me and then leave it to me to "come and get it." He not only makes me hungry and thirsty by His almighty and regenerating Spirit within my heart, but He also gives me the power and activity of faith to take hold of these "green pastures and still waters." Indeed, He restores my soul. He works also in me by His good and holy Spirit. And as He enables me to take hold of Him Who died that I might live, He restores and quickens me so that I will be wholly quickened and revived, even forever. This crucified and glorified Christ blots out all my sin, protects me from every enemy, causes all things to work together for my good, becomes in me a well of water springing up into everlasting life. He restores and revives me forevermore.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He revives and quickens my fainting heart and soul.

He restores me forevermore.

---

## EDITORIAL

# The Sesquicentennial of the Afscheiding

*Prof. H.C. Hoeksema*

This year marks the sesquicentennial, or one hundred fiftieth anniversary, of the Afscheiding, the Secession of 1834, a secession from the

Hervormde Kerk (the so-called State Church) of the Netherlands. Specifically the date of that anniversary is October 14, 1834.



I do not know whether among our churches there will be any formal observance of this anniversary; thus far I have heard of no plans for such a celebration. But whether there shall be such a formal celebration or not, this is something which should not pass by unnoticed. The *Standard Bearer*, therefore, will make a contribution to the end that we may remember with thankfulness and rededication this momentous event.

What was so momentous about this event? Why should we remember it?

The answer lies in the fact that we as Protestant Reformed people and churches have our roots in the Secession of 1834. If it had not been for that Secession, we would not be here and would not be what we are, a communion of Reformed churches and Reformed people in the United States and Canada.

This is true, first of all, from a purely historical point of view. We as Protestant Reformed churches and people have our origin in the Christian Reformed Church. In turn, the Christian Reformed Church had its origin in the churches of the Secession of 1834. The colonists who came with Van Raalte to what is now Holland, Michigan in 1847 were people of the Afscheiding; and the Rev. Van Raalte himself was one of the leaders of the Afscheiding movement in the Netherlands prior to his coming to this country. For a time, perhaps you will remember, the colonists were connected with the Reformed Church in America; but in 1857 many of them defected from the RCA to begin what is now the Christian Reformed Church. And there can be no question but that the Christian Reformed Church constituted the true continuation of the churches of the Secession in this country.

Later, of course, there was a further separation in the Netherlands which is called the Doleantie. This took place in 1886, especially under the leadership of Dr. Abraham Kuyper. And in 1892 the two groups (that of the Secession of '34 and that of the Doleantie of '86) came together to form the Gereformeerde Kerken (GKN). And as the immigration from the Netherlands continued into the early 1900s, there were many of our ancestors who came from the GKN and who could trace their roots to either the Secession of 1834 or the Doleantie of 1886. And there are also those who can trace their origin to the segment of the 1834 churches which did not go along with the union of 1892 and who are still today known as the Christian Reformed Churches of the Netherlands.

Nevertheless, our historical roots are primarily in the Secession of 1834. Hence, from that point of view this sesquicentennial is significant.

But even more, in the second place, our roots are

in the Secession of 1834 as far as the truth and as far as our confession is concerned. I am well aware of the fact that there have been other influences; and I refer to the peculiar emphasis and contribution of the Doleantie and of Abraham Kuyper and others. I am also aware of the fact that in the movement of the Secession of 1834 there was from time to time considerable "strange fire on the altar." In many respects, indeed, the formation and the survival of what came eventually to be the Gereformeerde Kerken was a wonder. Nevertheless, as far as the mainstream of the Secession of 1834 is concerned, it was a *reformation*! It constituted a return to the Reformed faith as it was enunciated by the Great Synod of Dordrecht in 1618-'19; and at the same time it constituted an advance and development in the line of Dordt. And since we have our roots in 1834, it follows that we would not be here as Reformed people and churches and would not be what we are as far as the confession of the truth is concerned, were it not for that Secession and the reformation involved in it.

From this point of view, therefore, the sesquicentennial of the Afscheiding is even more important, that is, provided that our observance of it is more than the empty observance of a "history buff" and provided it does not constitute a building of the graves of the prophets.

What happened on October 14, 1834?

I cannot now review all the history that preceded that momentous occasion. The actual event of the Secession was, of course, not an isolated event; but it was the climax of a long process of degeneration and decline and of a warfare for the preservation of the truth which really began not long after the Synod of Dordrecht in 1618-'19. Nevertheless, the actual break, the actual secession, the actual beginning or reformation took place on the date referred to.

The site is the little village of Ulrum, in the province of Groningen. On the evening of October 14 there is a gathering at the home of Widow Hulshoff, a gathering of 67 members of the Hervormde Kerk of Ulrum, together with the members of the consistory and their pastor, the Rev. Hendrik De Cock. With few exceptions, the entire congregation is represented at this gathering.

They have reached a decisive moment. They stand at the crossroads.

This gathering is, in the eyes of the duly constituted authorities of the church of that day — and various "boards" had replaced the assemblies stipulated by the Church Order of Dordt — a gathering of rebels. Days of tension and battle had preceded the evening's gathering. Struggle and upheaval and unrest and much prayer had been in-



volved in the preparation of this meeting. For the congregation had lived along with their pastor in the battle which he fought for the Reformed truth over against the ungodly ecclesiastical boards. They had lived along with him, too, in the persecution which he had to endure and in the reproach which was his portion for the sake of truth and justice. One can read on the faces of those gathered that this is a decisive moment, a turning point. They expect on this evening to take a decisive step. Not lightly will they take this step; the seriousness of the moment can be read on all their faces.

Repeatedly their pastor had been suspended. For a considerable time already he had not been permitted to minister the Word from his own pulpit. Finally he had been put out of office. To the very end he had walked the way of appeal. Patiently — too patiently in the opinion of many — he had been subject to the sentences of the ecclesiastical boards. But he had neither desired nor sought separation; on the contrary, he had done all in his power to prevent it. Now, however, both pastor and consistory had reached a decision. They were determined. Those who were gathered in Widow Hulshoff's home were glad that the moment of decision had arrived, and they eagerly awaited word of it and were prepared to participate in it.

Pastor De Cock briefly addresses the gathering, pointing them to the seriousness of the moment and of the step they were contemplating. Then they all kneel in prayer to commit their cause to the Lord and to beseech Him for grace that they may make their decision in the consciousness of His favor. For their help is in the name of the God of Jacob.

It was only a little band!

They did not belong to the noble and the wise and the rich of this world. They did not belong to those who counted for something in this world. But "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are."

It was by this little flock of small and despised folk that a step was taken and a decision reached which would prove to be of tremendous historical significance for the Reformed Churches — in fact, for Zion of all ages, for eternity.

For at this meeting this little band adopted and signed the "Act of Secession or Return (*Acte van Afscheiding of Wederkeering*)."

Later we shall reproduce this "Act of Secession or Return" in full in translation. For it is an historic

document. For the present we call attention to the following:

1) This document states that this small and despised group of Reformed believers at Ulrum were separating with finality from the *Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*.

2) It speaks in clear and decisive language of the motive of the Secession. The cause lay in the corruption of the State Church, in the degeneration of doctrine, in the profaning of the sacraments, and in the horrible neglect of discipline.

3) It rejects all that the ecclesiastical boards had done to their pastor, Hendrik De Cock, and calls his suspension and deposition from office highly unjust and ungodly.

4) It declares that recent history has made it more than plain that the State Church is not the true, but the false church.

5) It declares that therefore, by virtue of the office of all believers, Article 28, they separate themselves from those who are not the Church, and therefore no longer desire fellowship with the Netherlands Reformed Church until such a time that the latter returns to the true service of the Lord. At the same time it declares a willingness to exercise communion with all true Reformed members and to unite with every gathering that is based on God's infallible Word, wherever God has united such a gathering. And it declares that they in all things hold to God's holy Word and to the Formulas of Unity, in all things based on that Word, namely, the Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordrecht.

In this "Act of Secession or Return," therefore, is expressed the true character of the Secession of 1834.

And when we study that true character of the Secession, we discover that it had the marks of genuine reformation. The Secession was not sectarian. It was true reformation!

*The Standard Bearer  
makes a thoughtful  
gift for the sick and  
shut-in. Give the  
Standard Bearer*



## GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH

# Montanism and the Word

*Rev. T. Miersma*

By A.D. 150 the early new dispensational church was a well-established and growing church. Enduring the trials of persecution and the attacks of various Gnostic heresies, the church continued to grow in its understanding of the Word and to be led by the Spirit to discern God's Word of Truth. By A.D. 180 a solid consensus was already forming in the church as to what constituted the New Testament Scriptures, though this process cannot be said to be fully finished until around A.D. 350. The attacks of various Gnostic sects and heresies stimulated the church to take hold of the Word of God and to defend her heritage. According to God's sovereign purpose, the effect of these heresies upon the church strengthened rather than weakened it, and bound the churches more closely together.

In this battle the Apologists, who labored from about A.D. 150 to 200, rendered valuable service to the church. The earliest of them, Justin Martyr, had defended Christianity against paganism, sealing his confession with his own martyrdom in Rome in approximately A.D. 165. Irenaeus who had been taught at the feet of Polycarp, fought a similar battle against the Gnostic heretics until his death in about A.D. 200. It is Irenaeus who perhaps deserves the distinction of being the earliest theologian of the church.

Following the Apologists, other leaders arose in the church to continue the struggle: Tertullian in North Africa who labored until about A.D. 220 and Cyprian, his pupil, who suffered a martyr's death in A.D. 258. Under the leadership of such men God enabled the church to resist strongly the attacks of the various Gnostic sects. In spite of and in fact through the very means of persecution and trial, the church grew, began to develop the truths of the Word of God, and in particular to set forth the first formulations of the doctrine of the Trinity.

It is in this context that a new movement made its appearance within the church in A.D. 156. Its leader, Montanus, arose during a time of severe persecution in Asia Minor, the aged Polycarp being one of the victims of this persecution. In the midst of this severe tribulation Montanus saw the end of all things approaching and began to teach the imminent return of Christ and His millennial reign on

earth in a new Jerusalem, which according to Montanus was to make its appearance somewhere in Asia Minor. In connection with these views concerning the last things he announced the coming of a new dispensation of the Spirit, proclaiming himself a prophet and passive instrument of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete and Comforter. He, and two prophetesses with him, went forth to preach this special dispensation of the Spirit. In character Montanism was therefore an early form of the Pentecostal heresy prevalent in our own day. Like its modern counterpart it was characterized by emotional excesses, a violation of and ignoring of the Scripture's teaching concerning the role and place of women in the church, strange doctrines concerning the last things, and an attitude of world flight. Like Pentecostalism it emphasized the exotic gifts of the Spirit such as tongue-speaking and miracles of healing, and made a distinction in the church between spiritual and carnal members. Unlike modern Pentecostalism which emphasizes particularly speaking in tongues, Montanism emphasized the gift of prophecy.

Montanism was a serious threat to the church, for its error quickly spread throughout the churches. The church did not have a specific doctrine of the gifts of the Spirit at this time, although it did recognize their connection with the apostles. The church also made a distinction between the higher influence of the Spirit in connection with the labors and writings of the apostles and His influence in the post-apostolic era. This was the position which Polycarp took, as was pointed out in an earlier article. The church also taught that the Spirit still resided in the church and led the church, as she was founded upon the doctrine of the apostles. But the Montanist excesses and prophetic ravings the church ascribed to demonic influences and the power of Satan.

The seriousness of the error of Montanism lies particularly in its attack upon the doctrine of Scripture. While the Montanists, like the modern-day Pentecostals, made the claim that they fully recognized Scripture as the Word of God and claimed orthodoxy regarding it, yet in fact they undermined Scripture, for they denied its sufficiency as the rule



of faith and life. Montanism's prophecy was an additional revelation above and beyond that taught in the Scriptures. Even the church father Tertullian was carried away by this new error in the latter part of his life. While he and other Montanists taught that prophecy had to be in harmony with the teaching of Scripture and the historic doctrine of the church, it was particularly in the practical life and walk of the church that Montanism made its presence felt. It taught a rigorous asceticism — celibacy, fastings, abstinence from meats and drinks — which found ready acceptance in the church.

The church vigorously fought this new error and it was largely condemned by the churches, bishops, and various synods of the church. Yet the influence of Montanism continued in the church for a long time.

The Montanist error, in its denial of the sufficiency of Scripture, weakened the church and the authority of the Word, but it also served to promote an erroneous doctrine of inspiration in the church. The church maintained that Scripture was the Word of God given by the Spirit through the apostles and prophets. The question with which the church struggled was in understanding and explaining that work of the Spirit in its relation to the men by whom God gave His Word. The church taught that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21). The question was, how was this work of the Spirit to be understood?

While the church had formed no clear conception of inspiration, it had tended to vacillate between a more organic view of inspiration and a mechanical description of it. The common and simple explanation was a mechanical one in which the human instruments of Scripture were simply overpowered by the Spirit, their personalities, gifts, and even their consciousness suppressed. The resulting explanation described them as being like a musical instrument upon which the Spirit played a tune. This mechanical theory of inspiration was greatly advanced by the Montanist heresy, for they claimed that same kind of inspiration for themselves in their utterances. The prophet was supposedly lifted up out of himself so that he became a merely unconscious instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

This mechanical theory of inspiration and prophetic ecstasy of Montanism, which also finds its counterpart in modern-day Pentecostalism, gradually supplanted the more organic conception of the apostolic fathers who regarded the Spirit as speaking in and through the apostles as conscious instruments of revelation. Organic inspiration recognizes that though the Spirit spoke infallibly

and inerrantly by the apostles and prophets, yet He did so, not apart from, but in and through the human instruments, as conscious instruments, so guiding and directing all their talents and gifts that that which they wrote was word for word, God's inerrant Word. Due to the Montanist error, the church drifted away from this toward the mechanical theory, and it was left to the later church fathers, such as Jerome, Augustine and Chrysostom, to return to a more organic view (though they too often echo the mechanical idea as well), and ultimately a clear doctrine of inspiration was not developed until the days of the Reformation.

This mechanical conception of inspiration has certain consequences for how one interprets Scripture and is therefore a serious error. It severs the Scriptures from history in such a way that they really have no historical context at all, and it allows for all kinds of fanciful interpretations of the Word of God in complete disregard of the time and place in which they were given. The organic view, while avoiding the idea that Scripture is culturally conditioned and time-bound as it is God's Word and not man's word, yet at the same time maintains the literal sense of Scripture as spoken by the Lord to His people in the real world.

As a result the Montanist error served to further a growing tendency in the church to allegorize the Scripture and to give to historical passages of the Word of God a variety of mystical and symbolic interpretations which were not proper expositions of the meaning of Scripture. (We will have more to say about this in a future article, D.V.) Montanism, exactly because of its mystical and Pentecostal character, furthered the idea of a deeper level in the Scriptures than the plain meaning of the Word of God and the Spirit. This deeper level was open only to those who were "spiritual" in the church, i.e., the Montanist. With such an approach the necessity of comparing Scripture with Scripture is also eliminated since the inward revelation of the Spirit becomes a sufficient guide to exposition. Thus some of the sound principles of exegesis and Bible study, such as comparing Scripture with Scripture and explaining more obscure passages by clearer ones, were endangered. These principles, while not clearly understood by the church had begun to develop, and Montanism served to retard that development and misdirect its course.

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



## MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

# Our Order of Worship

*Prof. H. Hanko*

In our discussion of the elements of worship which make up our congregational worship of God, we were discussing the activities which actually precede the worship service. In the last article we talked about the Consistory meeting before the service and about the prayers which the individual members of the congregation make prior to the worship service itself and after their entrance into the sanctuary. There is one more element which we must briefly mention: the organ playing before the actual worship service.

There are two remarks which ought to be made before we discuss this matter. The first is that this practice is not common to all churches who use musical accompaniment for the singing. Those of our ministers who, prior to 1953, preached among the immigrants in Canada mentioned that this was not commonly done among them. There was no music played prior to the worship service itself, and the organ was used only to accompany the singing. The second matter is that some churches do not have instrumental music at all in the worship services. This is common among some branches of Presbyterianism, especially those Presbyterian Churches which have their roots in the Covenanting Churches of Scotland.

The latter refuse to allow musical accompaniment in the worship services as a matter of principle. They believe in what is sometimes called "purity of worship," and then again called, "the regulative principles of worship." It is not necessary to get into this matter in detail in these articles, although the whole question is an interesting one. In brief, the regulative principle of worship means that we may include in the worship services only such activities which are specifically commanded by Scripture. The Calvin Reformation differed from the Lutheran Reformation on this point. The Lutheran Churches took the position that the traditional activities of worship as practiced in the Romish Church could be retained as long as they were *not expressly forbidden by Scripture*. This is why the Lutheran Churches have been far more liturgically minded than the churches of the Calvin Reformation.

At any rate, it is the firm belief of those who practice purity of worship that musical accompaniment in the worship service is not commanded in the Scriptures and, therefore, ought not to be used. If it is argued that musical instruments were used in the temple worship according to the Psalms, the answer to this is that this was the Old Testament and not regulative for the New, since the Old Testament worship of God was in typical form, which typical form passed away with the coming of Christ. Usually, in these churches, a precentor leads the congregational worship.

It is not our purpose to enter into the argument in these articles. It seems to us that here too no legislation may be laid down. Scripture gives us freedom in these matters. If a congregation chooses not to use musical instruments in the singing, they do not violate any command of Scripture. But if a congregation does choose to make use of the organ, this cannot be sinful either, and such a congregation must be given the biblical freedom to do this.

In the Reformed tradition, musical instruments, usually an organ, have been used. And it is common, also among our churches, that ten minutes or so before the service the organist begins to play the organ. The purpose of this is to establish by music a spiritual atmosphere for worship, to put the congregation into the mood for worship, to assist the people of God in meditating upon their presence in the house of God.

The question has often been asked and debated: What music ought to be played before the worship service? Congregations and Consistories have debated this question and have come to various conclusions. Usually, the arguments center in the question of whether only the Psalms ought to be played or whether other music is also appropriate.

It ought to be understood at the outset that there is a great deal of music which is inappropriate for this organ (or piano) prelude. I have been in worship services where music was played during this prelude which was altogether out of keeping with the nature of the worship service. I have heard hymns played which are far from being Reformed



and are sometimes downright Arminian. I have heard spirituals played, the words of which are not expressive of biblical truths. I have heard patriotic music played which is secular. I have heard classical music played which, while good enough in itself, is not fitting for a worship service. It is clear that such music has no place in the congregational gathering for worship and detracts from, rather than adds to, the worship of God. (We might add that the same thing is true of the music played during Offertory.)

There is, of course, a problem of sorts here. One need only page through our own *Psalter* to discover that one could play from the *Psalter* itself and play secular, patriotic, and classical music. The second tune of *Psalter* No. 212 is the old English ballad, "Auld Lang Syne." *Psalter* No. 126 is the tune of "America." *Psalter* No. 261 is taken from symphonic music and was also the tune of the German National Anthem. Furthermore, there are other *Psalters* in existence besides our *Psalter*. These *Psalters*, while based on the Psalms, and in some instances closer to the AV translation of the Psalms than our own *Psalter*, nevertheless use music quite different. Some of this music is, to us, quite different from the familiar tunes we use in church. One faces all these problems.

We ought, at this point, briefly to mention the arguments pro and con for limiting the music before the service to *Psalter* numbers. Against this practice are the following arguments, so far as I have been able to discover them: 1) It does grave injustice to a long and rich heritage of beautiful church music which has been developed by the church over the centuries and which is part of our heritage as churches of the Reformation. By limiting ourselves to the Psalms, we simply ignore this rich heritage which the Lord has given to us. 2) It is an impossible position to enforce without becoming legalistic and piling law upon law and precept upon precept. This is true because of the problems which I mentioned a couple of paragraphs back. What if an organist would play "Auld Lang Syne" in church and justify this on the grounds that it appears in our *Psalter*? Would the purpose be served of limiting church music to the Psalms? 3) The prelude is not a part of the worship service at all. Even though a congregation may limit her singing to the Psalms, the music that is played before the worship service need not be from the *Psalter* at all since the worship service has not been officially begun. (This does not, of course, hold true for the Offertory, which is part of the worship service.)

In favor of limiting this musical prelude to the Psalms are the following arguments: 1) The judgment of what is proper music cannot be left to the

discretion of the organists in all cases, as history has proved. 2) It is impossible for some Consistorial music committee to approve beforehand all the music to be played during the prelude and the Offertory. This impossibility is partly due to the fact that Consistorial committees are not always musicians of such skill that they can tell by written music whether the music is appropriate or not. Better it is, therefore, to limit the organists to music we know is good. 3) We are Psalm-singing congregations, and, while it is true that the music played before the service is not actually a part of the worship service, nevertheless, we ought to be consistent in this matter of Psalms. 4) The music played before the worship service is intended to put the people in a spiritual frame of mind to worship. What can do this better than our own familiar *Psalter*, the music and lyrics of which are so familiar to us?

It ought to be evident from all that we have said that no definite rules can and ought to be laid down in this matter. It is certainly true, in general, that all the music which is played, even in connection with the worship service though not a part of it, ought to be solemn, majestic, and edifying. It ought also to be clear that if the music is going to accomplish its purpose, it must be expected that the people are listening to it. If, therefore, familiar numbers are played, it ought to be expected that the lyrics of the music will be running through the minds of the saints as they listen. It is for this reason that one ought to be careful in what is played. Even if the music is acceptable and proper, if secular and heretical words are associated with the music, it ought to be avoided, for it will be an offense to the people of God and will fail in the purpose it is intended to accomplish.

In general, we conclude this article with the observation that insufficient care is often taken in the choice of music used within the church during and in connection with the worship of God. Music is a great and wonderful gift of God. But just because it is such a great and wonderful gift, it can also be badly misused. The general rule certainly is: the greater the gift, the greater its misuse. Part of the reason why music is such a great gift is the powerful effect it has upon those who hear it and sing along with it. This effect is very often greatly underestimated — especially in the altogether worldly and sinful music so common in the world today, and which our young people so often listen to. We all must learn to appreciate good music and cultivate a taste for it. Those who are responsible for playing the organ (or piano) in the worship services ought to be very conscious of this. Good music, well-played will enhance the worship service and will serve the edification of the people



of God.

This is the reason why the prelude to the worship service and the Offertory is not a "concert" by the organist (or pianist) to demonstrate the virtuosity of the musician — as sometimes it becomes. The proper place for this is (if there is any place at all)

concerts given outside the worship services and for the enjoyment of those who like good music. The worship service is not the place. I am thrilled by the concert music of classical composers when well-played; but it is not what I want before the worship service. There is a time and place for everything.

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

# A Tragically Worthless Success

*Rev. John A. Heys*

Even though the Scriptures never credit Esther with using God's name in public even once, never reveal one work of her that definitely shows love toward God, or present her as fighting for truth and righteousness, and instead relate her wicked strategy in a careful striving to succeed in an attempt to compete with unbelievers to be more carnally pleasing to a godless, immoral king, and so to attain to questionable honour and fame as queen of an unbelieving nation, there are those who fight vigorously to elevate her as a heroine of faith, a woman whose ways and deeds the church of today ought to imitate.

One such attempt finds conflict between the teachings of the Old and of the New Testament. Whereas the New Testament teaches that a bishop should be the husband of one wife (I Timothy 3:2), the Old Testament, according to them, approved of leaders in God's church, such as Abraham, David, and Solomon, having many wives. And because of this fact Mordecai and Esther could, without breaking God's law, seek the position of queen of the land for Esther. However, that these men had more than one wife does not make it a deed of righteousness any more than Abraham's lying, David's murder, and Solomon's building of temples for the idols of his heathen wives make these sins good works in the sight of God. Besides, long before the New Testament was written, and already on the first pages of Holy Writ, God in Genesis 2:24 clearly states that "they two shall be one flesh."

Granted now that many of the Old Testament saints tried to make three, and even hundreds one flesh, and also broke other commandments of God, these saints are presented as confessing God, of putting their trust in Him, of sorrow over sin and thankfulness before Him for salvation. You look in vain for these in Esther or Mordecai, as I hope to point out when we treat the remaining chapters in the Book of Esther. Saints, believers, will stumble and fall into gross sins. But they do speak of God as

their God. They do seek to please Him and witness of His greatness and grace. Esther was not — and is not presented either as — seeking the city which hath foundations, Whose designer and builder is God. She sought a kingdom of this world with its lust of the eye, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. And of such God Himself declares in I John 2:15, 16, "the love of the Father is not in them." Let us listen to Him and not to commentators who cannot show one deed that reveals a love toward God in anything recorded of Esther. There is not one prayer to Him. There is not one suggestion of trust in Him. And there is not one acknowledgment of His goodness and of gratitude — as we hope to see — for deliverance. Instead we find violations of God's law. A seeking of the things below, and a denial of Jehovah.

What we read of her in this book you could expect to read of any unbeliever in the world. Were it not included in the canon of Scripture one could call this book a love story of the world with worldly characters. It reads like a worldly success story, a story of one who succeeded in this world. But I would have you understand, as the rest of Scripture casts its light upon this book, that it was a tragically worthless success that was achieved. And God's blessing was not in it.

Esther sought that which moth and rust corrupt and thieves break through to steal. And she succeeded in getting these things. But she does not have them today. Were she a believer, is she now in the glory of heaven, she does not have one bit of all that for which she fought and sought in a sinful way. "You cannot take it with you" even the world concedes. Success in this life, as far as the things of this world are concerned, does not follow one into the next world. No one has succeeded, though ways have been found to prevent rust, to kill moths, and to lock treasures in so that thieves cannot take them, I say, no one has succeeded in getting these things transferred from this earth into



the life to come, whether in the new Jerusalem or in hell.

Indeed, there is benefit in this success story of Esther for the church of God. For the church it was not a tragically worthless success. It was all planned by the God of our salvation and served the cause of the Saviour's birth. And amazing are His works. One who did not seek the city which hath foundations, whose building and maker is God, was given success for the good of those who do seek that city. The carnal ambitions of an unbeliever were crowned with success so that the believers might have success in their search for the spiritual things of God's kingdom. Satan never succeeds in destroying God's church.

He did not spoil things for God in paradise, even though he thought that he had succeeded in his devilish undertaking. He did not force God to perform a work which He had not intended to perform. Paul was led to write this so beautifully in Colossians 1:15 when he wrote that Christ is the firstborn of every creature. Being first He was in God's counsel before Adam. And Adam therefore had to fall. Satan had to be successful in his devilish plot in order that we in Christ might be lifted to a higher glory and closer relationship to God than the one in which Adam was created.

Satan did not succeed at the cross, even though he succeeded in getting Christ on that cross. And you may believe that today, after Christ's resurrection and ascension, he regrets his folly of leading men to hang Him on the accursed tree. But the success of the wicked so wondrously in God's grace serves the successful deliverance of the righteous from the guilt, power, and love of sin. For there is an almighty God Who has an eternal counsel according to which all that takes place was designed to occur to serve the church He unchangeably and eternally loved. Romans 8:28 must be remembered throughout this Book of Esther. All things today, and all that which happened so far in the past, work together for good to those that love God. That does include the temporary success of the wicked in their worldly pursuits. It will be so very true when Satan in his last desperate attempt gets the world to succeed in uniting all men, with the healing of Babel's mortal wound, to be in a position to starve the believers to death with the mark of the beast which will keep food from them. They, the believers, will lose all that Esther lost the day she died, but they will reach joys and blessedness which no earthly creature has ever known. They will know the life and joy that Christ succeeded by His accursed death to realize for all His people.

But the unbelievers, in spite of all that they succeeded in getting hold of in this life, will be plunged

into poverty and woe far worse than any of them ever tried to escape on this earth. And, though they were used for the good of the church, they will not be rewarded with the smallest part of the minutest blessing — if indeed there is such a thing on this earth or in the new creation — for their works which served the church of God. Many heroes of the world who gave their lives for their nation and fellowmen are extolled to the sky and presented as surely having their reward in heaven, though they were unbelievers here below. But soberly we had better listen to Jesus Who in Matthew 7:21-23 declares something quite different. And He knows and speaks the truth. There we read, "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father Which is in heaven. Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I say unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." If that is true, and it is, concerning those who do speak of Him, use His name, in their own minds even seek to further His cause, as they see it, how much more is it true of those who never went to church, never use His name but to curse and swear, seek the world and their own flesh?

Esther and Mordecai, though they unintentionally served the church of God, are not rewarded with the blessings that the church will know in the new creation. They are the chaff which serves the wheat. But Scripture teaches us that the chaff is burned, even though it served such a good and important purpose. Though without the peeling the orange and banana could not have become good food for us, we throw them away and in no way try to reward them. And these served unconsciously and unwillingly, while the wicked consciously and willingly seek to destroy the church in their worthless efforts to succeed in gaining this world and the things it contains. O, yes they do. If you will not work on Sunday for them, you lose your job. If you do not take their mark of the beast, you cannot buy or sell. Refuse to teach evolution in your Christian School, and they will strive to close the doors by making the requirements for your teachers so stringent that you cannot find men and women with your religious convictions who meet those standards. Or they will seek to tax your school, or make the building codes so severe that it will cost you more than you can raise to change over to conform with the codes. And all this they will do under the guise of looking out for your physical, material well-being. Or to "maintain the freedoms we ought to enjoy, and to do away with discriminations."

And though Esther and Mordecai did not deliber-



ately set out to destroy the church and to trouble the believers, they were not consciously and willingly seeking the well-being of the believing Jews of that day. Where in the whole book do you find them saying so? Where do you find that they even had the believers in mind as they struggled to succeed in a purely fleshly beauty contest for material, earthly gain? No, the whole struggle for them was carnal, and the success tragically worthless.

And there is a sobering lesson in all this for us who do believe, and do show in our speech and conduct that we trust in Jehovah, and walk as followers of His Son. We in so many ways emulate Esther, though not to the same degree. We strive to get as much of this world as we can, and kingdom causes go begging because we have such big payments to make on the house and the car, and to lay

away for that vacation and trip that we plan to take. But after we have paid them all up in full, and they are ours, after we have had that enjoyable trip around the world, or to some unique spot of earthly beauty, we have not really succeeded in anything of lasting value. Yea, besides the fact that we failed to support God's cause, these treasures have turned our hearts and minds away from the living God. They could not bring us closer to Him by such actions. And then rather than being worthless these things are damaging to us and our spiritual life.

Rather let us first seek the kingdom of God, and its righteousness, with the assurance that the earthly things we need to seek it will be added to us. We will succeed in finding it, and in God's grace receive rewards that have everlasting worth.

---

## ***TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE***

# **Preservation and Perseverance (1)**

*Rev. H. Veldman*

Preservation and Perseverance — what a truly wonderful subject! It is wonderful from a threefold point of view. It is wonderful, first of all, because of that whereunto we are preserved and persevere. This is nothing less than a glory so great that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Cor. 2:9). And the greatness of this glory is well expressed by the word "salvation," which means to be delivered out of the greatest evil and become a partaker of the highest good. This highest good does not, of course, refer to the highest good to which we could possibly attain, but the highest, the greatest good which God can give us and which could enter into the heart of God. Into all eternity the Lord will never be sorry that He did not prepare something greater for us. And that this is true is because this greatest good is God Himself, fellowship with Him in everlasting and heavenly glory and immortality. To be saved is wonderful, but to be saved out of the greatest evil is more wonderful; to see and hear and walk and speak is truly wonderful, but to see and hear and walk and speak when once we were blind and deaf and lame and dumb is surely more wonderful still. And to see and hear and walk and speak, having been blind and deaf and lame and dumb, when once we could see and hear and walk and speak, as in Adam, presents to us a still greater glory. And even this is not all. To be saved does not

merely mean that we return to what we once had, as in Adam, but that we receive a salvation higher and greater than Adam ever had, a glory in heavenly immortality, a glory that can never perish, can never fade away. Hence, how wonderful is this glory, is this subject, in the first place, because of the unbelievably tremendous heights to which it directs our attention.

Wonderful, in the second place, is this subject because of us who are preserved and persevere. To this we have already alluded in our preceding paragraph. We are sinners; we are, by nature, hopelessly lost sinners. We are sinners who cannot possibly save ourselves. We are burdened down with a guilt, a debt of sin which we can never pay, and we are in a bondage of sin from which we can never deliver ourselves; we are bound with chains of sin and darkness which we can never break. Besides, we are sinners that are holy only in principle. We are holy and regenerated sinners who cry out that the evil we hate we do and the good we love and will we practice not. Besides, we are such in principle redeemed and saved sinners who are constantly confronted by overwhelming odds, by an enemy within us and all around us, with whom we cannot possibly cope or contend. And now this wonderful subject holds before us that we are preserved and persevere even unto the end, and the odds, shall we say, are billions to one that we will never attain unto the glory which eye hath not seen, ear hath



not heard, which never entered into the heart of man. Indeed, also here the Scriptures proclaim a truth to us which is, humanly speaking, impossible of attainment. This is characteristic of the Word of God throughout. Always it speaks, humanly speaking, of impossible situations. Do we not read in the Word of God that the Lord's way is in the sea, absolutely trackless as far as we are concerned? Are the ways of the Lord not always humanly impossible ways? This is also true of this subject.

Wonderful, therefore, in the third place, is this subject because of this preservation and perseverance. Indeed, wonderful is this preservation because of how we are preserved! Imagine: God's people are preserved and they persevere unto the very end. They are all preserved and they all persevere, so that none is lost but all are raised up at the last day. This in itself is a wonderful truth. Of all the millions of elect, spoken of in Scripture as an innumerable multitude, innumerable as the stars in the sky and as the sand along the seashore and as the dust upon the ground, not one is lost. To this must be added, however, that they are all preserved in such a way that not a hair of their heads was singed, neither were their coats changed, nor has the smell of fire passed upon them. These expressions simply mean to emphasize that no danger befalls them in the absolute sense of the word. These expressions are not exaggerations. It is exactly this truth that is emphasized in that wonderful account in Daniel 3 where we read of the three friends of Daniel that they were cast into the fiery furnace made seven times hotter because they had refused to bow down before the image of gold which Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had made. And in this chapter we read in verse 27: "And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them." Indeed, they are not only conquerors, but they are more than conquerors! No harm ever befalls them. O, to be sure, they are as sheep that are led to the slaughter. It is true that they are burned at the stake, suffer terrible agony and tortures at the hands of their enemies. Yet, they are more than conquerors. They suffer affliction in the earthly houses of their tabernacles. But, as far as their new man in Christ Jesus is concerned, they suffer no harm. That principle of their new life, their new man in Christ Jesus, no enemy can touch. In fact, everything works together for their good. All the suffering of this present time simply serves to realize the glory God has laid away for them. He works for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17). The darkness of this

present time must serve the light of the eternal day; diamonds are beautiful, but they shine all the more gloriously upon the background of a coalpile. All the suffering and affliction of this present time serve to reveal the wonderful faithfulness of our God and the glory and power of His grace in Christ Jesus, our Lord. All our weaknesses merely serve to reveal the power of His grace, His wonderful faithfulness to preserve us even unto the end.

So, what a wonderful subject this is: Preservation and Perseverance! The Arminians, we know, have corrupted also this wonderful truth. It is because of what they taught in their fifth article of their Remonstrance that our fathers set forth the truth in their fifth article of the Canons of Dordt. Let us now look at this truth in detail.

Indeed, how timely and pertinent is this subject! It addresses itself to the position of the people of God in the midst of the world. That the people of the Lord are preserved and persevere surely implies a struggle. They must be preserved. And this implies that there are many, many forces at work that would prevent their preservation. And they shall persevere. The goal of their perseverance is the glory of heavenly immortality. Indeed, their kingdom is not a kingdom of this world. Today we hear more and more of a social gospel. A social gospel is a gospel that is geared to this world's society, to its improvement by removing all social ills and earthly imperfections, such as drunkenness, debauchery, immorality, etc., without the cross of Calvary and the blood of the Man of Sorrows; a social gospel would deliver this world from the results of sin without removing sin itself. This is surely being heard more and more today. Of course, the world is always interested in the removal of the results of sin without removing sin itself; it always seeks to remove the results of sin while continuing in sin itself. But what is characteristic of our present day and age is that the church is becoming increasingly involved in this social gospel. And then I do not refer to what is called "church" as in the modernistic sense of the word. After all, an exclusively modernistic church is not a church. There the Word of God is never proclaimed. And where the Scriptures are not proclaimed the sheep of Christ do not hear His voice and are not gathered; and therefore there is no church there. But I refer specifically to the Reformed church world, which is becoming more and more involved in a social gospel. How characteristic this is of recent synodical gatherings! How often it happens that such gatherings address themselves to social and earthly problems. And when they address themselves to the Scriptures, they discuss the question, for example, whether women may and should serve in ecclesiastical offices. And, of



course, if a woman may be a deacon in the church of God and of Christ, she may also serve in the office of the ministry. After all, all the three offices of minister, elder, and deacon have one thing in common and that is that they are all officebearers of Christ through Whom Christ Himself speaks His own word. And if He speaks through a woman in the office of a deacon, she may also serve in the office of the ministry of the gospel. However, the kingdom of God and of Christ and of heaven is not earthly but heavenly. It is exactly because of the heavenly character of this kingdom that the people of God must be preserved and that they persevere. This is exactly why their position in the midst of the world is always an antithetical position. This explains why we must strive to enter in, why we must fight our way into the kingdom of heaven as it ultimately will be revealed and perfected in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. This explains why we must fight, put on the whole armour of God, and oppose the powers of wickedness within us and all around us. This is surely the position of Scripture.

Hence, how pertinent and timely is this subject! If it be our calling to preach a social gospel, to seek the improvement of this world, there would be no need of battling and fighting our way into the kingdom of heaven. Then we would not encounter any opposition. Then we would have many things in common with the forces of sin and darkness. Then a common goal would characterize us. Then we

would all be striving to make this world a better place in which to live. Then we would not be pilgrims and strangers in the earth. Then we can stand shoulder to shoulder with the children of this world, fighting all social diseases and human and earthly inequalities and imperfections. Then we will strive to rid this world of sicknesses, of poverty, of wars and rumours of wars, striving to realize the kingdom of God and of His Christ in the earthly sense of the word. Doing this, however, we would be engaged in a dream struggle, a mere figment of our imagination. "My kingdom," Christ testified before Pontius Pilate, "is not a kingdom of this world." We must walk, not synthetically, but antithetically. There are two kingdoms in this world: the kingdom of God and of His Christ, and the kingdom of this world and of the devil. The former is heavenly, the latter is earthly. And as citizens of the kingdom of heaven we must be pilgrims and strangers in the earth, ever seeking to promote the cause of the living God and of His Christ. Doing so, we will experience the trials and afflictions of this present time. And this means that we must fight, witnessing of the Christ and His Cause and opposing all the unfruitful works of sin and darkness. How crucial, then, becomes our survival in the midst of the world. The Lord willing, we will continue with this subject of our preservation and perseverance in our following article.

---

## THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

# AIDS: A Revelation of the Righteous Wrath of God

*Rev. Ron Cammenga*

The past year has witnessed growing public alarm over the spread of a new major epidemic. The disease is known as AIDS, which stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. First identified as a disease in the U.S. about 2½ years ago, AIDS has been given its greatest public exposure in 1983. Several in-depth articles were published in such popular magazines as *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Reader's Digest*. Also the daily newspapers, radio, and television broadcasts frequently reported on the AIDS epidemic and those who have been affected by this new disease.

AIDS attacks its victims by crippling the body's immune system, thus leaving the body defenseless

against infection and certain cancers. So far, 76% of the victims in the U.S. have been active homosexual men. This group represents by far the highest risk group affected by the disease. Of the rest of the reported cases of AIDS, 16% are intravenous drug abusers, 5% are immigrants from Haiti, and 1% are hemophiliacs. Only 2% of the victims are not known to be members of one of these high risk groups.

AIDS has struck 2,868 people in the U.S. and killed 1,197 of them, according to end of the year statistics. The largest concentration of cases is in New York City, followed by San Francisco and Los Angeles. Secretary of Health and Human Services,



Margaret Heckler, has said: "AIDS is our No. 1 health concern and the epidemic is our No. 1 priority."

Up to this point both the cause and the cure for the disease remain unknown. To date, AIDS kills more than 75% of those who contract the disease in less than two years. Although the underlying cause of AIDS remains unknown, it is virtually certain that AIDS is transmitted sexually. Transmission requires intimate sexual contact, or contact with contaminated blood, which accounts for the occurrence of AIDS among hemophiliacs. Our government has allocated significant funds for research into the cause and cure of this new mystery disease. The director of the National Centers For Disease Control, Dr. James O. Mason, states that "... of the pressing problems that we need an immediate solution to, that (AIDS) is a number one problem."

Public concern over AIDS has run high. Much fear and misunderstanding of the disease exist. AIDS is seen as a significant setback to the gay rights movement in the U.S. Fear of AIDS is even causing some homosexuals to make changes in their life-style.

There are obviously some judgments which we as Christians are called to make in connection with this latest aspect of the homosexual movement. There are also some lessons which we ourselves ought to learn.

How are we to view the AIDS epidemic? Is there, besides a physiological explanation of the cause of this disease, a biblical explanation?

In the light of the Word of God, I believe that the Christian must view AIDS as the revelation from heaven of the righteous wrath of God against those who have rejected Him and His laws. AIDS is, in the language of Romans 1:27, the "recompence of their error" which those who practice the sin of homosexuality receive in themselves. It is, as Romans 1:18 states, the "wrath of God" which is "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

One of the lessons which AIDS teaches us is the truth that already in this life God punishes the sinner. The wrath of God IS revealed, right now, in this life. The sinner cannot sin and get away with his sin, not even in this life. Sin has bitter consequences, bitter consequences in the body, mind, and soul of the impenitent sinner. When he goes on in his sin, God visits those consequences upon him. In a life of sin, there is not, there cannot be, and God will not let there be, peace and happiness. Apart from God and thankful obedience to God's law, there is only misery and death.

But AIDS is not only the wrath of God visited upon the homosexual sinner personally, it is also the wrath of God visited against a nation which tolerates and legalizes the practice of this sin. Our nation stands exposed to the righteous wrath of God. In recent years our country has acceded to the gay rights movement and stricken from the criminal code laws which prohibited the practice of homosexuality. More and more this sin is practiced openly and unashamedly. Homosexuality is justified as an alternative life-style, with equal validity to traditional heterosexuality. The advances of the homosexual movement are in no small measure due to the increasing support given the movement by the churches. Large denominations of churches, as well as influential church leaders have done much to advance the homosexual cause. Churches, even Reformed churches, not only have begun to receive practicing homosexuals as members in good standing, but have even gone so far as to ordain them into the special offices in the church.

As a nation, the U.S. has given its approval to homosexuality. The wrath of God is therefore over us as a nation. AIDS is one manifestation of this wrath of God against our nation.

One other thing which the furor over AIDS ought to impress Christians with is the urgent calling that believing parents have to instruct and warn their children. If believing parents have been negligent in carrying out their calling, a thing like AIDS ought to warn them against their neglect. We must not be spiritual ostriches and hide our heads in the sand. Too often, this is the attitude taken by believing parents. Because of the obviously sensitive nature of these subjects, parents have too often failed to discuss openly and frankly with their young people the subject of sex. Too often, they have allowed their children to find out about sex from their friends, or worse yet, from the books and magazines produced by the world. An embarrassing subject like homosexuality is never discussed.

As believing parents, we must not take this approach. This is not the approach of Scripture. In clear, frank language the Scriptures speak on the subject of sex, and describe and warn against sexual sins. One has only to read the various laws in the Old Testament given by God, the Book of Proverbs, or the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans to discover the truth of this. This must be our approach to our young people. We must discuss these things with them. And we must warn them against these sins which they too, on account of their sinful and depraved nature, are prone to fall into.

One thing that the AIDS epidemic impresses us with is the wrong of considering homosexuality an



alternative life-style. More and more this is the position that is taken. Homosexuality is only an equal option, on a par with heterosexuality. Along with this goes the position that the homosexual cannot be blamed for his inclination to this sin. Homosexuality is considered to be not a matter of deliberate choice, but a matter of one's make up, his genes and chromosomes, and therefore something he cannot help and for which he cannot be blamed. This is the position of certain churches which, although they condemn overt homosexuality, do not condemn the homosexual nature, the bent towards homosexuality.

The AIDS epidemic ought to impress people with the wrong of this position. Obviously, AIDS as a disease is different than the common cold or the flu. As a disease AIDS is to be categorized with such diseases as syphilis and gonorrhea, venereal diseases. The disease is to be connected with the practice of the homosexual sin itself. If homosexuality is a normal life-style, why AIDS? The disease itself indicates the wrong of thus regarding homosexuality.

This certainly is the teaching of the Bible. The Bible neither presents homosexuality as an alternative life-style, nor the homosexual as unaccountable for the bent of his nature, the passive victim of his physical and psychological makeup.

Romans 1 teaches that the homosexual actively and deliberately perverts his nature in the practice of his homosexuality. According to verse 26 they "change the natural use"; according to verse 27 men are active in "leaving the natural use of the woman" and in "working that which is unseemly."

The plain proof of the homosexual's responsibility, both for the bent of his nature and for his homosexual sins, is that God judges him for his

nature and his sin. God is the One Who metes out "that recompence of their error which was meet" (Rom. 1:27). And this is without doubt the testimony of their own conscience: they stand exposed by their sins to the righteous wrath of a holy God. The God Who would not allow Sodom of old to go unpunished, will not allow them to go unpunished either.

Above all, the AIDS epidemic is a call to holiness of life. Being a warning against sin, it is a call to holiness of life. To use the language of the Heidelberg Catechism in its explanation of the seventh commandment, AIDS teaches us "That all uncleanness is accursed of God: and that therefore, we must with all our hearts detest the same, and live chastely and temperately, whether in holy wedlock, or in single life." It reminds us that "since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Ghost, He commands us to preserve them pure and holy."

We are not our own to do with ourselves and with our lives as we please. The governing principle of the life of the Christian young person is not what feels good, what gives the most pleasure at the moment. But the Christian young person understands that he belongs to another, to the Lord Jesus Christ. Having been redeemed by His precious blood, he understands his calling to live to the praise of the glory of his Redeemer. Having been bought with a price, the price of the life and blood of the Son of God Himself, we must glorify God in our body and soul which are God's. Exerting himself by the grace of God to be free of the sin of homosexuality, the child of God is also assured of being spared the terrible consequences which God visits upon this sin already in this life.

## IN HIS FEAR

# God is a Spirit

*Rev. Ronald Hanko*

It is not difficult to understand that the Second Commandment is distinct from the First. The First Commandment forbids the sin of having or worshipping any gods beside Jehovah, the sin of idolatry, while the Second Commandment forbids the use of images in the worship of Jehovah. The First Commandment, then, tells us *Who* we must worship, and the Second in turn tells us *how* we are to

worship Him.

This distinction is, of necessity, denied by the Church of Rome. She joins the First and Second Commandments as one and divides the Tenth into two parts, thus keeping ten commandments while at the same time covering up her widespread violations of the Second Commandment.

We see this distinction clearly in Israel's history.



There were times when Israel worshipped the gods of the heathen, Baal and Ashtaroath, Milcom, Chemosh, and Molech and violated the First Commandment. But when Israel worshipped the golden calf at Mount Sinai, it was the Second Commandment which was broken and violated first of all and not the First. This is clear from Aaron's words when he presented the calf to the people: "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Ex. 32:4). He did not claim that the calf was another god beside Jehovah, Who had brought them out of bondage, but he gave them the calf as a representation of Jehovah Himself, and as a means to worship Him. Jeroboam later said the same thing when, at the beginning of his kingdom, he set up golden calves at Bethel and Dan (I Kings 12:25-33).

In spite of the fact that these first two commandments forbid two different sins, they are, nevertheless, very closely related. The evidence for this is found in the warning that is attached to the Second Commandment, that God is a jealous God Who visits in continuing judgment those who do not fear and love Him as they ought. It does not require much effort to see that God is jealous over against all evil practices in His own worship and over against all worship of other gods. The inclusion of this warning at the end of the Second Commandment binds it to the First.

These two commandments are related because their principles are related. The great principle of the First Commandment, that is, that which God reveals of Himself in the First Commandment, is the truth that He is One Lord, the Only True God. From this principle, as we have already seen, flows forth the demand that we have and hold Him as our God with none beside Him, that we trust in Him alone, love, fear, and serve Him always and everywhere, and devote our whole life to His praise and worship. But just as the truth that God is One means that He is the Only True God in the First Commandment, so, in the Second Commandment it means that He is One in glory — that His glory is infinite, unexcelled, and matchless. That, then, is the revelation that God gives of Himself in the Second Commandment and the foundation for all that the Second Commandment requires of us.

Even more specifically, the principle of the Second Commandment is the truth that God is transcendent. This truth is found in such passages as Psalm 145:3, Job 36:26, and Isaiah 40:12-31. The last of these passages is also one of the places where the Word of God makes the connection between this truth and the Second Commandment. In verse 18 the Lord says, "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?" and goes on to condemn both the maker and the

worshipper of graven images.

This truth that God is transcendent has many different aspects. When we say that God is eternal we are saying that He transcends and is above time. He is also transcendent in relation to space and movement, as we confess when we say that He is everywhere present. That He is incomprehensible means that He transcends even our thoughts. He is the Only Immortal Who dwells in a glory which no man can approach unto (I Tim. 6:16).

The aspect of God's transcendence which stands on the foreground in the Second Commandment, however, is the truth that God is a Spirit. The angels are also called spirits in Scripture, but not in the same sense as God. The angels are creatures, limited by time and space as we are. That they are spirits means only that they have a different form of creaturely existence than we do, for they have a heavenly life and existence, while ours is of the earth earthy. When we say that God is a Spirit, then we mean that He is not a creature, that He has no body or parts, and that He is without any of the limitations of the creature. Especially it means that He is the invisible God. He is not just beyond our present earthly sight, but absolutely and forever beyond the sight of our eyes as He is in Himself and with Himself. He is the One Whom no man hath seen *nor can see* (Jn. 1:18; I Tim. 6:16). Our sight reaches the farthest of all our senses, scanning and searching the heavens themselves, and yet God is still beyond our sight. Only in the face, that is, in the human nature of Christ, do we see even a reflection of His spiritual glory, and then only by the great miracle of revelation.

This is beautifully illustrated in the history of Moses. After Israel had sinned in the worship of the golden calf, Moses went up into the Mount to intercede with God for the people and obtained from Him the promise that God's presence would continue with them. Moses then asked that, as a sign to confirm this promise, God would show His glory to Moses. God graciously condescended to do as Moses requested, but He told Moses that he would see only His "back parts" and explained, "Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me and live" (Ex. 33:12-23). In chapter 34 we find that Moses, even in seeing God's "back parts," did not actually behold God Himself. He saw the cloud and heard the voice of the Lord as the Lord passed by "and proclaimed the Name of the Lord" (verses 5, 6). That is as close as anyone can ever come to seeing God. Even Moses, therefore, who knew God face to face (Deut. 34:10) knew Him only in the reflection of His glory in the holy cloud and through His Word, and that alone was sufficient to make the face of Moses shine with such a glory that the children of Israel were afraid and refused to look at



him (Ex. 34:29-35, II Cor. 3:7, 13).

This truth that God is Spirit, infinite and invisible, is the glorious cornerstone of the Second Commandment. He must always be worshipped in such a way that He is remembered and praised as the transcendently glorious God, and that means first of all a worship without images and representations of Him, and in the second place and positively it means a worship according to His Word. The heathen use images to worship their gods because their gods are no greater than themselves. But our God is "above all glory raised" and must be so worshipped.

It is for this reason that the truth that God is invisible and unseen is found twice in the First Epistle to Timothy (1:17, 6:16). That book speaks of the worship of God, that is, "how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (3:15), and therefore of necessity emphasizes this truth. Whatever our behaviour in the church ought to be, it must always be in harmony with God's revelation of Himself as the "King eternal, immortal, invisible" (1:17).

In Deuteronomy 4:15, 16 God teaches Israel also Who He is as the invisible God, and then applies that to their worship:

Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake to you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure . . .

The point is, once again, that God not only determines that He alone shall be worshipped, but also how He shall be worshipped, and He determines that in harmony with His own glory. He will not ever give His glory to another.

The temptation for Israel was to ask how the nations worshipped their gods (Deut. 12:30-32), and to make that the standard for the worship of Jehovah. That worship of the nations was always a worship that pleased the flesh, and it is as much a temptation for us as it was for Israel to seek such a worship when we come into the presence of God. Nevertheless, we may not worship as we please and according to what pleases us, but as He commands.

Because of this temptation, the Second Commandment is more and more neglected today. The churches, and that includes Reformed churches, have gone crazy for liturgical change. The preaching is neglected. Choirs and special performances are introduced into the services. Psalm-books are replaced with hymn-books and the hymn-books are replaced every few years or so. Dramas, dialogues,

and films replace the traditional service with its emphasis on the preaching of the Gospel. The parts of the worship service are juggled around from week to week until one needs a special program even to follow the order of worship in his own congregation. The old liturgical forms are replaced at regular intervals. And so on and on and on, and always the cry goes up for more changes.

Without discussing any one of these changes and innovations in detail, we ought to remember that the standard for these changes is usually the flesh. What does it do for me? Does it make me feel good? Is it uplifting? And because the standard for these changes is the flesh, many of these practices, newly introduced, stand over against the truth concerning God that is revealed in the Second Commandment.

There are, of course, those who will accuse us of sticking at technicalities, and of being stubborn and old-fashioned, and unwilling to move with the times. Over against such charges let us remember some of the examples that Scripture gives to show that these things are not mere nit-picking. Cain's sin was not that he refused to worship God. He brought his sacrifice and offered it to God, and certainly he must have provided the very best of his fields. Nevertheless, because the standard for his worship was not the Word of God, but his own pleasure, he was branded and driven out. Thus it was when David brought the ark to Jerusalem. What a great day that was! Surely God could only be pleased with the zeal and consecration of David and the people. Of course, they had the ark upon a cart instead of having it carried by the Levites, but that was just a "technicality" and, after all, everyone could better see and gather around the ark that way. But that act of worship was not in harmony with God's Word, and God was angry, and Uzzah died. So it was when the inhabitants of Bethshemesh opened and looked into the ark out of curiosity when it returned from Philistia. Over 50,000 died because curiosity and the desires of the flesh are not the standard for approaching God. May we give heed and remember that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" — that is, according to His Word and revelation of Himself.

*Remember your friends  
and family with a  
subscription to the  
Standard Bearer*



## BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

# James, Evidence of a Living Faith (concluded)

Rev. J. Kortering

As we take up the task of outlining the letter of James, we notice the difficulty that confronts us. It appears at first reading that James is dealing with so many subjects that it lacks cohesion. To put it bluntly, it seems as if he is rambling. The words of Hendriksen in his *Bible Survey* are worth quoting.

Now, this type of discourse, superficially viewed, reminds one of a person who in conversation changes his subject constantly. We call him a rambler. If that is what James does, it would be just as impossible to outline his epistle as it would be to outline a dictionary. Closer study however, reveals that this is not at all the case. In the entire section 1:1-18 he rivets our attention upon one central thought: he is admonishing the sorely oppressed and afflicted readers of his epistle to exercise endurance in the midst of trials and temptations. If they lack this grace, they should, with confidence, ask God to supply it. Instead of losing all courage, they should reflect on their high estate. That the necessity of exercising endurance in the midst of trials and temptations is, indeed, uppermost in the mind of the author is evident also from the fact that in the paragraph beginning at verse 12 the blessedness and the reward of such endurance is indicated. Moreover, the fact that it — as well as every grace — is the gift of God, is again emphasized; see verse 17. All this is beautiful unity. James has not wandered away from his subject at all. Moreover, he ends his epistle as he begins it; namely, with an exhortation unto endurance. Cp. 1:3, 4, 12 with 5:11.

James is, as it were, preaching a sermon — and what he presents in his epistle bears so many resemblances to a well-organized sermon that some interpreters have regarded it to be just that — and before he dwells at length on certain “points”, he first states them. He is going to enlarge on the fact that genuine faith, which far excels mere intellectual belief, is demonstrated by deeds of kindness and impartiality, chapter 2; by words of restraint (the bridled tongue), and wisdom, chapter 3; and by thoughts or inner attitudes of purity and meekness, chapter 4. These three points are first mentioned or introduced in the paragraph 1:19-27, as already indicated. Then in chapters 2, 3, and 4 they are dwelt on at length.

### BRIEF OUTLINE

1. The introduction. James identifies himself as

the author, “a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1). Also he states to whom he is writing, “to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (1:1).

2. Encouragement given to endure in the midst of trials (1:2-18). The value of the trial is stated: it works patience (durability), and that in turn makes one reach the goal God has set, perfect and entire (1:2-4). This requires wisdom which one may receive through prayer. This prayer must not be of a double-minded man, but the prayer of faith (1:5-8). God is the One Who sends riches and poverty of which the real benefit is being right toward God (1:9-11). One who is tried and endures will receive the crown of life (1:12). The source of temptation is not God but one’s own lust which produces death (1:13-15). In contrast, every good gift comes from God, especially salvation which makes us the first-fruits of redemption (1:16-18).

3. James now specifically mentions the main subjects which he will treat in this letter (1:19-27). The first of them is the importance of deeds of kindness. Be doers of the word and not hearers only. It is important that we do not look into the glass of the law and forget what we see; rather we should look into the law and continue to practice it. Pure religion is to visit the fatherless and widows and keep oneself unspotted from the world (1:22-25, 27). The second theme is that we must use words of restraint and wisdom. Let every man be swift to hear and slow to speak. Religion is vain if a man cannot bridle his tongue (1:19, 26). The final theme is the importance of thoughts of purity and meekness. Lay aside all evil and receive with meekness the engrafted word (1:21).

4. Genuine faith is demonstrated by deeds of kindness and a working faith (2:1-26). We are not to show respect of persons when rich or poor come to our assembly. If we do that, we are judges of evil thoughts (2:1-4). We may not despise the poor, for God has chosen them. The royal law requires of us love for the neighbor (2:6-9). The law of God is one whole; if we break one commandment we are



guilty of all. Hence, if we do not commit adultery but kill our neighbor, we are breaking the whole law. We are to speak and act as those who will be judged. If we judge without mercy, then the same will happen to us (2:10-13). Faith without works is dead. It profits nothing if a brother or sister has need and we say, "Go eat," but we don't fill that need. So with faith — if we say we have faith, but are not active in that faith, it is dead (2:14-18). Mere belief in God is not proof of faith. The devils have that kind of faith. Only a working faith is real. Abraham is an example. He offered up Isaac and was justified through that working faith (2:19-24). Rahab is another example (2:25-26).

5. Another proof of real faith is one's ability to restrain his tongue and express wisdom (3:1-18). A warning is given that we should be careful not to try to be teachers when we are not (3:1). The tongue must be controlled, even as the bridle controls horses and the rudder controls the ships (3:2-4). The tongue is a small member of the body, but can enflame a world of iniquity (3:5, 6). Man has tamed many birds and animals, but no one can tame the tongue. The same tongue is used in blessing and cursing (3:7-10). We should be consistent in our use of the tongue. As a fountain gushes with either sweet or bitter water and fig trees do not produce olives, so our tongues should speak the truth in love (3:11, 12). As children of God who possess true faith, we are able to overcome evil speech by love and wisdom which are from above and are characterized by gentleness, mercy, being sown in peace (3:13-18).

6. The evidence of a living faith can be seen in pure and humble thoughts and attitudes (4:1-17). Strife in the church arises from lust, greed, and murder (4:1, 2). When one is in that spiritual condition his prayers will not be answered because such prayers are motivated by lust (4:3). Spiritual adultery brings one into friendship with the world and makes one an enemy of God, a result of lusting to envy (4:4, 5). The only cure for this is the grace of God which enables us to resist the devil and draws us near to God. The expression of such a change is repentance from sin and a sincere desire to do God's will (4:6-10). If we do this, we will avoid evil speaking and harsh judgment (4:11, 12). We will realize how frail our life is and say, "If the Lord will" (4:13-16). If we neglect to do good, which we know we must do, we sin (4:17).

7. By faith we are encouraged to overcome all sin and endure unto the end (5:1-20). A warning is given to the rich that gold and silver cannot abide. If they take advantage of God's people, God will call them to account and punish (5:1-6). The believers are encouraged to be patient for the coming of the Lord. Some examples are given. The first is

that of the farmer who waits for harvest through sunshine and rain (5:7, 8). The prophets are cited as examples of endurance, persistence in faith even if abused (5:9, 10). Job is mentioned as an example of patience (5:11). Rather than swearing oaths, we had better pray personally and for each other, and, if need be, call the elders to pray and anoint the sick that they may be healed (5:12-16). Elijah is the final example of endurance (5:17, 18). True care for one another can save a soul from death and realize reconciliation by mutual forgiveness of sin (5:19, 20).

#### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What biblical proof do we have that the author of this letter was James, the half-brother of our Lord?

2. What was the need for writing this letter to the dispersed Jewish Christians? Why does it deal almost exclusively with practical Christian life?

3. What proof is there in this letter that the readers were suffering tribulation. What was the occasion for this?

4. The spiritual problem that James deals with in this letter is the need for living faith, not historical faith. Explain the difference.

5. What is the difference between temptation and trials? (see James 1:2-8, 12-16).

6. How could we be guilty today of the sin or showing the favoritism mentioned in 2:1-7?

7. How can a person be a hearer of the Word and not a doer (1:22)?

8. What different emphasis does James place upon justification by works (2:14-24) — different from Paul's emphasis on justification by faith (Romans 4 and 5)? Are they in conflict?

9. Why is the law called "royal" in 2:8?

10. List ways in which we can sin with our tongues. Do you agree that if a person can control his tongue he is able to control his whole body (3:2)? Why is this so?

11. Notice with me that there are three references to using prayer wrongfully (1:7; 3:9; 4:3). Why would a person pray at all if he would pray wrongfully?

12. Is all strife in the church forbidden (4:1-6)? Is there good and necessary strife in the church at times?

13. Refer to the examples of "endurance" given in chapter 5 and illustrate from the events of their lives recorded in the Bible that this was true.

14. Explain the prayer and anointing of the elders mentioned in 5:14-16.



## Book Reviews

**THE CHILD'S STORY BIBLE**, by Catherine Vos, revised by Marianne Catherine Vos Radius; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983; 382 pp., \$14.95 (cloth) (Reviewed by Gertrude Hoeksema)

This is the fifth edition of *The Child's Story Bible* and also the Golden Anniversary Edition. Through the years, the author's daughter, Marianne Vos Radius, has revised and rewritten portions of her mother's book, while being careful to retain her mother's style and gift of story-telling.

This Golden Anniversary Edition is attractively bound in a leather-like binding and uses the traditional style of illustrations that appeared in the original edition. The format and art work is an improvement over the most recent paper back edition.

Also included at the end of this edition is a useful explanation of some of the Biblical terms used in the stories.

Apart from some of the interpretive statements in the stories and some of the artist's interpretations of Jesus (e.g. the one of Christ on the cross) I recommend it for the covenant home.

**THE SOJOURNER'S FILE**, by Joan Harris; New Century Foundation, 1983; Available from National Christian Action Coalition, P.O. Box 1745, Washington, D.C.; 170 pp., \$5.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko).

*Sojourners* is a Christian magazine, which according to the blurb sent along with the book, has an "awesome" impact on Christianity in this country. It is, however, a "left-wing" publication which consistently parrots the communist line in all international and national issues. According to the book, the magazine is a part of the Institute for Policy Studies, which is leftist and could conceivably be a Communist front organization. Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon is claimed to be closely connected with the magazine, and the book is intended to blunt his campaign for re-election.

The book was written to expose the communistic leanings of the magazine, the IPS and Senator Hat-

field. It treats 53 different subjects, in each case gives quotes from *Sojourners* which show the position of the magazine on this subject, offers comment and references, to prove both the communist line of *Sojourners* and the bias of the magazine in consistently altering, ignoring or denying the facts in a given situation.

The book is not always as careful as it ought to be in documenting its position and the book is spoiled by many typographical errors.

**CHRISTIAN ENGLAND**, Its Story to the Reformation; David L. Edwards, Eerdmans, 1983; 351 pp., \$8.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko).

The history of the English Nation and the history of the Church in England are some of the most interesting in the whole field of historical studies. This is probably why so many books have been written in this field. I would guess that it would take a rather large library just to hold these books. This addition to this vast library is intended to give readers who are Christians a greater appreciation for the English element in their heritage. The blurb sent along with the book says that Edwards has "paid more attention to people, to literature, architecture, art and prayer, and to the Church's setting in the social and political life of the age than to ecclesiastical administration or theological controversy." This characterization of the book is correct and is both the strength and the weakness of the book.

It is the book's strength because it gives a great deal of information not readily available in other books. There is a mass of detail, both interesting and instructive. But it is the weakness of the book because the book gives these data without much analysis and evaluation, the book almost requires a knowledge of English secular history to be understandable, and it does not give a proper place to the importance of the church. For example, the book considers Chaucer to be more important in the history of the church than John Wycliff.

It is recommended especially to those who are



students of or are interested in the history of the English nation or the development of the church there. It is the first in a series.

**GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**, by Ronald E. Baxter; Kregel Publications, 1983; 266 pp., \$8.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko).

Although the number of books on Neo-Pentecostalism continues to grow, this addition to the literature is a worthwhile one, which anyone interested in the movement ought to have. The author was born in Northern Ireland, educated in various schools in Canada and this country, and is now serving a Baptist Church in Ontario.

While the purpose of this book is in part to expose the error of "gift theology" as it is maintained by Pentecostalism, the chief aim of the book is to develop a positive concept of the Scriptural teachings concerning gifts of the church. Hence the book is both negative and positive — and this is partially its value.

The author proceeds from the basic premise that Pentecostalism is subjective in its theology and thus divorces the Christian's life from Scripture. It is from this perspective that he attacks the doctrine of gifts maintained in Pentecostal circles. Both his discussions of the gifts of miracles and tongue-speaking are excellent and one can find in these discussions material which is rarely considered. The strength of the discussion is, however, its analysis of Scripture and the pertinent Scriptural passages.

Perhaps the author is not quite as strong in the positive part of the book where he discusses what Scripture actually does teach about various gifts in the church. A Reformed man would have some trouble with some of his ideas. Nevertheless, this positive approach is important and needed. It is not sufficient to show where Pentecostalism has gone astray; it is equally important to make clear all that Scripture has to say about gifts in the church as they are worked by the Spirit. The book attempts to do this, and can well serve as a starting point for further discussion and instruction on this matter.

We recommend this book to our readers.

*Read and study  
the Standard Bearer*

*The Standard Bearer  
makes an excellent  
gift for any occasion.  
As a thoughtful  
expression of your  
concern, give the  
Standard Bearer.*

#### NOTICE!!!

The Hope Christian School of Redlands, California, is in need of a Kindergarten thru the 4th grade teacher beginning in September of 1984. Teachers interested in applying for this position please write to Bill Feenstra, 831 Sylvan Blvd., Redlands, CA 92373 or phone him at (714) 793-3597.

#### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Society of Faith Protestant Reformed Church extends its sincere sympathy to our fellow members, Mr. and Mrs. Irvan Velthouse, in the recent death of her mother, MRS. EDWARD MAAT. May our Lord comfort the family through His Word.

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever." (Psalm 118:1)

Rev. W. Bruinsma, Pres.  
Mrs. June Van Den Top, Sec'y.

#### NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Loveland, Colorado on Wednesday, March 7, 1984 at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. Material for the Agenda must be in my hands 30 days before Classis convenes.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk

#### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council of the Faith Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere Christian sympathy to our brother officer-bearer, Deacon Irvan Velthouse, and his family in the death of his mother-in-law, MRS. EDWARD MAAT.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory . . ."

(II Corinthians 4:17)

Rev. Wilbur G. Bruinsma, Pres.  
David M. Ondersma, Vice Clerk



## News From Our Churches

January 13, 1984

In regards to our ministers, the December 25, 1983 bulletin of Hull Protestant Reformed Church had a handwritten message at the bottom: "Baby girl, Leanne Joy, born Christmas morning to Rev. and Mrs. Cammenga." And the December 25, 1983 bulletin of First Protestant Reformed Church in Holland stated, "The new phone number of Rev. and Mrs. Heys is 001-64-4-672-200. They send greetings to the congregation. May we remember them in our prayers and by a call or letter."

First Protestant Reformed Church's bulletin of January 15, 1984 had this information: "Classis East of our churches met last Wednesday in our church . . . Classis gave permission for the formulation of a Grandville church . . . A spirit of brotherly love prevailed at Classis."

In the December 4, 1983 bulletin of the Mission in Birmingham, Alabama was this announcement: "On the book table is a cassette tape you all will want to hear. It is of the lecture by the Rev. Steven Houck on the subject of 'The History of the King James Bible.' In a very interesting way, Pastor Houck tells us of what gave rise to this version and of the talents and piety of the men who translated it. The speech is well documented and well delivered."

Southeast Protestant Reformed Church carried this January 1, 1984 bulletin notice: "The Evangelism Society is pleased to announce the publication of a new pamphlet, 'Our Only Comfort,' written by Rev. Haak, with the cover design by Karen VanDer Schaaf. This pamphlet is ideal for the sick, the aged, and those new to the Reformed faith. Also, available once again is Rev. H. Hoeksema's pamphlet 'God is Our Refuge.'"

The Reformed Witness Committee of Hope Protestant Reformed Church sent out this information in their January 5, 1984 newsletter. "Our work in this area has consisted of coordinating programs at the Christian Rest Home. These programs have been given by the societies of our church; and we thank them for their part in this work. Another part of our work is sending tapes monthly to 18 people

in this country, and semi-monthly to 90 addresses in countries such as Korea, Australia, Ireland, Singapore, New Zealand, and many countries in West and South Africa . . . To date, this year we have sent out at least 1200 copies of Sunday School papers, 1800 copies of *The Standard Bearer*, and 400 copies of catechism books . . . When a person from Africa sends a letter for our material he spends as much as \$7.35 for postage . . ."

Volume III, No. 9, January, 1984 issue of *Across the Aisle* had in it a letter from Rev. Arie and Sherry den Hartog. Here are some highlights from the letter. "The evening meeting at Toa Payoh Mission was also a Gospel Meeting. The attendance was very good. The meeting place was filled to capacity with a number of new friends brought by various members of our church. Besides the above, both Pastors have been busy writing for the church magazine and also for our anniversary booklet for next month's anniversary celebration . . . One of the biggest things going on presently is the matter of purchasing the house on Blair Road to be used as a church premise. The purchase is now almost finalized . . . We have two more weeks of pre-baptism classes left to go. Already, seven people are committed to either baptism or membership in the church . . . We now have six weekly Bible Study groups at various places and led by different people in the church . . . Malaysia has had serious flooding problems because of all the rain including the church in Kuala Trengganu."

I will conclude with two excerpts from a newsletter of The Board of the Society for Protestant Reformed Special Education. "Initially, it appears that we will serve a student body of three to six children . . . ranging in age from 5 to 11 years old . . . We have found that there are Protestant Reformed people who are willing and able to serve as special education teachers or aides. The board hopes to extend contracts to both teachers and aides early in 1984 . . . Also, we are heartened by the number of Protestant Reformed young people in college who hope to make special education their careers . . . Here, as in all other areas, we see that Jehovah fills every need."

DH