

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

... We must never take the attitude that we have arrived. Nor must we suppose that the only threats to this heritage of ours are the errors of all of the other churches out there. The fact of the matter is that the greatest threats to our Reformation heritage are from our own selves, our own weaknesses, our own sins, both as individuals and as churches.

See "Our Reformation Heritage" — page 20

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## MEDITATION

# Preaching as Chief Key of the Kingdom

Rev. C. Hanko

*Ques. 83. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?*

*Ans. The preaching of the holy gospel and christian discipline, or excommunication out of the christian church; by these two, the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers, and shut against unbelievers.*

*Ques. 84. How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the holy gospel?*

*Ans. Thus: when according to the command of Christ, it is declared and publicly testified to all believers, that, whenever they receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God, for the sake of Christ's merits; and on the contrary, when it is*



*declared and testified to all unbelievers, and such as do not sincerely repent, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God, and eternal condemnation, so long as they are unconverted; according to which testimony of the gospel, God will judge them, both in this, and in the life to come.*

*Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 31*

Zion, founded on the mountain,  
 God, thy Maker, loves thee well;  
 He has chosen thee, most precious,  
 He delights in thee to dwell;  
 God's own city, who can all thy glory tell?

The Psalmist sang of God's church, represented in the old dispensation by the mighty citadel of Jerusalem with its massive walls and its strong iron gates. The gate of this spiritual City is pictured as having a lock and key, and a sentinel who is authorized of God to exercise his key power, opening the gate for some and closing it for others. For outside of this Holy City rages the enemy, all the forces of darkness, sin, and hell, wickedly determined to destroy the City and all its inhabitants. Symbolically this represents the key power of the kingdom of heaven, guarding the City of God against the onslaughts of the power of darkness, to the glory of our God, for the welfare of Zion, as a blessing to the citizens of heaven.

Upon Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus had responded, "And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:18, 19).

Glorious confession! For the Rock upon which Jesus builds His church is not the man Peter, nor Peter as representative of the apostles, but HIM Whom Peter confesses to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. Blessed is that man who experiences the wonder of God's grace in his own heart and life, whereby He knows and confesses Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. Flesh and blood cannot reveal that to us. God alone, by the risen and glorified Christ, and through His Spirit in our hearts can so renew us, so enlighten our understanding, that we realize our depravity, sin, and misery, and are driven out to the cross of Calvary, where we make the good confession that Jesus is our Savior, our Lord, and our God! In other words, God makes us citizens of His kingdom, leads us to the gate of the City, where the sentinel, so to speak, recognizes us by our confession, assures us of the forgiveness of our sins, unlocks and opens the gate, saying, "Come, thou blessed, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord!"

This sentinel, you may rest assured, is none other than Christ Himself. He is the foundation upon which God's church is built, He is the gate, and He is the sentinel, for He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. In Him, and in Him alone, is all our salvation. To Him is given the authority of God, merited through His death, resurrection, and exaltation at the Father's right hand, to exercise the key power of the kingdom of heaven. He alone has the power to open and close the gate of the kingdom, to bind and to loose, to declare within or without, to take in and to cast out. This is His own testimony, "I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Our Lord exercises this power through the preaching of the Word from the pulpit, through the divinely ordained ministers, who are properly called by God's church, and who declare: "So saith the Lord," expounding the Scriptures in sincerity and truth.

It is our duty to be on our guard against false teachers and preachers who declare the church to be an open city, inviting and urging whomsoever will to enter, assuring them of a false hope of life everlasting. They are interlopers, thieves, and robbers, who plunder the sheepfold of Christ, surreptitiously presenting themselves as ambassadors of Christ, presenting a gospel that appeals to the flesh, corrupting the Scriptures, and deceiving many.

We must insist that the preaching we hear from the pulpit is the sound exposition of the Word of God. We do not attend church on Sunday to hear the philosophies of a man, no matter how brilliant he may seem to be, no matter how fluent in his speech, how beautiful his style, or appealing his voice or person. We come to hear the voice of Jesus calling us out of our lethargy of sin, bringing us to sincere repentance in sorrow of heart, and assuring us upon confession of our sins and forsaking them, that our sins, no matter how great or how many, are forgiven us on the merit of the cross of Jesus Christ, just as really as sinners heard Jesus' words of peace and comfort while He walked among us here on earth. To hear Jesus speak to us through the preaching we must be sure that the preacher is called in the God-ordained manner. God is a God of law and order. He requires that only Christ shall exercise the keys of the kingdom; and Christ shall do this only as the chief Shepherd of His flock by appointing under-shepherds called by Himself. And Christ refuses to call anyone except through His



church, for Christ exercises the key power through the church institute, and through the church institute alone. Thus Christ calls through His church, which is represented by the special offices of ministers, elders, and deacons. The divinely called minister must preach the Word, expound the Scriptures, proclaim the crucified and risen Christ. That is his sole mandate. That alone makes preaching the power of God unto salvation, the Light that penetrates the darkness of the human heart, our sure Guide, the Lamp before our feet and the Light upon our pathway, leading us to the eternal Day.

It must not escape us, that this power of God always works antithetically; that is, it is a savor of life unto life, but also a savor of death unto death. The Jew within the church clamors for signs and wonders, for display of power, for big happenings, while the idol worshiper clamors for the wisdom of the world. To them the preaching of the gospel, centering in the crucified and risen Christ, is always foolishness. Their wicked, rebellious hearts cry out: NO! A thousand times NO. For "This saying is hard, who can believe it?" No one leaves the church quite as he entered. He has been where the Spirit dwells, where Christ is present with His Word, where the saints gather, where the gospel is preached. God's Word never returns void. It proves the fact that "He who believes in the Son of God has everlasting life, but he who is disobedient to the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36).

Our Catechism suggests four possible uses of the keys of the kingdom. The key of preaching, which is the chief key of Christ, both opens and locks the gate of the kingdom. It opens the gate to draw into the church that which is outside, but actually belongs within. It also opens the gate to drive out those who are within yet belong outside. It closes and locks the gate to keep out those who are outside and belong outside, yet attempt to enter in. And at the same time it keeps in that which is within and must remain in into eternity.

There are those who must be drawn in by the preaching of the Word, even though they are outside. They are known of God as Jesus' sheep, elect of God from before the foundations of the world, and redeemed by the precious blood of God's own Son, yet born and reared outside of God's church and covenant. For their sake the church receives the mandate to go out into all the world and to preach the gospel to all nations, for he who believes and is baptized shall be saved. The great commission is still the calling of God's church in the world, amazingly evident in Singapore. That does not mean that God never uses the local church and ministry to draw His own unto Himself. Although

this must not be considered the chief calling of the local church, as so many do in our day, God does sometimes use the pulpit in the local church to draw His own out of the world into the church. In a sense it can be said that all of us are drawn out of darkness into light and into a richer communion of life with God in Christ, even though we were regenerated and converted in our early infancy.

There are, moreover, those who are within the church institute who must be put out. They are the carnal element that is always present in the sphere of the covenant. It is not all Israel that is called Israel. Some are born of believing parents and grow up in the church, but are unbelievers, as becomes evident from their sinful walk of life. Others come into the church with ulterior motives, placed there by Satan to destroy the church, like foxes that wreak havoc in the vineyard. The preaching of the Word must be so thoroughly Scriptural that it serves as a power of God exposing them. The Word offends, and also condemns. Often they will leave to seek their refuge in some other church, where the preaching is more to their liking. We must realize that also in them Christ is exercising His power, the power of the Word as a savor of death unto death. They left, for they were not of us.

There are also those who seek admittance into the Christian church even though they are unregenerated citizens of Satan's kingdom. From sinful motives they attend the services for a while and then apply to the consistory to be accepted as members of the congregation. Maybe they married someone who is already a member of the church. Maybe they consider it to be to their advantage to become a member of that particular congregation. Whatever the motive may be, Satan is trying to bring his forces as a fifth column into the church, wolves in sheep's clothing. As eager as the congregation may be to receive new members, the office bearers must be on their guard against such evil workers. If such individuals still somehow find their way into the congregation, the preaching must be so positive that this carnal element cannot hold out without exposing itself, and ultimately being placed outside the kingdom.

Finally, there are those within the church who also have a rightful place there, as is evident from their hearty confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Since they are still imperfect saints, they must always be warned against a sinful walk of life. The preaching must keep them within the fold, causing them to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, into an ever closer communion with the living God. They are kept by the power of God through faith, even unto the end, by the powerful Word of Christ brought to them through His ambassadors.



The faithful servant of Jesus Christ is unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in

them that perish (II Cor. 2:15). To God be the glory now and evermore!

## EDITORIAL

# Seminary Convocation, 1984

*Prof. H.C. Hoeksema*

This year the Convocation of our Theological School was at our Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, where a fair-sized audience was gathered for the occasion. For several years now our seminary convocation has been a public occasion to which the people of our Michigan area churches are invited. It always proves to be an evening of spiritual enjoyment and edification, as well as an evening of refreshment and encouragement for our seminary professors and students. I only wish sometimes that more of our people could and would join us on this occasion.

It was Prof. Hanks's turn to deliver the convocation address this year. It was an address to which all our churches and people may well take heed. In order that you may do so, a transcript of his address will be found elsewhere in this issue.

As usual, it fell to me as Rector to introduce our students. There were no new students to introduce. Besides, there was a reduction in our student body, due to the fact that the Free Reformed students are no longer with us, having transferred to Calvin Seminary. We have three seminarians who are beginning their third year of training: Messrs.

Russell Dykstra, Steven Key, and Charles Terpstra. Back for his second of three years of training is our Singaporean brother, Jaikishin Mahtani. And in the final year of his pre-seminary training is Mr. Mitchell Dick. May our God bless our professors and students in the new school term!

A surprise feature of the evening's program — a surprise, that is, to me, because I knew nothing of it until I read the evening's program — was the fact that the Theological School Committee prepared a commemoration of the thirty-fifth anniversary of my ordination as Minister of the Gospel and the twenty-fifth anniversary of my installation as Professor of Theology. At the request of the TSC, I have included an account of this surprise commemoration, a transcript of the presentation — remarks of the Rev. Lubbers, of the letter from the Consistory of Doon, Iowa, and of the remarks made by Mr. Menno Smits as representative of the Consistory of South Holland, Illinois.

I take this opportunity also to express publicly my hearty thanks and appreciation for this kind and encouraging gesture to the Theological School Committee and to all who had a part in it.

## Seminary Convocation

### Thirty-Five Years of Faithful Service

On September 5 we celebrated the fact that it was thirty-five years ago that Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema was ordained into the ministry of the Word and Sacraments in our Doon, Iowa Protestant Re-

formed Church. This represents many years of the faithfulness of our covenant God, both to brother Hoeksema and to our churches. The Theological School Committee felt that this anniversary date



should not pass by unnoticed, not for Prof. Hoeksema's and his dear wife's sake, but above all for the sake of the Lord Who gave strength, courage, and faithfulness.

To God be the glory!

It was on the evening of September 5 that many brothers and sisters met for the Convocation program of a new school year of our Seminary. A good and profitable program was rendered and enjoyed by those present in the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. Prof. Hanko gave the convocation address, the students were introduced, and the school and the professors, students, and Theological School Committee were commended to the faithful love of God in prayer.

However, there was a special number on the program. The Theological School Committee had prepared a beautiful plaque in honor of Prof. Hoeksema's commemorating thirty-five years of service in our churches. Ten of these years, 1949-1959, were years which were devoted to labors of love in the churches at Doon, Iowa and South Holland, Illinois. There were years of "*sturm and drang*"; they were the years of trouble and stress; these were the years when the souls of men were tried. Often such days of stress bring out the best in God's servants as well as the worst. Such was the service of Prof. Hoeksema in Doon, during the days of the actual

schism in Classis West. Later in South Holland, too, the matter of faithfulness to the Reformed faith was tried. And the bottom-line was ever and anew: what hath God wrought!

Both the Consistories of Doon and South Holland were requested to be represented at this time in Hudsonville Church.

All in all, it was a fitting evening, a joyous occasion. We returned to our homes in the confidence that hitherto the LORD has helped us, and that as the faithful God He will continue to be with us.

Our prayer is that the LORD may continue to use Professor Hoeksema, as well as our other Professors, in the years to come for the teaching of young men to preach the Reformed faith, so that in future generations faithful men may stand in God's church, holding forth the Word of life.

God Who entrusted the Word as a trust to the church of the ages is able to keep this trust unto the day of the Lord.

He is faithful Who has promised!

—Theological School Committee  
per Rev. George C. Lubbers

P.S. The actual dates were October 13, 1949 at Doon and September 4, 1959 at the seminary. HCH

## Presentation of Plaque to Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema

Brothers and sisters in Christ, Students and Faculty Members, Members of the Theological School Committee, and Consistories of Doon, Iowa and South Holland, Illinois:

Tonight we have the happy occasion of recognizing the goodness and the tender mercies of the Lord over His church, as represented in our Protestant Reformed Churches in America, in granting us a faithful servant, Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema.

This year of 1984 numbers thirty-five years of uninterrupted service and ministry in God's church, the church which is the pillar and ground of the truth.

I feel not a little honored to be requested to make these remarks, and presently to hand to Prof. Hoeksema the tasteful and fitting plaque which the Theological School Committee has prepared.

Tonight we remember gratefully that Prof. Hoeksema served ten years in the ministry in the respective churches of Doon, Iowa and South Holland, Illinois, and twenty-five years in our Seminary.

Full well we know that the final, complete, and adequate reward for God's faithful ministers will not be here on earth; neither is it in the domain of any man or woman adequately to judge of the value of the service performed by any faithful steward. However, we do know that it is sought in a steward of the Lord, a mere under-rower of Christ, that he be found faithful. It is only in the grace of God that any man may serve in an office in God's church. Truly, these offices are very beautiful in the sight of God; they are full of prophetic and priestly beauty. They are God's offices, and it is His work which a servant of the Lord is called to perform.

We commend Professor Hoeksema lovingly unto the day when each steward shall receive a reward according to his work. It will be a reward of grace for labors performed by grace, and that, too, unto which Christ alone can and does enable His servants to perform faithfully unto the very end. Paul does not say for naught that he has constant thanksgiving to Christ, Who enabled him, accounting him faithful, placing him in the ministry.



May Prof. Hoeksema, together with the other Professors, continue to be strengthened, in order that they may be able to say, "I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me."

We believe it fitting and proper that we extend to Prof. Hoeksema a special token of our gratitude to God and as an expression of our appreciation for his many labors a plaque which reads as follows:

Faithful Service Award  
Presented to  
Homer C. Hoeksema  
for Devoted Service  
in the Gospel Ministry  
And in the Training

of Students for the ministry  
1949-1984  
Theological School Committee  
Protestant Reformed Churches in America

And now I have the honor in the name of the Theological School Committee of the Protestant Reformed Churches to present this plaque made specially for this occasion. The artwork is from the hand of sister Terri Gleason, the beautiful oak background is from the hand of one of the brethren in our churches. Heartfelt thanks to both.

I ask Prof. Hoeksema to step forward and receive this plaque.

## Transcript of Letter from the Consistory of Doon

Dear Prof. H.C. Hoeksema,

It was with great joy that we accepted the invitation to send a word of congratulations upon your thirty-fifth anniversary in the ministry of the Word of God. We give thanks to God for His grace to us through your faithful labors on behalf of the gospel of our risen Lord. The Scriptures instruct us that the living Lord Jesus gives to His church, which is found in a world of sin and unbelief, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints. Therefore we have and do now receive you as a gift of God to us and to all our churches.

We fondly recall your labors among us as our Pastor in Doon, Iowa. God used you to give us a clearer understanding of and greater appreciation for the truths of God's covenant with believers and their seed and the glorious truths of sovereign grace. Your pointed, incisive instruction in the principles of the gospel, both in the preaching and the catechism room, gave our small, struggling congregation the spiritual strength necessary to persevere in a most difficult time. We remember well the troubles and tensions of 1953. We thank God that our then-youthful pastor was a tower of strength for us and for Classis West, which body experienced that unfaithfulness permeated its ministerial ranks.

The consistory of the Doon congregation expresses our indebtedness to you for the training of

most of our recent Pastors received from you in seminary. We believe that our churches have received pastors able rightly to divide the word of truth. In no small way we are indebted to you, though not to you only, for exegetically biblical and confessionally sound sermons proclaimed from our pulpits throughout our denomination. The Lord has used you for the cause of truth and righteousness in our midst. May Jehovah, our God, be praised.

Finally, we conclude this word of congratulations by considering our need in the future. We all know and thankfully acknowledge that no mere man is indispensable. But we know too that God uses the means of earthen vessels to accomplish His purpose in Christ Jesus. May the Lord, therefore, continue to give you health and strength of body, stamina and vigor to perform your many responsibilities, and, above all, the graces of faithfulness to His word, humility before God, and love of Him in Christ Jesus.

We need to hear your voice of leadership in the churches. May our God bless us by giving you several more years of service in the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, which churches we love.

In the love of Christ Jesus,  
The Doon Consistory  
(w.s.) Rev. M. Kamps, President  
Jim Hoogendoorn, Clerk

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



## Transcript of Remarks by Menno Smits

The Council of the Prot. Ref. Church of South Holland extends its greetings and wishes to congratulate Prof. Hoeksema on his 35 years of service in our denomination.

He served 10 years as pastor, six of those years in Doon, Iowa and four years in South Holland; and now tonight we commemorate his 25th year as professor in our seminary.

It is with gratitude in our hearts that we give thanks to the Lord for using Prof. Hoeksema these

many years in the training and instruction of young men for the ministry.

We pray that God may continue to use Prof. Hoeksema for this important task, and through his teaching, along with the other professors, prepare men faithfully to proclaim, defend, and preserve God's Word as has been revealed to us, until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us continue to pray for the professors and students in our seminary. Thank-you.

## Speech — Our Seminary and the End of the Age

### Introduction.

Although my speech tonight, in a general way, is based upon Romans 13:11, 12, it is not my purpose to give a detailed exegesis of this text, nor to preach a sermon on it.

It is rather my purpose to discuss with you, in the light of this passage from God's Word, our need for students in the Seminary. This need is critical, not for the Seminary so much, but for the churches in which God has given us our particular calling to labor on behalf of His kingdom. It is not our well-being, the welfare of the Seminary that is at issue; it is the welfare of the churches of which you all are a part. This need does not seem to me to be recognized sufficiently among us, and it is for this reason that I wish to speak a bit about it.

Although there are different interpretations of this text given among commentators, it seems clear on the very surface of it that the Scriptures are speaking here of the end of the world in relation to its present history.

However, this idea is presented in somewhat figurative language, in terms of a contrast between day and night. The present history of the world is compared with the night, while the age that shall come when our Lord appears is compared with the day.

This figure is not strange by any means to Scripture. When Scripture makes use of it, Scripture refers to the day and night as moral-ethical ideas rather than merely chronological concepts. In fact, it is not to say too much to insist that God originally created the day and the night as figures of the spiritual day and the spiritual night, the latter of which came when sin entered the world.

Thus, in Scripture, the darkness which characterizes the night is synonymous with sin and guilt, moral corruption, and perversion, evil in all its forms, and death. Light, on the other hand, is a figure of holiness and righteousness, moral purity and sanctity, goodness in all its forms, and true life.

The night came into this world with the fall of Adam and Eve, for then the world came under the direction and control of Satan who comes from the darkest regions of hell to lead men away from God and to make this world his empire. He represents all that is of darkness, for he comes with the lie and with every manner of sin. Man dwells in this darkness because he has forsaken God and given himself over to Satan's rule. All his works are characterized by darkness, i.e., by the lie and by the works of evil. As this sin develops in the human race through the conquering of the powers of the creation and the subjection of them all to sin, the night of this world's history grows ever darker. The darkness of hell pervades history, for the prince of darkness rules.

But God does not surrender the rule of the universe to Satan. He rules supreme in all that He does. God causes the light to shine in this world of darkness, though sometimes it seems to us as if it shines very feebly and is all but extinguished.

That light is principally Jesus Christ, of Whom John says, "He was the true light." Christ is the true light because He is the very Truth of God in this world of the lie. He is the Holy One, the perfectly righteous One, Who was Himself holy and Who accomplished all holiness and righteousness by His death and resurrection. It is through Christ that we are also the light of the world. Through Christ, God has given His truth to us,



which truth has given us Christ's holiness and perfect righteousness. In this all-pervasive darkness, the church shines as light. It may be a flickering light sometimes; it may even appear to go out completely; but it is there, shining by the power of Him Who is the true light.

Nevertheless, the church continues to live in the midst of this darkness. And, just as day follows night in creation, so also it is in the history of the world. The night of sin and death goes on, and the day will not dawn until our Lord comes back again to bring in the everlasting day, where there shall never be night. It is to that day that the people of God look forward in longing and expectation.

But the history of this world serves the coming of the day of Christ, just as the night serves the coming and glory of the day. And it is for this reason that God's people, representatives of the light, give testimony and witness to that light in their life here in the night.

It is of that testimony to the light that the apostle speaks primarily in this text. And he gives urgency to that by calling attention to the fact that the dawning of the new day is not far off. He reminds us that the night is far spent and the day is at hand. There are no rays of light penetrating the eastern horizon as yet; indeed the night grows ever darker. But everyone knows that it is darkest just before dawn; and the very darkness of the night expresses exactly the fact that the night is far spent and the day is at hand.

To give urgency to this, the apostle even reminds the people of God that the day of their salvation is nearer than when we believed. The passing of the night must not be measured in long and incomprehensible periods of time, but in matters of days, or weeks. Though we believed a short time ago, the dawning of the day is nearer than then. Each day of our life of faith brings us nearer that day.

That this is true in our times cannot be denied. The signs of Christ's coming are very clear and unmistakable. We cannot mention them all tonight, nor need we. There are only two or three, related to what I have to say tonight, to which I call attention.

A sign of the coming of the day is the preaching of the gospel in every land. This has happened in our day, and God has given to our churches a part in that work. Through the work of missions we labor in Singapore, Jamaica, and Africa, places where the gospel is relatively new.

Another sign of the return of Christ is the apostasy which characterizes the "church" world of our day. It becomes increasingly severe as more churches depart from the faith, and the movement to false doctrine gains speed and momentum. It is

in this respect too that we have a calling: a calling to gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel through our Domestic Mission program, and a calling to maintain and defend the truth, something which is particularly important within the established church.

It is through these labors that we are called to witness to the light. And the nearness of the end of the night and the coming of the day gives urgency to this. It never really ceases to amaze me that we, in this country, live in a time when we can be busy with these things without interference and harassment. We still have freedom to worship our God according to the Scriptures; we still are able to educate our children in Protestant Reformed schools; we still are able to send out missionaries in this land and abroad to be a means through whom God gathers His elect; we still are able to defend and develop the truth as it is taught in God's Word.

But the fact remains that the night of sin, the darkness of sin, becomes increasingly black, and the time is near when we will be able to do these things no longer. Thus there is an urgency about our calling, which nothing can minimize, to use the time God has given us for this purpose before the night apparently swallows up the light altogether.

It is clear from all I have said that at the heart of our calling to walk as children of the light is the calling to be busy in the preaching of the Word. It is in this way that the gospel is brought to the church and on the mission field. It is in this way that the truth is preserved and maintained while the darkness of the lie becomes more intense and impenetrable. It is obvious, therefore, that if we are to be faithful to our calling in this respect, we are to do all in our power to preserve the ministry of the Word among us. And this means students in our Seminary.

The fact is, however, that we are not receiving very many. I would like to have you consider for a moment just a few brief facts. At present we have three vacant churches who are calling and five students, four of whom are in the Seminary and will graduate, the Lord willing, in another two years. Of these four, one is committed to the work in Singapore. If there would be students starting college this fall with a view to coming to Seminary (and I do not know of any) it would be 1992 before they would graduate. By that time several of our older ministers will be nearing retirement or will already be retired. And, during this eight years, under God's blessing, we can look forward to the establishment of new congregations. This all points to a severe and critical shortage of ministers to carry on the work.

Why is it that we have such a shortage of



students? I have talked with others about this, some who are teachers, some who are my colleagues in the ministry, and some who are people occupying the pews. The reasons that are given are these, which I want briefly to mention and discuss with you.

In the first place, it has been pointed out that, up until a short time ago, all our churches were filled and there were no vacancies. This has a way of discouraging students because they tend to wonder if there will be a place for them when they graduate from school.

Now, this is, of course, a matter of faith. Although there have been times in the history of our churches when all the churches had pastors, there has never been a time when graduates from our Seminary had no place. I was in Seminary in such a time, and was told more than once that it was foolish for me to continue my studies since there was no place for me in the churches. But before I started my second year, the split in 1953 came and there were so many vacant churches asking for help that I could not even go to school very much during my second year.

This is all, I said, a matter of faith. Jesus' words are always true: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few." When God calls to the ministry, God calls knowing the work the one He calls will have.

In the second place, I have been told that the high academic standards of the Seminary are a barrier to students. Because the demands of the Seminary are so great, students are hesitant to enter, fearing they might not succeed.

This is, of course, a difficult matter for me to discuss, for I am on the inside. But a couple of remarks can be made in this connection. The first is that I doubt whether any of our people who are seriously concerned about the heavy responsibilities of the ministry are interested in a mediocre minister, who has been only shabbily trained. The tendency in our day in Seminaries is to make studies easier and easier. Neither you nor I want this to happen in our school. In the second place, however, I do not really think this is true. I do not think that the standards of the Seminary are any higher than when I went to school and studied under Revs. Hoeksema and Ophoff. The fact is that any average student, provided he is willing to study and work hard (as he will have to do all his life if he is a conscientious minister) is able to "make the grade" in school. But, in the third place, this brings me to another point which has been made especially by our teachers.

Concerned teachers have told me that they find within our schools an increasing lack of interest in

and concern for studying. While there are still students who are conscientious in their work and who apply themselves to their studies, the number of them is markedly decreasing. The desire for learning, studying, mastering material is on the wane. The ones who apply themselves are considered odd. The chief concern of a growing number of students is in having a good time, playing sports, earning money, and not in hard-nose study. This, of course, has a lot to say about our homes, for the students in school reflect the homes from which they come. And this leads me to yet another point.

There is, I am told, and the evidence seems clear, a gradual decline in interest in the things of God's kingdom. In a recent sermon on the text: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness . . .," Prof. Decker made some important points on this subject. A general spiritual malaise characterizes many of us because we become increasingly engulfed in the materialism and carnality of our times. The ministry requires sacrifice and will require more such in the future as the night grows darker. As respect for and interest in God's Word declines, there is also a decline in the respect in which ministers were once held. They are often subjected to scathing criticism and constant reproach. To give one's life to the ministry under these circumstances is considered too great a sacrifice to make. And the spiritual strength to make it is too great when worldliness has sapped our spiritual interests and resolves.

The answer to this lies, of course, in the admonition of the apostle: "It is high time to awake out of sleep. Let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light."

We stand, I am convinced, at a crucial stage in our history. In many respects the future strength and well-being of our churches is to be decided in the next few years. And, while there are many considerations which enter into this whole matter, none can deny that a strong ministry lies at the heart of the strength of our churches. But we will have no strong ministry if we have no ministry at all.

The responsibility for all this rests upon us all. It rests upon our pastors, our consistories, our homes. It rests upon you and me. Let us be earnest in prayer that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into His vineyard. And may our gracious God be pleased to hear and answer our prayers.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

# Shameful, Unvarnished Fatalism

*Rev. John A. Heys*

If any lingering doubt remains as to whether Esther and Mordecai were believing children of God, or manifest unbelievers, the fourth chapter of the Book of Esther should remove all doubt and reveal to us that they were indeed unbelievers who will not confess the God Who brought up His people out of the land of Egypt and Who gave rich promises to Abraham and his seed.

Mordecai's reaction to the published decree of the king, that all the Jews in the provinces of his kingdom were to be destroyed, was to tear his clothes, put on sackcloth with ashes, and in the midst of the city to cry with a loud voice and a bitter cry. And it is to be noted here already that his first thought was not of going to God in prayer. In fact, we shall see that this was never in his thoughts — not even when God saved the Jews through an amazing turn of events. Instead he went to play upon the emotions of the people. Therefore he went into the midst of the city where the greatest group of observers would be found. For that reason he cried with a loud voice to reach out as far as he could. To try to move the populous he made a bitter cry. His sackcloth and ashes revealed him to be in deep mourning and showed how much it grieved him that all the Jews in the kingdom were to be destroyed.

He came, we read, even up to the gate of the king's palace with his lament and in that sackcloth with ashes. And although he could not enter to bring his lament to the king's ears, he came as close as he was allowed.

To be sure the other Jews in the kingdom were also deeply disturbed and filled with great fear. They had at best only a year to live; and then their children could not carry on where they left off but would likewise be killed. Their generation was about to cease; and there would be no generation of Jews after that! Yet understandably Mordecai felt the sting more than any other Jew. For he had occasioned this coming slaughter of his people by refusing to bow before the king's right-hand man. He

had angered an enemy of Israel. And, although he did not see it that way, it seemed as though the seed of the serpent was about to crush the head of the seed of the women. A critical moment in the history of the Old Testament Church has arrived!

But let us turn our attention for a moment to the king and his policies that differed so from those of Jehovah to whom Mordecai should have gone in confession of his sin, and for help in this dire predicament which he had helped create. None might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. The king's life must be made as happy as humanly possible. All manifestations of deep sorrow and grief must be kept from his eyes. He must not hear the moaning and wailing of those in distress. He must live in a very unreal world, sheltered as much as possible from the curse that undeniably is on the earth.

It was not Haman's decree that one in sackcloth might not enter the king's gate. He was not trying to keep the Jews from playing on the king's emotions, or to seek reprieve and a disannulling of the decree. The laws of the Medes and the Persians are not altered. Of that we read already in Esther 1:19. We read of it three times in Daniel 6:8, 12, and 15. No, this rule that no one wearing sackcloth might come into the king's gate was in effect long before this decree that Haman succeeded in getting the king to make, namely, to destroy all the Jews in his kingdom.

But note the tremendous difference. He Who is the King of all creation welcomes the cries of His covenant people in all their sorrows and griefs. Does He not tell us to cast all our cares upon Him, with the assurance that He cares for us? (And really, if we can cast them upon Him, they were not as big and heavy as we imagined, for to His own He gives the grace to do exactly that.) And does He not counsel us in Psalm 50:15, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me"? Are not those who labour and are heavy laden called to come unto Him with the



assurance that He will give them rest? What a King we have! What folly that Mordecai does not go to Him. To him that cannot help him Mordecai is not allowed to come. To Him Who alone can help him he will not go. O, the folly of unbelief!

But for the sake of His covenant people God does set in motion events that will save His church and whereby He will keep His covenant promises. News comes to Esther, who also lived a sheltered life in the palace away from all the sorrows and troubles in the kingdom. Her maids, however, get news from outside and tell her how the Jews were fasting, weeping, and wailing, with many of them lying in the streets in sackcloth and ashes. The telling blow was that Mordecai was doing all this at the king's gate. And she feared for his life. Although he was not her blood father, she loved him and appreciated all that he had done in taking care of her from childhood onward, and in helping her get this place of honor as queen of the land. And therefore she sent other clothing for him to wear. But he refused to receive it. Esther now sends one of her servants to find out why he behaves this way and what his problem is. Never had he behaved this way before. Mordecai tells this chamberlain the situation and gives him a copy of the decree to give to Esther, so that she could see the seriousness of the matter.

But Mordecai did more through this chamberlain. He charged Esther to go in unto the king to plead for her people and to seek to deliver them from this threatened destruction. Esther in reply, and again through the chamberlain, reminds Mordecai that for anyone to come before the king uncalled for, and unto whom the king did not extend the golden sceptre, was to expose oneself to certain death. Mordecai was asking a very dangerous deed of her. He was asking her to take her life into her hands. And especially was this a life-risking act now because the king had not called for her for thirty long days. Fickle man that he was, he must have found some other woman, or have been so satisfied with the other virgins which were steadily being brought in to him. And to force herself upon him by appearing uncalled was a dangerous act to perform. The law called for the death of such whom the king did not at the moment wish to see. There was one law in regard to this, she tells Mordecai. And that means that there are no ifs, ands, or buts, no exceptions to that rule, no fine print and loopholes that would serve to save the life of these intruders. If the king judged one to be an intruder, if he did not approve and show this by extending his golden ruling rod, death was inescapable.

Now Mordecai becomes more emphatic, instead

of more understanding of her position. He tells her, "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews." Not only does he remind her that her head is already in danger, even though she is in the king's house, but he makes a veiled threat. For he adds, "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knowest whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" It is not at all impossible that he would himself have exposed her as a Jewess, if she does not try to save his life and that of thousands of other Jews. The secret is now out! Esther is a Jewess; and at least one chamberlain knows it. But it is quite safe; and subsequent revelation reveals that the king did not hear of this until it came from Esther's own lips. As difficult as it was to appear before the king uncalled, there was little possibility that this chamberlain would go to tell the king.

At the moment we will not go into this matter and will focus on Esther's response to this warning of Mordecai. She orders Mordecai to gather the Jews together to fast for her, neither to eat nor drink for three days, with the promise that after these three days she will go in unto the king with a request for her people, adding those words of shameful, unvarnished fatalism. But before we look more closely at those words, let it be noticed once again the significant silence here, both on her part and on Mordecai's. God's name is not mentioned. What is more, she asks for fasting while significantly not adding "and praying." One would expect her to ask the Jews to pray for her as she approaches the king, and not only for her but for all the Jews that their lives may yet be spared.

Now fasting when it is accompanied by prayer is fine. But fasting divorced from prayer is worthless. You can do that merely to try to lose a few pounds of weight from the body. Prayer is the essential thing in praying and fasting. Turn to Joel 2:12, 13 where we read, "Turn ye unto Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God." Praying is an act of the heart. Fasting is an act of the flesh, and without that act of the heart, the outward failure to eat means nothing. It means no more than rending your garments and leaving your wicked heart intact. And there must be weeping over sin. Otherwise the fasting is only an outward ritual with no spiritual value whatsoever. And would not a believing child of God in such a desperate situation urge prayer, and direct the Jews to approach the God Who brought them up out of Egypt in a similarly hopeless situation?



More of this when we examine Mordecai's acts of unbelief a bit more closely. Now we must look hard at those words of fatalism of Esther, namely, "If I perish, I perish." And I ask, "Is that the language of faith? Is this the way a child of God would react in such a situation? Is that the speech of one who has heeded the word of God quoted above from Joel? Is there any evidence of a rent heart here? Is there even a suggestion of turning to God with her heart? Is there any committing of the whole matter into His hands? Is there any confession of what we sing from the Psalm, 'My hand is in Thy hand, Thou carest for me'? Is there even the slightest hint here that she has Jehovah, the God of our salvation, before her and in her thoughts?"

Unwittingly she spoke the truth. If she perishes according to the law of the king, she would in the full sense of the word everlastingly perish in the torment of hell! That is not what she meant however. She meant that if she died because she appeared before the king without being called, and because he did not feel inclined to extend his golden rod to her, that would be the end of her. By "If I perish, I perish" she meant, "If I die, that is the end of me. It is all over." The word she uses is the same word that Haman used in Esther 3:9 when he requested the king to have it written that all the Jews were to be *destroyed*. They were to be exter-

minated!

What would faith have said? Listen to what Daniel's friends said to the king: "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods" (Daniel 3:16b-18). Applied here, Esther would have said, "I am not full of cares and anxieties (which is what 'not careful' means) to go in unto the king though not called by him. If it so be, my God Whom I serve is able to deliver me from his sword, and He will deliver me from the king. But if not, I have served Him faithfully in the interest of His church. And rather than perish, I will, as Asaph so beautifully stated it in Psalm 73, be led by His counsel and afterward be received up into glory."

And mind you she speaks so fatalistically in spite of the fact that Mordecai had suggested that she came to the kingdom for a time like this, and that deliverance would come from another place. God's counsel she did not think of, and that God ruled even the hearts of kings to turn them whithersoever He will (Proverbs 21:2). No, there just is not the slightest hint of faith in God. We shall, the Lord willing, pursue this next time.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

# Believing All the Prophetic Scriptures (XIV)

Rev. G. Lubbers

### The "Kingdom-Unchanged" Fulfilled in the New Testament

Strange and unbelievable as it may sound in the ears of the Reformed believer who believes all the Scriptures, it is nonetheless a fact that Dispensationalism teaches that the Kingdom, spoken of in the prophecies of the Old Testament, is in its very essence a Jewish National kingdom. In this kingdom the Gentile Christians do not share!

Yes, strange thus to teach! This is not a rightly dividing of the Scriptures, explaining the Old Testa-

ment in the light of the New Testament, nor is it the fruit of explaining the less clear passages of the Bible in the light of the more clear passages of Holy Writ, but it is the very teaching of Jewish rabbinism. The Jewish *Targums*, oral and written interpretations and paraphrases of the Old Testament prophecies, give this Premillennial interpretation. In a footnote in Volume I, page 78, Dr. Alfred Ederheim gives the following illuminating information. The very understandably Jewish interpretation speaks of the *national* restoration and the future glory of Israel in an exclusively Jewish sense. Not a



word is said about the future salvation of the Gentile world. The futuristic interpretation which holds that the promises of Israel's restoration all refer to the time of the future Millennium is cut out of the same pattern as that of the teachers in the *Mishna*. The *Mishna* is the "whole of the oral law which had come into existence up to the end of the second century A.D." (Vol. V, page 2904, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*).

It is instructive, indeed, to notice the following from the pen of Edersheim: "It is worth while to trace, how universally and warmly both Eastern and Western Judaism cherished the hope of Israel's return to their own land. The Targumim have repeated reference to it."

In this connection we have the following footnote by Edersheim:

"Notably in connection with Exodus 12:42 (both in the Pseudo-Jon. and Jer. Targum); Numbers 24:7 (Jer. Targum); Deut. 30:4 (Targum Ps. - Jon.) Isaiah 14:29; Jeremiah 33:13; Hosea 14:7; Zechariah 10:6.

It would be well worth the reader's time and effort to look up these prophetic utterances in his/her own Bible. For, as Edersheim affirms, "it cannot be doubted, that in this respect the Targums represent the views of the Synagogue at the time of Jesus."

However, some good, solid Bible reading and study of the prophecies proves quite otherwise. It will prove that the restoration of Israel into their own land was the beginning of the restoration of all the elect, both Jew and Greek, into a better country, that is an heavenly (Heb. 11:13-16). God is not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for He has prepared for them a city. Such is the hope of Israel's complete restoration (Acts 1:6; 3:21). This is not an afterthought on the part of God, but, as Peter says, they are the eternal verities "which God hath spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets since the world began" (Idem verse 21).

Only by some clever exegetical juggling can one attempt to prove that the Old Testament Scriptures in their promises concerning the Restoration of Israel, did not have the elect Gentiles in mind too as being a part of the Israel of God, fellow-members in the commonwealth of Israel (Eph. 2:11-22).

If we proceed on the exegetical principle that the Holy Spirit interprets His own Word, which He spoke as the Spirit of Christ in the prophets in the Old Testament (interprets these later to the New Testament prophets) we have no problem in understanding the somewhat less clear utterances in the Old Testament.

We have such a notable case in the aged Simeon, spoken of in Luke 2:29-32. The essence of this we

can sum up briefly: that it speaks of the salvation which the aged prophet has seen when he sees the forty-day old baby in the arms of Mary at the temple. This was at the occasion of Jesus being "presented to the Lord" according to the law of Moses in Leviticus 12:1-8; it was the rite connected with the "firstborn" son's being holy to the Lord (Ex. 13:12, 15). This is the Savior, firstborn, in Whom salvation is prepared before the face of all the people of Israel. But this "people" is contextually both the people out of Old Testament "Israel" and also of the "Gentile" world. Hence, it is first the Jew and also the Greek; Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem (Gen. 9:27). It will be such that Christ is to be "the light of the nations and the glory of thy people Israel."

What should not escape our attention is that the Holy Spirit is "upon Simeon"; this is not a mere personal confession of an aged Old Testament saint, who stands in the morning of the latter days, but this aged Simeon is a prophet, the mouthpiece of God. Do we not read in verse 26 of Luke 2 that "it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ?" And do we not read that "he came by the Spirit into the temple" and being in that state of being led by the Spirit he uttered those memorable words concerning the Christ: His suffering, death, and the exaltation for the falling and rising again of many in Israel? And would His crucifixion at Calvary not be as a sword passing through the soul of Mary, as well as the "sign" of contradiction by unbelieving members of the commonwealth of Israel?

Now these words are a remarkable commentary of the Holy Spirit on His own words in Isaiah 49:6ff.

Let it be borne in mind that Isaiah 49:6ff was written centuries before there was any Jewish interpretation of these in the *Mishnah* and later in the *Talmud*. Both the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud* are the products of men who did not believe that there was salvation predicted in the Scriptures. Paul says such of these in Acts 13:27. Writes he, "For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him." And this spiritual ignorance is perpetuated in the Jewish writing after Christ in the *Mishnah*, *Talmud*, yea, also all the Jewish application of the law, as recorded in their *Halakah*.

They did not know the Scriptures and the prophets, yea, did not know Moses' writing from Genesis to Deuteronomy. They did not know that Jesus is the Lord of Glory (I Cor. 2:7, 8). The



reason? They have a vail of blindness over their minds. Even to this day, when unbelieving Israel reads the Scriptures "the vail is upon their heart" (II Cor. 3:14, 15).

Now it ill behooves those who profess to believe in Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, to perpetuate this erroneous interpretation which knew neither Christ nor the "voices" of all the prophets! This is what premillennialism does, knowingly or unknowingly. Pray, may it be the latter.

But let us then attend to the prophecy in Isaiah 49:6ff. It is good, at the outset, to notice that the same "voices of the Prophets" are heard in Genesis 15:15 as well as in many passages in Isaiah. We refer to such passages as Isaiah 40:5; 42:6; 46:23, 30; 52:10. Nor should we overlook the wonderful gospel of Isaiah 25:6-8. We could call attention to such wonderful Messianic Psalms as 22:22ff; 87:1-7; and to others.

However, let it be observed that the Holy Spirit in one grand sentence in Luke 2:31, 32 gives us the key to the understanding of all the prophecies. The Bible is then not any longer a closed, dark book; the prophecies are then very lucid and clear. We then can understand the burning hearts of the travellers to Emmaus, when Christ opened to them all the Scriptures, beginning at Moses, the Psalms, and all the Prophets.

We cannot enter into a detailed exegesis of each of the texts which we have quoted. It ought to be clear that if Isaiah 49:6ff refers to the gathering in of the Gentiles, the islands of the sea, through the instrumentality of Old Testament Israel, then this is the teaching of the Bible. It is then the clear Biblical hermeneutics of the Spirit of Christ. All we need is one clear Scripture passage as the key to understand all Scripture passages. Notice what Jesus says of this hermeneutical principle in Mark 4:13. There Jesus, the infallible Teacher, says, "Know ye not this parable? and how shall ye know all parables?" The prophecies are not a hodge podge of contradictions, but the one interprets the other.

And so we can thus proceed with attempting to

understand the clear and lucid teaching in Isaiah 49:6ff.

Here we have but to believe and listen. And in that order, too.

We desire to learn from this passage that the Holy Spirit indeed before preached the glad tidings that the Gentiles too should be saved by grace, and should be justified without works of law (Gal. 3:8). It was not a mere afterthought on the part of Christ to turn to the Gentiles. It is Satan's lie that the Old Testament prophecies did not speak clearly of the salvation of the church. Millennialism needs this reconstruction of the prophetic teaching to maintain that salvation and the kingdom life is for natural Israel in the literal land of Palestine.

In Isaiah 49:1 we read a most wonderful exhortation from the lips of the Servant of the Lord, Who was called from the womb, from the bowels of His mother. The words, "Listen, O isles, unto Me and hearken ye people from afar," is really the keynote of all the prophetic utterances from Isaiah 49 till Isaiah 57. It is as Dr. Young says in his commentary on this verse: "As the isles are to hearken unto Him so our attention is to be directed unto Him throughout this section."

It would seem that this prepares us for the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel. It anticipates and includes the words of Jesus to His disciples on the Mount of Olives, where in answer to the question of the disciples, "wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" Jesus answers and says, "It is not for you to know the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power, but ye shall receive power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8).

The kingdom, promised to David, is here given to his Son, Jesus Christ; it is the kingdom which was "near" when Jesus began to preach and to teach in His state of humiliation; it has come now, in His state of exaltation at the Father's right hand.

(to be continued)

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## BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

# II John — Walk in the Truth

Rev. J. Kortering

Having shown in his first epistle the significance of love as a power for true fellowship in Christ Jesus, John deals in his other letters with the application of this guideline to two specific instances. In this second epistle he emphasizes the need to hold to the truth and refuse hospitality to heretics who deny the true knowledge of Christ, but to extend it to all who walk in the truth. In his third epistle he commends Gaius for his hospitality in the gospel, but reprimands Diotrephes for his failure. Tenney, in his *New Testament Introduction*, explains this relationship as follows.

The smaller epistles deal with the same problems (as considered in the first epistle), from the standpoint of church polity and discipline. I John says that "they", meaning the adherents of the false doctrine, "went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us" (2:9). There had been a schism in some of the churches in which the errorists had withdrawn to form their own group. Some of these, however, had become itinerant teachers, who sought to gain entrance into smaller churches that were immature and weak. The Second Epistle contains warnings against them: "For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh," II John 7. The church is warned that any such teacher is not to be welcomed, "for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" II John 10, 11.

The Third Epistle affords one or two interesting insights into church life in this period. Apparently much of the ministry was carried on by itinerant preachers who made periodic rounds, staying a little while with each group and holding "protracted meetings" in private homes. Such a procedure was easily susceptible of abuse by religious racketeers, who would use their privileges to obtain a free living from the people. John commended Gaius for his gracious support of them since they received no contributions from the Gentiles to whom they administered (III John 5, 8).

### THE AUTHOR AND DATE

There is no question, but that John, the Apostle, brother of James and author of the gospel, is also

the author of this second epistle.

The only question that does arise is his self designation as, "the elder" (vs. 1 and III John 1). He does not identify himself by name. There is, however, plenty of evidence to convince us that John could properly call himself elder. Peter called himself elder (I Peter 5:1) as well as apostle (I Peter 1:11). The Greek word *presbuteros* refers to someone advanced in age as well as an office bearer in the church. In both instances, John could properly be called elder. The early church recognized John as the author of this second letter. True, the letter was somewhat overshadowed by the larger first epistle (and perhaps some even considered II and III John as part of I John), yet the church fathers regarded it as an inspired letter and John as its author. The style, vocabulary, and subject matter easily identify it with the first epistle.

Considering the closeness of the content of all three epistles, we may conclude that they were written in close succession as far as time is concerned. The heresy mentioned in First John continues to be his concern in this epistle. They must walk together *in truth*, reject all heresy, as well as those who advocate heresy. We place the writing of this letter within the decade A.D. 90-100, the same as for First John.

### THE ELECT LADY

We concluded that John wrote his first epistle to the saints of Asia Minor, especially the region of Ephesus where the heretic Cerenthus lived. From Ephesus the letter was circulated to others.

This letter is addressed to "the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth, but also all they that have known the truth" (vs. 1). Over the years, various suggestions have been given to explain who this lady is. These suggestions break down into two groups. First, those who explain that this lady is a real person, a leading lady in the churches of Asia Minor, perhaps a resident of Ephesus. They suggest that her name might be "Electa" (a proper name



from the word translated elect), or "Cyria" (a proper name from the word translated lady), or that she is described simply as an elect lady without a proper name at all. The other group understands "elect lady" as a figure of speech describing the church itself as the spiritual mother of God's children.

Arguments have gone back and forth expressing reasons why one is to be preferred over the other. In favor of an individual Christian woman and her family are: 1. A symbolic interpretation is not indicated, it seems forced upon the text. 2. A distinction is made between the lady and her children (vs. 1) and "all those who know the truth." If the lady is the church then all who know the truth would be the same ones. 3. Both verses 5 and 13 refer to an individual in the singular, hence a godly woman. Arguments against an individual but in favor of spiritualizing are: 1. Electa was not a proper name in that day, though Cyria was. Yet there is no indication of her name. 2. The Scriptures in other places picture the church as a woman (Gal. 4:26). 3. The content of the letter is general, it hardly applies to one lady. Also, would it not be strange, in that day especially, to address a letter to an unidentified woman? 4. Plural pronouns are used in verses 6, 8, 10, and 12 in which John identifies himself with the lady, hence the church is one. 5. In John verse 9 mentions a former letter to "the church." This epistle could be the one. Personally, it seems more convincing to spiritualize "the elect lady" and make it a description of the entire church. One hesitates to be too dogmatic about such things, however. Whether he directed this letter to a Christian woman and her family (which is entirely possible), or to the saints whom he calls elect lady and her children, the end result is not different: it is intended by the Spirit to be read by the entire church and also for us. Ultimately, we are the "elect lady" no matter who may have been first intended.

#### A BRIEF OUTLINE

As we outline this letter we must show how the theme of walking in the truth is developed. Throughout, the emphasis is on the TRUTH.

1. His greetings (vss. 1-3). He identifies himself as the elder, and the recipient as the elect lady and her children. Here he specifically points out, "whom I love in the truth" and others as "those that have known the truth" (vs. 1). His concern is for the truth's sake (vs. 2). He extends apostolic greetings (vs. 3).

2. He exhorts us to walk in the truth (vss. 4-6). He expresses joy in that he found her children walking in truth (vs. 4). This walking in truth is not new; it is old and it is demonstrated in that we love

one another (vs. 5). Walking in love is expressed as keeping God's commandments, the summary of which is to love one another (vs. 6).

3. As we walk in the truth, we must know how to deal with many deceivers (vss. 7-11). These deceivers are identified as those who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. They are antichrists (vs. 7). John exhorts us not to lose the work that has been done by God, but to receive a full reward (vs. 8). It is so serious that, if we follow such error, we will lose God; if we remain faithful we possess both the Father and the Son (vs. 9). The key verses follow: if such heretics come to our houses, we are exhorted to refuse them entrance and not give them the greeting of God's speed, for if we do that we are partakers of their lie (vss. 10, 11).

4. Conclusion and parting prayer (vss. 12, 13). He informs them that he has many more things to write, but he will wait until he sees them face to face (vs. 12). Those with him send greetings, Amen (vs. 13).

#### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Explain briefly the relationship between the three epistles of John.

2. Review once again the error of rejecting Jesus Christ as come into the flesh. How was this error in John's day preliminary to the many doctrinal controversies regarding the natures of Christ, His Person, and His works that were to follow in the second and third centuries?

3. Discuss the arguments for and against the "elect lady" of verse 1 as being a Christian woman with her family. Are you convinced one way or the other?

4. How is this letter a brief summary of his first epistle? Can you show this?

5. Why are truth and love so closely related? Expand on this idea by considering other passages of the Bible that deal with the subject of truth.

6. As you reflect on verses 10, 11, what is meant by not receiving a heretic into your house (would this mean, do not discuss it with him at all, or does it mean do not socialize with him)? How does a person bid another God-speed?

7. Try to illustrate the instruction of verses 10, 11 in our dealing with the Jehovah's Witnesses who come to our doors. What is the proper method in dealing with them on the basis of this passage?

*Remember a friend with a  
gift of The Standard Bearer.*



## GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH

# The Return to Scripture — The Waldenses

*Rev. T. Miersma*

Throughout the Middle Ages God always preserved in the church a remnant who kept the light of the gospel burning in the midst of the prevailing darkness. The Waldenses were such a group. They were not, for the most part, learned men or theologians. Originally they formed a group within the existing church, nor did they have any real desire to leave the church or to reform it. While their contribution to the history of doctrine is small, they did serve to a certain extent in preparing the way for a return to Scripture in the days of the Reformation and are therefore worthy of our attention.

The Waldenses derive their name from Peter Waldo, a prosperous merchant of Lyons, France who lived in the latter part of the 1100s and probably died around 1218. While little of his life is known for certain, there are several things which can be said of him. He was evidently a faithful son of the Roman church. In his day, spiritual piety and devotion were measured in terms of voluntary acts of humiliation, pilgrimages, monastic seclusion, and other outward acts of devotion. He therefore who desired to live a more spiritual, religious, and holy life would separate himself as much as possible from the material things of the world in order to devote himself to spiritual contemplation and good works. This idea of a physical separation from the world was partially rooted in the Roman Catholic idea that evil was found in material things, as well as in a lack of a clear understanding of the doctrine of justification by faith without works. Monasticism and celibacy were viewed as the highest form of the religious life.

In this environment there were various avenues or ways of life open to laymen who were seeking a more meaningful spiritual life and a sanctified walk. It was such a desire which moved Peter Waldo, under the instruction and counsel of a priest, to take literally the command to the rich young ruler to sell all that he had, to give to the

poor, and to follow Christ. Around the year 1170 he made provision for his wife and daughters, the latter of whom entered a convent, and distributed his remaining possessions among the poor. His desire was to live simply according to the literal commands of the gospel.

This desire led him to seek a translation of the gospels and other parts of the Scriptures from the Latin into the common language of the people. Then he, and those who found themselves in agreement with him went about from village to village, preaching. In this he and his followers sought to follow directly the command of Christ to the apostles to go forth two by two, taking nothing with them but the bare necessities of life. The name they took for themselves was "the poor of Christ." They sought, by their preaching, to spread the simple precepts of the gospel among the people. As this movement spread it was resisted by the church which forbade them to preach. When the Waldenses sought approval from the church authorities for their way of life and for their translation of the gospels, the church refused its consent.

This rejection by the church authorities is understandable. In the first place, the Waldenses were not ordained and sent to preach; they were laymen, not officebearers. Although the church was technically correct, she passed over the real issue: that the clergy themselves had neglected to preach faithfully the Word, and that those who were God's people hungered for His Word. In the second place, this preaching of the gospel, however simple in form, stood as a threat to the whole structure the Roman church had built, as it was founded upon human traditions and the commandments of men. A return to the Word of God as the authority for faith and life must necessarily undermine the whole Roman Catholic system of doctrine, of the sacraments, of hierarchy, of popes, and with them the temporal power of the church. And so they were forbidden to preach, and when they refused



to stop, saying that they must obey God rather than men, they were excommunicated, which at that time also exposed them to punishment by the civil authorities. The movement, however, continued to spread, from France into Italy, Austria, Germany, and even into Poland.

In addition to their preaching the Waldenses also distributed and sold copies of the gospels and other portions of Scripture, and that in the common language of the people. This led to a greater knowledge of the Word of God among the common people and would also serve to prepare the way for reformation.

Despite being driven from the church, the Waldenses continued their labors. Their zealous teaching and preaching of the Scriptures in the common language could not be without effect. The group more and more began to question certain doctrines of the church. In the first place, they emphasized the importance of preaching. This was at odds with the Roman church's emphasis on the sacraments, particularly the mass, and the priority of these over the preaching. They also began to challenge such doctrines as purgatory and prayers for the dead. Positively, they began to assert, in an early form, the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. The right of unfaithful clergy to function in their office was also challenged by them. This in itself was indeed a serious threat to Rome, as many of her priests lived in open fornication and concubinage.

While all this does not mean that the Waldenses were true Protestants, yet, in their development they were heading in the direction of the Reformation. Their movement was rooted chiefly in the desire for personal piety and spirituality, while its doctrinal development stood in the background. Their simple approach to Scripture often led to a definite lack of clarity in their views as well as to several serious errors. Some of their groups for example, taught that women also could preach. This was a confusion of the office of believer with the official work of the ministry, a confusion which arose out of the Waldenses' rejection of the authority of the offices in the church. They also showed a tendency to drift into anabaptist and baptistic ideas and to reject infant baptism and the lawful oath.

But it was their emphasis on preaching and on the power and authority of the Word of God, and their dissemination of the Scriptures to the people which reserves for them a special place in the history of the church. These things the hierarchy of Rome could not tolerate. In attempting to deal with the Waldenses the church created an ecclesiastically approved counterpart to them from disaffected members of their group. This group of "Catholic

poor" emphasized the same ideas of poverty and personal piety, but under the strict control of the church. This idea later found a home in the religious order of the Franciscans within the Roman church.

A second response of the church to this growing movement was to forbid laymen to possess copies of the Scriptures. Heretofore the church had taken no official stand on the matter, but at the Synod of Toulouse in 1229, the Bible was officially removed from the hands of the laity. All translations were also denounced. The laity might only possess the portions of the Scriptures which were in use in the church's liturgy such as the psalter. the decree of this Synod was not a universal one, but it did set the pattern for the later Middle Ages, and it reflects the church's hardening in her position of removing the Scriptures from the people.

The church's primary response however was one of suppression and persecution. This persecution at first varied in degree and from place to place, but it increased in severity as the influence of the Waldenses spread. As early as 1212 some of their number may have suffered martyrdom in Strassbourg. In some areas of Europe they were able to gain a considerable following, especially in Bohemia where the pre-reformer John Huss was to arise. To counteract these developments the church established the Inquisition. The Inquisition was organized by the popes and its purpose was the rooting out and destruction of heresy by means of interrogation and threats under torture. While the Inquisition was directed at groups other than the Waldenses as well, they too fell victim to its methods of torture, imprisonment, and execution by burning at the stake. In the 1300s the Inquisition was sent to Bohemia, Poland, and Austria to root out the Waldenses. In 1487, Pope Innocent VIII called upon the king of France to set out on a crusade against the Waldenses in order to root them out of the alpine valleys to which many of them had retreated for safety.

In spite of these things the Waldenses survived, and when the Reformation took place in the 1500s they appropriated it and its doctrine. It was then that they endured some of the fiercest persecution yet to come upon them.

In the Waldenses therefore also is revealed the fact that the way of the church's return to Scripture would not be a way of peaceful Reformation, but a way of suffering and death for the Word of God. For the church of Rome was more and more manifesting herself as the false church. Only in the way of suffering would the yoke of tradition and false doctrine be broken and the church reformed upon the foundation of the pure Word of God.



## THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

# Our Reformation Heritage

*Rev. Ron Cammenga*

The last day of this month will mark the 467th anniversary of the Reformation. The Reformation, dated from Luther's nailing of the 95 Theses on the chapel door in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, was a great work of God for the renewal of His church. Prior to the Reformation, the church had departed from the truth of God. There were departures in doctrine. Many serious errors were held and taught by the church. There were also departures in the Christian life. Ungodly and carnal living characterized both the clergy and the laity at the time of the Reformation. The Reformation was the means of God to purify and reform His church. It was such a reformation as called the faithful people of God out of an apostate church in order to institute the church anew.

We today are heirs of the Reformation and of the work of the Reformers. We are children of the Reformation; the Reformers are our spiritual fathers. The Reformation is our heritage. This applies to you young people. You young people are children of the Reformation. The heritage of the Reformation is YOUR heritage. It's a blessed heritage, a glorious heritage, a priceless heritage. For this heritage you ought to be eternally thankful to God.

What is the Reformation heritage that is yours and for which you ought to be thankful?

That heritage is, first of all, the Bible. The Reformation was the great means of God for the recovery of the Bible. The Roman Catholic Church had buried the Bible. The people were forbidden to have and to read the Bible. Besides, Rome had obscured the Bible with all her traditions and papal decrees that were exalted above the authority of the Bible. Instead of faith in the Word of God, the people were exhorted to put their faith in the church. The Reformers reacted sharply to Rome's denial of the central and exclusive place of the Word of God in the faith and life of the people. Through their efforts the Bible was restored to the church.

Secondly, belonging to our Reformation heritage

is the truth of justification by faith alone. The Reformation not only recovered the Bible, but it also recovered the central message of the Bible: justification by faith alone. Rome had denied this truth. Rome had taught salvation by works, that men must earn their salvation. Through his own experience and from the study of the Scriptures, Luther came to see the error of this teaching. In its place he preached the truth that salvation is of grace. Salvation is not the work of man, but the work of God in Christ received by men through faith alone. God, not man, must receive the glory for salvation.

Thirdly, it was the work of the Reformation to restore preaching to its rightful place. The great truth of justification by faith alone was a truth that had to be preached. By the time of the Reformation, preaching had all but disappeared in the church. Instead of preaching, the priests administered the sacraments. Not the preaching, but the sacraments, and especially the Mass, was viewed as the chief means of grace and salvation. So little preaching was done that even the sacraments were administered in a language that the people could not understand. The Reformation restored preaching to its rightful place in the church. The Reformers themselves were mighty preachers. In harmony with the centrality of the preaching, the worship services of the Reformed churches emphasized the preaching, expository, doctrinal preaching.

In the fourth place, the Reformation restructured the church itself. The offices and discipline of the church had been thoroughly corrupted in the Roman Catholic Church. An unbiblical form of hierarchy had been introduced, with an infallible pope at the head. The office of all believers had been completely lost sight of. There existed almost no conception of the proper work and calling of the officebearers. A cleavage was made between the clergy and the laity. The Reformation did away with this hierarchical form of church government. Especially through the labors of Calvin, the Re-



formed churches were restored to a presbyterian form of church government.

In the fifth place, occupying an important place in our Reformation heritage are our creeds. Particularly two of our creeds, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession of Faith, are direct products of the Reformation. For the sake of the unity of the church, out of concern for the instruction of the youth, and to serve as a witness to the world, the Reformation wrote creeds. In these creeds we have not only the essentials of the Reformed faith, what it means to be Reformed, but we have also set forth all of the fundamental truths of the Word of God. How useful to the Reformed churches have not the creeds been!

In the sixth place, the Reformation restored godly living, and put the Christian life on its proper basis. The Reformers renounced as the basis for the Christian life the attempt to earn salvation. Instead they proclaimed as the basis for the Christian's life in the world gratitude, gratitude for gracious salvation. The Reformers' emphasis on justification by faith alone did not lead them to disparage good works. Instead it was this very doctrine which the Reformation recovered that led the Reformers to call God's people to a serious and devout Christian life.

In the seventh place, the Reformation was instrumental in promoting and establishing Christian schools. Christian education is part of our Reformation heritage. The Christian school movement that flourishes among our own people rests on principles set forth by the Reformers. Luther once said:

When schools prosper the church remains righteous and her doctrine pure . . . . Young pupils and students are the seed and source of the church . . . . For the sake of the church we must have and maintain Christian schools. They may not appear attractive, but they are useful and necessary.

Finally, it must not be overlooked that belonging to our Reformation heritage is also the example of unswerving devotion to the truth which the Reformers give us. They were men who stood for the truth, and who stood for the truth at a cost. They were willing to pay the price, to make the sacrifice, for the sake of the truth. They endured the persecution, gave up their earthly possessions, parted with those who had been their friends and companions, for the sake of the truth. Many of them laid down their own lives for the truth's sake. What an example of steadfastness and of faithful discipleship!

This is our heritage. This is YOUR heritage, young people. What a heritage it is! It is the truth, it is the gospel, it is God Himself.

For this truth you ought to be thankful. You ought to be thankful that you have this heritage. God in His grace has caused you to be born to believing parents. He has seen to it that you have been brought up in a Reformed church, in a church that stands on the Reformation. He has given you faithful instruction in the Reformed faith many years already, by your parents, in the church, at the Christian school. That the Reformation is your heritage ought to be reason for deepest gratitude on your part.

If you are grateful for this heritage, and to the degree to which you are grateful, you will use this heritage. This heritage is yours not simply to admire, but to use. Do you read and study God's Word? Do you embrace with a believing heart the truth of that Word? Do you faithfully hear and receive the preaching of this truth? Do you participate in the life of the church and, through confession of faith, in the government of the church? Do you show a concern for a godly walk and separate yourself from those who do not? Do you avail yourself of the Christian education that is yours, and already now do what you can to support the cause of Christian education? Do you live a life of devotion to the truth of God and to the church that maintains that truth? This is how we show our gratitude for our Reformation heritage and identify ourselves as children of the Reformation.

Grateful for this heritage, you will also defend and maintain it. This is not only your heritage to enjoy and from which to profit, but this is the heritage that you are called to preserve for your children after you. On every hand today the heritage of the Reformation is being corrupted and sold. Every important aspect of that heritage is under attack and is being denied today. More and more there is a movement back to the very conditions from which the Reformation delivered God's people. The Reformation heritage is despised and berated. As the children of the Reformation, you are called to preserve your heritage. Maintain and defend it against every corruption, every denial, every attempt at compromise. Be concerned to pass that heritage on intact to the coming generation.

A concern for the preservation of our Reformation heritage will also motivate you to continual reformation. We must never take the attitude that we have arrived. Nor must we suppose that the only threats to this heritage of ours are the errors of all of the other churches out there. The fact of the matter is that the greatest threats to our Reformation heritage are from our own selves, our own weaknesses, our own sins, both as individuals and as churches. Love for this great heritage which is ours must express itself in our being Reformed and



always reforming.

We are grateful to God for what He has done and what He has given us in the Reformation. We are thankful for what He accomplished through men

like Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Knox. May God preserve this Reformation heritage among us. And may we be used by Him for the propagation of the Reformed faith in all the world.

## Book Reviews

**A PRIMER ON THE ATONEMENT**, By John H. Gerstner; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1984; 30 pp., \$1.50 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko).

In his series of "primers" on fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, Dr. Gerstner has done a valuable service to the church. The primers contain clear and concise discussions on these points, and they are, therefore, helpful to anyone who is coming to faith in Christ. They are, on the whole, helpful tools for instruction.

This pamphlet deals with the central doctrine of the atonement, a crucial doctrine to say the least. It is, as others, written in dialogue form in which an "'inquirer,' who is an educated, thoughtful person, becoming convinced of the truths of the Christian religion, though not yet converted to them," discusses this truth with "'Christian,' an experienced evangelical minister."

Various aspects of the truth concerning the atonement are discussed and various problems faced. Special attention is given to the particular aspect of the atonement, i.e., to the truth that Christ shed His blood for His people only.

Nevertheless, this is not one of Gerstner's better primers. I was, in fact, somewhat disappointed in it. I think there were especially three reasons why the book was disappointing. The first was that Gerstner did not at all deal with the concept of "satisfaction," a concept which lies at the very heart of the truth of Christ's sacrificial work. This is quite surprising in the light of the fact that the Westminster Confession (Gerstner's own confessional commitment) speaks of this: "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, *hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father*. . ." (VIII, 5). Secondly Gerstner gets into the matter of the call of the gospel; and, while in this discussion, he is basically sound, he nevertheless uses the terms "call," "offer," and "invitation" indiscriminantly. This is confusing, to say the least. Finally, the author deals at length with the question of how God or the Son of God can both love and hate the sinner at the same time. His treatment here

is less than satisfactory. He fails to discuss the question within the context of God's eternal counsel and finally solves the problem by distinguishing between God's love of complacency and God's love of benevolence. Such a distinction is not found in Scripture and Gerstner offers no Scriptural proof for it.

We recommend, however, this primer also as a concise statement on the atonement.

**22 LANDMARK YEARS (CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL, 1943-65)** John A. Vander Ark (Assisted by Gordon Oosterman); Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 189 pp., \$9.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema)

This book is about the history of one period in the existence of Christian Schools International (formerly the National Union of Christian Schools), the 22 years from 1943-65. It is written by a man who was director of CSI from 1953-77. (For those of our readers who were acquainted with the former principal of Baxter Christian School in Grand Rapids, this is not the same John Vander Ark.)

The book will be valuable, first of all, to anyone who is interested in the history and development of CSI. There is much information furnished on this subject, as well as on the Christian school movement in general. In the second place, the book is valuable from the point of view of the fact that it becomes abundantly clear in it what kind of organization CSI is, i.e., a movement which is principally Christian Reformed in its outlook on Christian education.

However, this book is not strictly limited to the activities of CSI, but also reflects on other Christian schools and Christian school movements. In a chapter entitled "Relationships with Churches and Colleges" reference is made to our Protestant Reformed Christian Schools. However, in the three paragraphs devoted to Protestant Reformed schools (pp. 101-102) I noticed at least four errors of fact, errors serious enough to affect the picture drawn of our Protestant Reformed school movement. It is to be hoped that similar inaccuracy does not characterize the rest of the book. Nevertheless, I recom-



mend the book for those interested in a reference work on CSI.

**LUKE'S THRILLING GOSPEL**, by Ivor Powell; Kregel Publications, 1984; 507 pp., \$12.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko).

Ivor Powell, a Baptist minister from Wales, is a figure not too well known to American readers. He is the author of a number of books on Bible studies; this one was first printed in 1965 and is now published by Kregel Publications.

The author has, as he explains in his introduction, especially two purposes in mind. His chief purpose is to provide material for the minister who is searching for flesh to put on the skeleton of his sermon outline, but who in the press of all his other work simply cannot find time to locate such material. To attain this end, the author includes in

the exposition a series of "Homilies" which are specifically directed to the minister in his sermon making.

The second goal of the book is to provide an easily read and non-technical exposition of the book of Luke, which would make a helpful study guide to anyone.

While the exposition is fairly brief, the author, on the whole, attains his goals. He is, generally, conservative in his approach to Scripture, and his exposition is clear and to the point. In the judgment of this reviewer, the "Homilies" are not really all that helpful, but this is probably due to the fact that Gerstner's concept of homiletics is quite different from ours. And the book has a decidedly Arminian slant to it, something which the reader must take into account in his study. It is, however, a helpful commentary in many respects.

## News From Our Churches

September 15, 1984

On September 4, there was an officebearers conference at Doon Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. G. Lanting gave a paper on "The History of Church Visitation" and Rev. Kamps gave a paper on "The Evaluation of the Practice of Church Visitation Among Us."

The Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches held its Convocation, September 5, at Hudsonville Church. Prof. H. Hanko gave the address on "Our Seminary and The End of Time." Prof. H.C. Hoeksema was also presented a plaque commemorating his thirty-five years of faithful service. Doon Consistory sent a letter of congratulations and South Holland Consistory sent a representative to congratulate Prof. Hoeksema. "... who is for you a faithful minister of Christ" (Colossians 1:7). "... the same (truth) commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2).

Rev. Arie den Hartog writes from Singapore: "... I gave four messages on the (annual church) camp theme KNOWING GOD. In addition to this there were discussion groups on a number of subjects relating to Christian living. . . . We were very much impressed by the brethren from Trengganu (Malaysia) who seem to be really taking hold of the Reformed Faith. We thank the Lord for this. The church there had once again asked one of our Pastors to go up there to preach. So Pastor Lau will

be going there, D.V., the end of September.

" . . . On August 19 two new elders were ordained into office.

" . . . There is a real movement to unite all the religions into one, something the political leaders of the country publicly talk about. A number of the more liberal churches are just about ready to join hands with heathen religion . . . . It seems to me that the day could come very soon when those who dare to say that the Lord alone is God and Jesus Christ is the only Savior will be severely persecuted.

" . . . We are still waiting for the approval of our change of use and building permit applications for Blair Road. So it will probably be quite a while before we will be moving there . . . ."

Rev. Lubbers has a new commentary now for sale beside his commentary on Galatians entitled *Freeborn Sons Of Sarah*. The new commentary is on Hebrews, and is entitled, *Glory Of The True Tabernacle*.

Classis West examined Candidate Ken Hanko and advised Covenant Protestant Reformed Church, N.J. to proceed with ordaining and installing him as missionary to Bluebell, PA. Congratulations to Candidate Hanko!

The Congregation of First Church has decided to



The Committee for Reformed Education in Ulster set a goal of \$13,000 for the financial support necessary to make Mr. Wassink's going to Northern Ireland possible. The original goal was reached. However, several other expenses, notably the cost of insurance for Deane and his family, will require

The Evangelism Committee of South Holland Church has arranged two public lectures in observance of Reformation Day this fall. Both will treat the Secession of 1834 in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, the 150th anniversary of which is this year. The first lecture will be held in South Holland Church, Thursday, October 25 and the second will be held on the Northwest Side on Friday, October 26. The speaker at both lectures will be Prof. H.C. Hoeksema. DH

Gwen Van Kampen (Mrs. Joe)  
Secretary

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