

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

. . . READ your *Standard Bearer*! I fear sometimes that there is reason for concern in this respect. What good is a magazine lying on your table or in your drawer? Read it, teach your youth to read it, digest it, learn from it, and become established in the truth!

See: "One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty"

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## MEDITATION

## True Prayer

Rev. H. Veldman

*"Lord, teach us to pray." Luke 11:1b*

Prayer Day — must we be taught to pray?

We do not know what to pray? Must we not pray for crops, for rain and sunshine and their proper amount, and that they may be sent us at the proper time? Should we not pray for health and strength,

for corn and grain, for happiness and peace, etc.? Surely, we know what to pray, do we not?

Yet, do we know? The Saviour taught us so differently, did He not? He taught us: "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done."



This must always be first. Besides, we must pray such prayers which we can conclude with "Amen." This word means that our prayer shall be heard. And, in this context, Christ, we read, had been praying, and the disciples were struck by the praying of the Christ, its uniqueness, its complete dedication to the Father, and they wish to pray accordingly.

O, let us understand: prayer, true prayer is not so easy after all. To pray, really to pray, to pray to our Father in heaven, to pour out our soul before *Him*, it is indeed necessary that the Lord teach us to pray. Always we must learn and be taught to pray.

\* \* \* \* \*

Today many people pray and many prayers are uttered. Every day our Congress and State Legislatures, while in session, begin with prayer. Many years ago a president of our country assumed the role of a national high priest to lead the entire nation in a word of prayer, and the result was a prayer which everyone could pray, except those who had really learned to pray. Prayer, today, has become rather national, yea international — who today cannot offer a word of prayer? But all this is surely contrary to the Word of God and our Reformed confessions. In our confessions prayer is treated as the highest manifestation of gratitude, and it is preceded by a knowledge of our misery and redemption. In Scripture, we must be taught to pray, and by none other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer, we must understand, must not be considered merely as a means to get something. Viewed thus, we pray for the things we desire. We pray for crops in the spring, and in the fall we give thanks for them, for health in time of sickness, peace in time of war, etc. If this be the essence of prayer, we can surely dispense with the words of this text: Lord, teach us to pray. Then we do not need this instruction. Then we simply ask for the things we desire. Then the prayer, "Lord, teach us to pray," is completely unnecessary.

Some have questioned the propriety of prayer, have said that prayer is unnecessary, yea improper. We need not discuss this. The child of God does not really ask himself, shall I pray? He must pray. Prayer is the spontaneous seeking by the child of God of the living God as the God and Father of his salvation in Christ Jesus. We are not concerned about the philosophical question whether prayer is necessary or proper. Of course, it is necessary and proper. Prayer is spontaneous. It is, first of all, a speaking unto the living God, a personal conversation with God. To pray means that we *pray to God*. Besides, to pray to God means that we approach unto Him with all our needs. Of course! God has no needs. We have needs. Thirdly, to pray to God

means that we express the desire of heart and soul that God may be glorified in us, that we may receive His salvation and that, in connection with whatever the Lord sends us, we may know Him and experience covenant fellowship with Him.

What does this mean? What is true prayer?

True prayer means, first of all, that we address the living God. He is the living God. This is clearly taught us in the Lord's Prayer and throughout Scripture. Indeed, the whole universe, all of creation is less than a drop of water on the bucket and a particle of dust on the balance. That God is the living God means that He created all things for His Name's sake, and does all things for His Name's sake, that He is sovereign in all His works and ways, that there is none like unto Him. And let us bear in mind that true prayer is a speaking unto Him. So often we shut our eyes and fold our hands without being consciously in the presence of the Lord. To pray means that I am speaking, but also that He is listening, and that I am consciously in His presence, overwhelmed by God.

Secondly, to pray means that we approach Him with all our needs. We are needy. God is the All-Sufficient One. We are needy. We are needy, physically. In God we move, live, and have our being, constantly. We are needy, spiritually. In ourselves we have no life, no grace, no forgiveness of sin. In ourselves we have nothing. We have needs as a church or as churches. Only, we must approach Him with our *needs*. This does not mean that we acquire all the luxuries of life and then cry to the Lord because we find ourselves "up to our ears in trouble." This implies that we wish to conduct ourselves, with our children, as of the party of the living God, realizing that, physically and spiritually, we are utterly dependent upon the living God and therefore approach Him with all our needs.

Finally, to pray means that we approach the living God with all our needs and with the desire that the living God may fill us and satisfy us as He wills, unto the glory of His Name. We pray not that we may impose our will upon His will, not to ask Him what we want or desire, but that He may reveal His will to us and that we may say, Thy will be done, on earth as in heaven.

\* \* \* \* \*

How necessary it is that we be taught!

Yes, in principle we know how to pray. The disciples ask this of Jesus and they have learned to know Him and the Father Who had sent Him.

Still, this request is so necessary. From a subjective point of view it is so very difficult to pray. To be sure, to pray is easy if we merely pray for what



we naturally desire. But this is not true prayer. True prayer is that we seek the glory of God's Name. To speak unto the living God, to be controlled and prompted by His majesty, His greatness, and His glory, to become nothing, to lose ourselves in Him — all this implies a struggle, a continuous struggle, in which we must daily crucify our old nature and mortify the flesh, continually subject ourselves to the Lord. This means a fight, a continuous fight, in which we cannot possibly engage in our own strength. To pray for God's sake is humanly impossible. How easy it is to murmur when we experience things that are contrary to the flesh!

On the other hand, however, true prayer is so very difficult also from an objective point of view. First of all, we know not what to pray for as we ought. O, we may know this in general, having been taught the Lord's Prayer. But, we know not what to pray for as we ought as far as the specific details are concerned. It seems so often that, walking in the way of God's precepts, seeking the glory of His Name, we court and invite trouble and disaster. And, secondly, true prayer is so difficult, objectively, because we must surely pray for grace to be His people and of His party in the midst of the world. To pray for grace to do God's will implies that we know that will. But this also means that we must be able to distinguish that will of God. We must not only know what to pray for as we ought, but we must also know what we must not pray for as we ought. There are so many movements, mighty forces at work in the midst of the world in which we have a name and place. Indeed, how difficult is prayer, subjectively and objectively! O Lord, teach us to pray.

True prayer is possible only through this instruction: Lord, teach us to pray.

First, we must be taught subjectively. To be sure, only the Lord can teach us to pray. Of ourselves we cannot pray; we cannot seek God and the glory of His Name. Hence, we must be taught by His Spirit, and ever anew. Always the Lord must teach us, from day unto day, that we may know and experience the true, spiritual attitude of heart and mind which is so essential to true prayer.

But we must also be taught objectively. To be sure, the Lord has taught us objectively. He did give His disciples and us the model of the Lord's Prayer. And, He also gave us through His apostles His own infallible Word. In that Word of God He has revealed unto us the will of Jehovah, the norm and rule of all our conduct in the midst of the world. That Word also speaks to us of the coming of His kingdom in the midst of our present evil world. If we pray, "Lord, teach us to pray," sincerely and

from the heart, then we shall also always turn to His Word for instruction. How can we pray, "Lord, teach us to pray," and then fail to turn to the Word of God? We understand that life's increasing perplexities and problems demand of us an ever increasing study of the scriptures. Hostile forces are always at work all around the church of God. It is becoming increasingly difficult to pray unto the living God, to conduct ourselves unto His glory. More and more we will experience the need of His grace and of His Spirit to live unto the glory of His Name. The Lord, of course, instructs us by His Spirit. However, He also instructs us by His Spirit through His Word, the lamp before our feet and the light upon our pathway.

\* \* \* \* \*

How empty will be our life if we fail to pray thus. O, we may pray prayers that are in harmony with our carnal desires. Then we pray, on Prayer Day, for rain and sunshine and crops, and on Thanksgiving Day we give thanks for the crops we have received. Then we pray for health in times of sickness, for peace in times of war or when war threatens. We simply pray for the natural desires of our carnal heart and mind. Such prayers, however, leave us empty. What if we receive crops and health and all the "good" things of this life that a man can desire and lack the grace and fellowship of the Lord? What do we have then? We have nothing!

However, how rich is the fruit of true prayer! To be sure, the way may be ever so difficult. Trouble and sickness and sorrow may then be our lot and portion. But God answers prayer, true prayer. He will fill us, not necessarily with earthly things, with the things one carnally craves and desires, but He will fill us with Himself, with His grace and mercy and Spirit and the blessed assurance that all is well unto the glory of His Name and the realization of His covenant. Then all is well, really and truly well, now and even forevermore.

Lord, teach us to pray.

Teach us to pray truly and sincerely.

Grant us Thy mercy and the peace that all is ever well.

Then my soul shall surely magnify the Lord.

*Take time to  
read and study the  
Standard Bearer.*



## EDITORIAL

# One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

(Note: In our previous installment we concluded our discussion of the meaning of these One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty. We are now ready to discuss their relationship.)

### One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty: Their Relation

We may raise the question whether there is any connection between these two events, the Secession of 1834 and the beginning of our *Standard Bearer*.

If by connection is meant direct historical connection, the answer to this question is very plainly negative. Direct historical connection there was not: the two events were ninety years apart and took place in two different countries with the Atlantic Ocean between them.

Nevertheless, it is possible to trace an indirect connection, for the simple reason that God continues His covenant and His church in the line of the generations of believers. And from that point of view it is plain to see that our Protestant Reformed Churches trace their heritage to the Secession of 1834. First of all, as we have seen, the Secession movement was transplanted to our country through the colonization process in 1847. Especially in western Michigan, in the Holland area, this took place, so that there was a replica in miniature of the Secession movement in that area. Secondly, the Christian Reformed Church arose out of those colonies in 1857 by way of the separation from the Reformed Church in America after the colony churches had first been led into the latter denomination through the influence of Rev. Van Raalte. And our Protestant Reformed Churches arose out of the Christian Reformed Church in 1924 and as the true continuation of the Secession movement, a process in which our *Standard Bearer* was instrumental.

In connection with this, we may point out that many of the members of our churches can trace

their ancestry back to the *Afscheiding*. Some of them can trace their ancestry back to the colonies in the Holland, Michigan area, and from there back to the churches of the Secession in the various provinces of the Netherlands. Others in our churches can trace their heritage back to parents or grandparents who came to this country in the later immigration of the late 1800s and early 1900s, parents or grandparents who were of Secession heritage in the "old country." My own parents, for example, were of Secession heritage, even though in their early childhood the Churches of 1834 and the Churches of 1886 (the *Doleantie* churches, associated with the name of Abraham Kuyper) came together to form the Gereformeerde Kerken (GKN) in 1892. And so there are many among us who can trace their heritage rather directly back to the *Afscheiding*.

But is there more than an historical connection?

The latter may be interesting as mere historical data. If you are a "history buff," it may be interesting to trace that connection; and there is probably an element of nostalgia involved if one can trace his origins, for example, to the "colonies" and can read and study stories of those days. There happens to be at present a considerable revival of interest in all kinds of historical data pertaining to the colonies and their struggles, failures, and successes.

That in itself, however, is not of much value.

Another question is whether there is a connection involving a spiritual, doctrinal, ecclesiastical heritage.

In this respect, I find a twofold relationship.

In the first place, there is a doctrinal connection. There has come down to us as Protestant Reformed people from the Secession the heritage of the Reformed faith. This heritage has been transmitted to us today via the line of generations mentioned in the preceding. I know very well: the Secession is not known for its great doctrinal development. I am referring now to the Secession movement especial-



ly in its early years. On the other hand, I do not believe it is fair to accuse the *Afscheiding* as a whole of pietism, as is frequently done. Nevertheless, I think it is a fact that especially in the early years there was not a large degree of development in the Secession as far as the Reformed truth is concerned. One reason for this is undoubtedly the fact that the early leaders of the Secession were simply too busy for this: busy preaching twenty and more times per week, busy teaching, busy fighting the battle, busy helping the churches to become established.

But the Secession is indeed known for its return to and faithfulness to the Reformed faith as set forth by Dordt! This is its outstanding characteristic. You might say that it was a kind of *holding* action. Even in this respect, I know, one can point to many weaknesses and struggles and divisions. But I am referring now to the main line of the Secession and to its principle as this comes to expression, for example, in the Act of Secession or Return of the congregation of Ulrum, where the Secession began.

In this respect our *Standard Bearer* is surely related directly to the Secession; and we are not ashamed to trace our origin to it! But there is a difference. God has given to us through the years of our existence the opportunity and talents for further development and enrichment. I think in this connection especially of the truth of the covenant as the eternal covenant of friendship established through Christ with believers and their seed.

But there is also an ecclesiastical or church political relationship between us and the Secession.

Again, though the churches of the Secession were beset by many internal troubles and differences and struggles, the mainstream of the Secession was sound in this respect. It was not ingrown. It was not sectarian. It was not narrow in the wrong sense of the term. But the Secession represents a return to the truth of the office of believers. It represents a return to the principle of the autonomy of the local church. It took a firm stand — and at great cost! — against hierarchy. And it represented a return to the principle of the sacred right and calling of reformation.

In this respect, too, we Protestant Reformed are related to the Secession in principle.

#### **One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty: Their Lesson**

Looking back over the sixty years of the existence of our magazine, let me remind you that our *Standard Bearer* has been of significance only in so far as it was faithful to the principles mentioned in the preceding. And I wish to emphasize that it has, by God's grace, indeed been faithful to those prin-

ciples for sixty years. There are not many church papers and religious periodicals of which that can be said today. But our *Standard Bearer* has been faithful. It is basically the same kind of paper today that it was sixty years ago. Thank God for that!

And the lesson is that our *Standard Bearer* will continue to be of significance in the future only in that same way, that is, only as it continues to be the same kind of magazine that it has been for sixty years. We must not only not depart and become apostate. But we must remain sharp and distinctive and antithetical — yes, also polemical as occasion demands. And we must continue, too, to develop positively as we have in the past. If the day should come that the *Standard Bearer* becomes dull and colorless, just like many another religious magazines, if the day should come that it loses its distinctiveness and fails to lift high the standard of the Reformed truth, then it should cease publication. The market is glutted with colorless, non-distinctive, and apostate periodicals; why add another?

To that end our *Standard Bearer* must remain FREE. It must be in a position to speak freely, without ecclesiastical harness and restraint — even if the day should come, which may God graciously forbid, that the *Standard Bearer* should have to speak out against our Protestant Reformed Churches!

For that purpose our magazine must have the strong support of its readers and subscribers. And I am not referring only, nor even in the first place, of financial support. That is necessary also. But at present there are no worries in that regard. And this is not the first priority. But READ your *Standard Bearer*! I fear sometimes that there is reason for concern in this respect. What good is a magazine lying on your table or in your drawer? Read it, teach your youth to read it, digest it, learn from it, and become established in the truth!

Finally, all glory and thanksgiving be unto our God! We have nothing of which to boast in ourselves. All is of Him and of His sovereign grace and covenant faithfulness!

*Give a subscription to  
the Standard Bearer  
as a gift to a friend  
or relative today.*



## TRANSLATED TREASURES

# A Pamphlet Concerning the Reformation of the Church

Dr. A. Kuyper

(Kuyper, in this paragraph, is discussing the marks of the true and the false church. He does this so that the child of God who is called to engage in church reformation may be able to distinguish the two from each other.)

The church of Christ, without losing her essence as church, can be both mutilated and impure and even, as Calvin says, infected in part by corruption. This mutilation usually is first recognized in a cessation of discipline. This impurity manifests itself in imperfections which creep into the preaching and the administration of the sacraments. And this corruption in turn becomes manifest in false doctrine which accompanies the faithful preaching of the Word.

Further, where this illness and mutilation continues, the church soon loses her essence as church and fades away into a lifeless society.

And finally, where poisonous gases accumulate in this dead body, this lifeless church soon becomes the false church when it, under Satan's influences, persecutes the truth and those who confess it.

Following the directives of Calvin, we earnestly warn anyone to be sure that the church, which he intends to leave, has so completely been forsaken of God that not only its well-being, but also its essence as church is lost.

Just because your church is sick or crippled, you may not withhold from her your love. Just because she is sick, she has a greater claim on your compassion.

Only when she is dead and has ceased to be your church and when the poisonous gases of the false church threaten to kill you, do you flee from her touch and withdraw your love from her.

Above all, one must pay attention to the fact that the question is never whether you shall leave a certain *church fellowship*, but only whether you shall

leave *your church*. A church fellowship consists of churches, in the sense in which the term is now used, and the church consists of members. (This usage is not historical. Originally, church fellowship meant a certain local church.) Thus you are a member of your *church*, and your church is a member of your *church fellowship*. Your church can leave the fellowship, but you can only leave *your church*. We do know that there are churches who have accepted members into the "fellowship," who do not become members of a congregation. But this inconsistency need not detain us. For you, for me, for each one, the question is only: Must I, may I, leave the church of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht?

I have absolutely nothing to do with what happens elsewhere; only with my own church. The communal responsibility for what happens elsewhere is the responsibility of the *consistory*, not of the individual *member*. This can result in severing the bond between my church and those other churches, but it can never deprive my church of the *essence* of church.

In the seven letters to the congregations of Asia Minor, the Lord Christ never pointed out a responsibility of members towards the church federation.

Just as our fathers did not leave the church of Amsterdam because that church was affiliated with the churches of Rome, and did this because they judged that the essence of the church still belonged to her, so also we may not give up our churches even though they are in an impossible church fellowship, because this does not deprive her of the essence of the church.<sup>1</sup>

And as far as the churches themselves are concerned, I only ask: Does that church in which I live (my church) still offer me the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments in such purity that the essence of both these means of



grace is still present?

The fact that idolatry exists along with the tolerably pure administration of the means of grace does not take away the essence of the church, but it does place the consistory before the obligation to cut out this abomination. Nevertheless, it does not require of the individual member that he leave that church. The organization of my church is indeed sick, mutilated, and partly committed to corruption, but not to the extent that it no longer offers me with tolerable purity the means of grace, and therefore has not yet lost her essence and her life.

In this same way the prophets stayed in the church of Jerusalem even though idolatry had crept in. And our fathers continued to live in the Romish Church for many years before they came to Reformation.

This last remark should lead to a still more serious warning.

Some act as if the obligation and calling of God's children is to break every connection with their church without delay, as if on the same day.

But this seems to us to be contrary to Scripture and history.

If a coma accompanies a human sickness, sometimes even like the appearance of death, the church experiences the same phenomenon. It seemed as if

all too often in Israel the whole church was lost. And yet, the imperishable church always flourished again. In the dark night of the Middle Ages, it often seemed as if the church was dead. And yet, once again it raised its head. Also in the days of the Reformation not all the church was immediately restored. It was from 1517 to 1570 that the work of church reformation developed through all the churches.

This should warn us to be careful in our own day. He who considers the church from an external and regimented perspective, without piety or sincere love, immediately packs his suitcase and is ready at any moment to travel. But he who seriously and conscientiously puts himself before the question: Am I trying to escape judgment? Am I throwing away that which is still alive? Am I burying what only seems to be dead? O, he hesitates and tarries. He always still hopes and seeks new remedies to stimulate the spirit of life. And when others mock him, asking: How long will that trifling with your corpse continue? Then he reverently puts his finger on his lips and whispers: It is my mother!

<sup>1</sup>While there is an element of truth to what Kuyper says here, it must not be forgotten that there is a corporate responsibility between the individual member and his denomination as a whole even though that corporate responsibility is actually a reality through the consistory of the local congregation.

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

### The Moment of Truth

*Rev. John A. Heys*

Strikingly Mordecai, after being highly honoured by the king with a parade through the streets of Shushan while Haman cried out concerning him that he was the one in whom the king delighted, went back to his sackcloth and to sitting on the ground in front of the king's gate. It is easy to understand that Haman went home with his head covered and feeling greatly humiliated. But for Mordecai, after having the royal garments removed, and after getting down from the royal horse, to return to sackcloth and to his former place

on the ground where he sat in his mourning, seems wholly out of place. We have no problem seeing what kind of man the king was. Imagine a king who highly honours a man who saved his life, and then forgets him entirely in less than one day. It was a one-time and short-time exaltation and reward that he bestowed upon Mordecai.

Mordecai's actions however were not at all strange and out of place. Taking all the facts into consideration we can see his reasons for this be-



haviour. His life and the lives of his people were still in danger not only but actually consigned to be terminated in a few months by the decree of the very king who had honoured him so highly. Mordecai protected the king, and was rewarded with a parade in his honour. But the decree that he and his people must be exterminated had not been revoked. The king had no knowledge of the fact that Mordecai belonged to this people that must be exterminated for the king's good and the kingdom's well-being. Mordecai then had good reasons for mourning and returning to his former state. As an unbeliever he did not recognize God's providence, or read this as a sign that the God of Israel could indeed send "enlargement and deliverance." His actions were out of place for a believer. But looking for enlargement and deliverance from another place, rather than from God, explains his conduct. Instead of sitting on the ground in sackcloth, he should have been on his knees praying and thanking God for this evidence that He can reverse the decisions of men. Haman sought his death. God made that enemy honour him in a most spectacular way. Mordecai should have seen God behind the king, and Haman as a tool which the Almighty had completely in His control.

Esther, on the other hand, is about ready to enter into the moment of truth. The second banquet of wine is prepared. Soon the king, Haman, and Esther will be in their places at the table. And Esther will have to reveal to the king what she had been hiding all this time. The truth will now come out and remain hidden no longer. She will have to reveal that she is a Jewess. By revealing that her life is slated to be taken from her she will reveal that she is a Jewess. When she makes her petition known to the king she reveals the truth of her identity among the people that had been branded by Haman as a danger to the king and kingdom, and accepted as such a people by the king without any investigation whatsoever.

There were then at this table three with disturbed thoughts and differing emotions. Esther is filled with fear. Her life hangs in the balance. She will in a few moments know whether, as she said to Mordecai, she will perish in her attempt to save her people. Haman is a deeply humiliated man who wonders what place he is going to retain in the kingdom. Extremely hard it was for him to look across the table into the face of the king who had so deeply humiliated him. He did not have the fear of death. Had he not been summoned to this honour of banqueting with the king and queen? He feels shame, deep shame and wonders whether he is going to be abased by being demoted from his high position in the kingdom. But he does not yet have reason to fear the death that in a few moments will

be decreed. The king is filled with both curiosity and apprehension. He is eager to know why Esther wanted these two banquets with Haman present. Is there a political or social condition in the kingdom unknown to him? Is his life and his kingship in danger as before when Esther notified him of the plot of the two chamberlains?

Quite plainly the king was getting impatient. He does not wait for Esther to keep her promise and to make known at this banquet her petition. Instead when the banquet had just begun, he again asks her what her petition is, adding the promise once again that it will be granted to the half of his kingdom. Indeed the moment of truth has come. What her father-uncle had so unequivocally commanded her not to reveal she must now make known. The truth must come out into the open. And if it was — and it was — dangerous for the queenship to let it be known that she was a Jewess, it is even more dangerous now to reveal that she belongs to this people that is consigned to death by the king. Her deceptive ways in the past would only underscore Haman's words that this people was not to the king's or the kingdom's profit. Being deceptive about this matter, could she be trusted in the kingdom with anything?

In a very clever way she presents the matter to the king. She asks for her life and the life of her people. Plainly her own life was her chief concern. Had she merely said to the king, "If it please the king let the life of my people be given at my petition," she would automatically be included in that people and be safe, if the king granted this request. But no, she echoes the sentiment expressed in her shameful, unvarnished fatalism, namely, "If I perish, I perish." And remember that she agreed to do as Mordecai commanded her only after he made it crystal clear to her that she too would die with her people. Not until she saw that her own life was in danger did she agree with that fatalistic outcry of her own perishing.

Cleverly enough she mentions her own life first, also in order to bring to the king's attention how it will also hurt him. His wife's life is in danger. He is in a position wherein he will suffer the loss of another wife, and this one a most beautiful wife of whom he was proud, as is plain from his extending the rod to her when she came in without being called.

For Haman it was also the moment of truth. For he is about to find out that although he had convinced the king that the Jews were a people that "is not for the profit of the king to suffer them" to live, he himself will be shown to be the one who is not to the king's profit, for he has gotten the king to decree that his wife must die. He is not simply



touching Mordecai and the Jews. He is touching the king by touching his wife. Here was a truth that would cost him his life. But he does not know it until Esther opens her mouth to make known her request.

Note those first words of Esther, "If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king . . ." Consider also the words of the king that produced this reply, "What is thy petition queen Esther?" Quite a husband-wife relationship here, is it not? Granted that Ahasuerus is king and that Haman is present so that the wife must honour the king before his officers, the king did address her warmly as queen *Esther*, using her personal name. She could at least have addressed him as "O husband, king." In that way she would have honoured him before Haman. She however holds her distance. There is no warmth in her speech to this man who decreed her death sentence and that of her people. In a cold, reserved way she approaches him with whom she was joined in the bonds of marriage, and with whom she considered herself to be one flesh according to God's ordinance.

What is more, her "If I have found favour in thy sight, O king" reveals her fear of him in spite of his promise to grant her request even to the half of his kingdom. The word "if" in Scripture sometimes means since, as in Colossians 3:1. Here in Esther 7:3 it expresses doubt. Esther is not at all sure that the king will grant her request. This was no formal, platonic way of approaching a king. This man is her husband, and one who had decreed a matter far more important than half of his kingdom. Actually she was going to ask for *all* of his kingdom. She would make a request that would make the king step down and cause the work of his right hand man to be brought to naught. Her request was one that would make her rule the king and his kingdom. If she got her way, she would decide the policy of the kingdom in regard to the Jews and undo a decree of the Medes and Persians that altereth not.

No doubt the king did not see it that way; and his great desire to keep his beautiful wife made him turn against the man with whom he had agreed, and to debase him and have him executed. And as it turned out, the request of Esther did not make her rule the kingdom as far as the treatment of the Jews is concerned. The decree was not reversed, but the Jews were given the right to defend themselves and to fight for their lives on that day when the decree was to be executed. Yet the request as such was that her will overrule what the king had willed with Haman and at his suggestion. Her will, as becomes plain when later on she appeared once more before the king, was that his decree be *reversed* (Esther 8:5). If that would take place, Esther would have

ruled the king and the kingdom as far as her people are concerned.

And now we see why Esther wanted Haman at those two banquets. It was not because of love or even respect for him. It was not because she delighted in his company. It was not to honour him but to humiliate him before the king. It was to cast him into the agony she and her people had been suffering since the king's decree. They had death staring them in the face; and Haman must have that fear now, and that from an wholly unexpected source. He had moved the king to exterminate all his enemies, that is, Haman's, and she is now striving to rid her people and herself of this enemy through a death sentence upon him. It was hate, a vicious hatred in her soul, under the guise of respect and friendly thoughts to him, that would get back at Haman. It was the moment of truth also from the point of view that her true evaluation and thoughts toward this right-hand man of the king were made crystal clear.

And what shall we say of all this? Certainly both Esther and Haman were under the power of sin as citizens of Satan's kingdom of darkness, even as our old man of sin is until we are delivered through the blessing of death. Yes, death is a blessing for the believer, for it delivers him from the dominion of Satan and from all sin. But we err if we say that Satan moved Esther to perform these devilishly clever deeds. He did not give her this clever plan. Ever since God told him immediately after the fall that the seed of the woman would crush his head, Satan tried to keep Christ, The Seed of the woman, from being born. He would not now move Esther to try to reverse the decree that would prevent His birth.

Too often and too easily we blame Satan for our sins and overlook the fact that we are born with a totally depraved nature, born spiritually dead — not sick, weak, partially paralyzed — and we sin because in the beginning Satan succeeded in bringing us to this state. We are not always — or even often — moved by Satan or one of his henchmen to commit a particular sin. Many would like to explain Revelation 20:2 as teaching that with the binding of Satan a tremendous drop in sin will be found in the world. Not at all! Were Satan and all his fallen angels cast into hell today, our old natures would still develop in sin. The cancer is there. And the death of others with cancer will not stop the growth of ours. Only a rebirth with the life of Christ will stop sin in us.

Instead see God's counsel here and His grace to His people. He is using Esther for the good of His church. Trust Him, and so be sure that all the moves in the future of those in the kingdom of Satan will work together for our good.



*FROM HOLY WRIT***Believing All the Prophetic Scriptures***Rev. G. Lubbers***CHAPTER XVII****The Mystery of the "Seventy Weeks"  
in Daniel 9****INTRODUCTION**

The impelling reason for discussing this ninth chapter of Daniel in the series of essays on Dispensational Premillennialism ought to be obvious to anyone having but a smattering of knowledge concerning the basic tenets of Premillennialism, particularly in the teaching of the so-called seven years of tribulation. According to this teaching, which we hold to be erroneous, this tribulation period is the time between Christ's coming in the "rapture," and His return to raise up the millennial kingdom. This return is denominated "the revelation."

It is the teaching of Premillennialism, both post- and pre-tribulation, that the Scriptural basis for this teaching must find its bedrock in Daniel 9:27, where we read "and he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week . . ." This "one week" constitutes the "seven years" of the Great Tribulation, so it is alleged. In view of this strange contention by Dispensationalism it is incumbent upon us to search the Scriptures whether these things are true; whether they are truly a correct interpretation of the word of prophecy in Daniel, as explained by the angel Gabriel to Daniel upon his prayers and supplications.

There is a mighty and positive reason for studying this magnificent revelation of God to Daniel in far-off Media-Persia! It is that these are the Scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation which is by faith in Jesus Christ. For let us not forget that in this chapter we are shown the Messiah, the Christ in His mediatorial work at the Cross of Calvary. In this Christ, Jerusalem is saved, and God causes His face to shine upon His sanctuary that is desolate for the Lord's sake. The Old Testament temple is indeed left "desolate," with no one to dwell in it. The glory of the Lord was departed from it, even as the glory had departed

from Shiloh in the days of Eli (Jer. 7:12, 14; 26:6, 9). Jeremiah prophesies the word of the LORD, "Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and make this city a curse to all nations of the earth."

Now we must believe all the prophetic Scriptures!

We must not believe only certain parts which we then try to fabricate into our own humanly conceived constructions. Scripture must interpret Scripture, and we must believe the further interpretation of the prophecy, as God gives added instruction and details concerning the fulfillment of His own sure promise. Even in our refutation of very obvious errors, yea, even heresies, we must so interpret the Scriptures that the truth stands out so sharply and clearly that the errorists must yield the field. Thus did Jesus interpret the Scriptures when He said repeatedly, "have ye not read?" (Mt. 12:5; 19:4; 21:42). We could give many, many more Scripture references. Hence, the question is for us to do two things. We must read Daniel 9 well, and we must interpret it according to all the Scriptures!

Our method of discussion will be such that we contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. This does, however, not mean that our writing will be basically "controversial" in nature. We need more than formal polemics. We must contend with trowel and sword, and in that order, too. We must build the temple of truth and keep the work area free from those who will not build according to the plumbline of the Scriptures.

Hence, we must offer positive, constructive exegesis, based on good methods of interpretation and sound rules of hermeneutics. Only thus will we rightly divide the word of truth, so that we shall not be ashamed to present it to God and to His church.



## THE HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE OF DANIEL 9

This historic perspective we are given in the verses 1-2. (I suggest that you take your own Bible and read these two verses, and also that you read the entire 9th chapter of Daniel.)

The first question which should be faced is this: what do I mean with the designation "historic perspective." When I speak of perspective I am referring to the searchlight of the prophetic word as it shines in a dark place, and as this light continues to shine more and more brightly unto the time when all God's promises are fulfilled in Christ Jesus. That perspective we will be able to see clearly revealed by God in this 9th chapter of Daniel. The prophecy speaks of the "seventy weeks determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression . . ." (Dan. 9:24). Woven into this prophecy we see the fact that all the history of Israel is unto the Seed which must come, the Messiah. Our fathers see here in this prophecy the "Gospel of the Promise," and rightly so. Here is no mere bickering over words and syllables, but here we see the unerring work of God, who never forsakes His people, whom He foreknew, that is, the elect of both Jew and Gentile.

So much for the term "perspective."

But we must also notice the term "historic." The Word of God gives "dates" in the unfolding of God's counsel. Hence, the prophets are very specific about the time when they received a revelation from God, if such indication of time is of importance to understand the meaning of the prophetic instruction.

Thus it is here. We are dealing here with "salvation-history"; our Dutch fathers called this "Heils-Geschiedenis." This is the history of the revelation of the Christ of God, the Messiah, prophet, priest, and king of God. This Messiah is God in the flesh, Immanuel, God-with-us!

When there is a great moment in the fulfilling of this promise, a so-called high-point, something by which the ages will be affected and will ever be remembered, we call this "historic." Not all that happens in time is historic in this sense! Here we have a great moment in the history of God's church. We stand here, so to speak, at the crossroads in the history of the Israel of God and of the church of the ages! We stand at that point where in the royal line of the kingdom of Judah the second "fourteen generations" end and the third "fourteen generations" begin, according to Matthew 1:17. The line runs from Abraham-David-Salathiel. It is the *becoming into being* of the kingdom, the *high-point* typically, and the *time of the "dry-ground,"* from whence Christ, as the root of David, will come forth in the virgin-birth from Mary.

It is in the year that "Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans." This is the time when Cyrus, king of Persia, will give his decree that the people of God return to rebuild Jerusalem and the holy temple (Ezra 1:1-4). At this time Daniel is an old man already! He was perhaps some ninety years of age. He had been an interpreter of the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:36-39; 4:19-27) and also had interpreted the handwriting on the wall in the festal hall of Belshazzar (Dan. 5:17-31). Daniel stands here as a prophet in the very *transition* from the time or period of David till the Babylonian Captivity of Judah, to the time when there is the return from the Captivity till the time of Christ.

It is the time predicted by Jeremiah the prophet.

We read in Jeremiah 25:11, 12 the following:

"And the whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the kingdom of Babylon seventy years.

"And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it a perpetual desolation."

That point in history has come to pass; that prediction of God has been and shall be accomplished.

Hence, it is not merely to the former *status-quo* of Israel's typical kingdom-life that Judah shall return, and to the former glory of the earthly temple of Solomon.

It shall be a progressive going forth "till Messiah comes!"

The entire history of Israel and Judah clearly exhibited that the "law" made nothing perfect; all cried with a loud voice for the coming in of a "better hope" (Heb. 7:19). We need a Messiah and a better hope by which we draw nigh to God!

We cannot really doubt that Daniel, when he drew near to God with his supplications, was not deeply aware that from the "desolations" of Jerusalem there must rise a better hope. And when Daniel intercedes before the face of the Lord, it is thus that his prayer is heard and interpreted by God Himself, and He sent Gabriel to interpret the meaning of the Captivity for "seventy years" by the unfolding of the message of the "seventy weeks," or, better, the "seventy *sevens*."

Such is the historic perspective here in Daniel 9.



## THE "BOOKS" BY WHICH DANIEL UNDERSTOOD THE DURATION OF THE DESOLATIONS

It is a remarkable fact that here in Daniel 9:2 is the only instance in which the plural is found for the Hebrew word for "book": *sepharim*. In legions of other passages we find the noun "book" in the singular. To cite just a few we call attention to "book of the generation" (Gen. 5:1); "book of the covenant" (Ex. 24:7); "book of life" (Ex. 32:32, 33); "book of the law" (Deut. 30:10; 31:26); "book of the Chronicles" (II Kings 1:18). These were all smaller books, which were incorporated by the Scribes in the Sacred Canon. However, the term here ("books") must refer to all the Scriptures which were in existence in the days of Israel's "desolation" in Babylon for seventy years. Surely Daniel was an ardent student of Moses, the Psalms, and all the prophets which were before him. And these "books" he must have studied in view of ascertaining the time and the manner of the time of the sufferings to come upon the Messiah and concerning the glory to follow (I Peter 1:10, 11).

Daniel had the Spirit of the Most High God in him.

So true was this that, even as Joseph in Pharaoh's court, so Daniel stands here in the court of the earthly ruler of the world as God's prophet.

He stands here with the "books" in his hand and reads and studies them with the deep yearning in his heart that God may fulfil the promise made to the fathers of old. And, whereas Daniel believes the Scriptures, he tries to understand and interpret them. In a sense he attempts to penetrate into the impenetrable mystery which still shrouds the future fulfilment. One thing Daniel knew: the Lord was going to perform great things. The Lord had given great and precious promises, and soon the horizons would lift on the heavens; God would break through the heavens and He would "visit His people" in mercy!

For a Bible-believing man is a Bible-praying man.

And such a man is very beloved of God (Dan. 9:23).

God does not hear sinners, who are unrepentant! (John 9:31; Prov. 15:26-28).

## ALL AROUND US

# Time's "Man of the Year"?

Rev. G. Van Baren

Annually, *Time* magazine chooses a "man of the year" and places his picture on the front cover. Could you imagine, even in your wildest dreams, that *Time* should perhaps place on that cover our Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema? I could not conceive of such either. Yet, perhaps even more unbelievable, would one expect to find such a picture on the front cover of the *Banner*? Yet there it was — in living color — on the cover of the *Banner* of February 4, 1985. In the photo, behind the subject, was the painting of Luther, Calvin, and H. Hoeksema (found in our Seminary library).

The *Banner* featured the "Protestant Reformed Perspective" and contained a report of an interview with Prof. H.C. Hoeksema, and several articles

written by C.R. ministers including an editorial on the subject. Generally, the treatment given our churches was fair. Though we have often expressed disagreement with the Christian Reformed Church on various points (beginning with the "common grace" issue of 1924), and though we have been disappointed often in the way that Editor Kuyvenhoven has been using the *Banner* to introduce subjects which appear to create dissension in their ranks — still, there is a time when appreciation must be expressed too. We thank you, Editor Kuyvenhoven, for this issue of the *Banner*. We did truly appreciate it.

In the interview with Prof. H.C. Hoeksema, some interesting questions were asked and



answered. Here are just a few:

Q. And the Protestant Reformed position on these three points (of common grace)?

A. On the first point, we maintain that the grace of God is never common, always particular, for the elect alone. The gospel is not a conditional offer to all men, and God is not willing to save all men, head for head and soul for soul. We maintain the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, which operates sovereignly in the hearts and lives of the elect only, through the preaching of the Word as a means of grace.

On the second point, we teach that sin is not restrained in the heart of the sinner but that sin develops in history along with the organic development of the race. This doesn't mean that every man commits all sins. But sin develops along with life in the world. Adam and Cain and his generation did not have the capacity and the means to sin as men of the twentieth century can sin.

In connection with the third point, we take the position that the natural man, apart from the grace of God in Christ, always sins and cannot do good in all that he does. All that is not of faith is sin.

The interviewers also wanted to know about the lifestyle in the Protestant Reformed Churches. And both the question as well as the answer serves to remind us too that others observe us — and our children — to see whether we “practice what we preach.”

Q. Let's switch the topic from theology to lifestyle. Are Protestant Reformed persons less worldly than Christian Reformed persons?

A. I don't say they all are, but they should be. Take the theater — your churches have justified it. I don't say that our young people are all faithful in staying away from the theater or from the theater on television, but they should be, and our churches teach them to be. The same is true of the dance.

Concerning the origin of the Protestant Reformed Churches, the interviewers asked also:

Q. Let's go back to the split in 1924. Could it have been avoided?

A. Hoeksema and Danhof were not the ones who started it. Others began to accuse them of denying common grace. At the time, if common grace had not been elevated to church doctrine, if it had been left to the area of discussion and difference but with the status of an extra-confessional matter, there never would have been a split in 1924. It was Classes Grand Rapids East and Grand Rapids West that took it upon themselves to discipline Hoeksema and Danhof and to do what the synod had refused to do. And then the 1926 Synod rejected the appeal of Hoeksema and Danhof against that.

Kuyvenhoven, in his editorial, presents his own view of our churches:

... The Protestant Reformed Churches need us and our sins as the justification of their separate existence.

Therefore, their semi-monthly magazine (*Standard Bearer*) has not grown weary in sixty years of telling its readers what terrible things happen to a church that believes that in “God's common grace” a bridge can be built from the church to the world.

Of course, these tactics and teachings, which are essentially worldly (and of which we ourselves must repent as well), cannot please God and do not help either one of our denominations.

In China a government simply told different denominations to join together or cease to exist. As a result, the churches united. I wonder what power it will take to bring us together.

Editor Kuyvenhoven also presents his own brief summary of the “Three Points” of '24:

In addition to the saving grace of God, displayed to the elect unto eternal life, there is also a certain favor or grace that God shows to his creatures in general (Ps. 145:9, Matt. 5:44-45, etc.).

Without renewing the heart, God's Spirit restrains sin in unregenerate individuals, and by the same activity he makes human society possible (Gen. 6:3, Acts 7:42, 2 Thess. 2:6-7, etc.).

Although the unregenerate are incapable of doing any spiritual good, they are able to do civic good. God is the source also of that goodness and their virtue (2 Kings 10:29-30, Luke 6:33, Rom. 2:14, etc.).

This summary is of interest, perhaps, more for what it omits than for what it states. There is no reference (in the first point summary) to the “free offer” of the gospel. It was that part of “common grace” which disturbed Hoeksema and Danhof most of all.

In an article, “Is Reunion Possible?” Dr. John H. Kromminga gives his own observations concerning the Protestant Reformed Churches:

In the ensuing years, the *Standard Bearer* has given a good deal of attention to Christian Reformed discussions on the doctrine of reprobation and somewhat less to a wide range of issues, such as biblical criticism, dancing, and the emergence of the Mid-America Reformed Seminary. With reference to the last-named, the editor expressed shock at this new seminary's association with the ideas of William Heyns, of whom Herman Hoeksema was a critic while a student at Calvin Seminary. The whole dreary process reflects two pertinent facts: that few Christian Reformed problems have escaped the attention of the *Standard Bearer* and that it is hard to find any Christian Reformed spokesman, of whatever stripe, who has a clear and proper grasp of the issues.

There is little satisfaction in conducting a review such as this. But the facts lie before us, and they are ominous regarding any possibility of reunion. The two churches are not only no closer than they were in 1924 or 1961, but they have moved and are moving farther apart. While the Christian Reformed Church has not explored the potential of the doctrine of com-



mon grace to its fullest extent, it is far along in a more positive address to the surrounding society than it was in 1924 and is not likely to abandon the gains made. The Protestant Reformed Churches have not only added many issues to the original dispute but derive much vitality from criticism of the Christian Reformed Church. Repentance for some past mistakes might be possible from either side, but the central issue is not about to be resolved or compromised.

There certainly are reasons to desire reunion. Believers give the world a confusing witness when they are so close in many respects and yet so divided ecclesiastically. Some observers merely find this cleavage hard to explain to the casual inquirer. Others find it difficult to justify in an age when the antithesis between faith and unbelief is as deep as ever and the church should present a united front against its real adversaries. Still others find it hard to endure, particularly when families are unable to meet peacefully together except in a conspiracy of silence.

I would therefore welcome the demonstration that my analysis is wrong. But in all honesty I cannot see that the record supports any hope whatsoever for reunion.

The same issue contains a very favorable book review of the latest book of the Rev. George C. Lubbers, "The Glory of the True Tabernacle." The reviewer writes:

Lubbers' commentary on Hebrews is a careful and comprehensive exposition of one of the New Testament's more difficult books. He identifies perceptively the primary theme as the glory of the new tabernacle. Although it is evident that he is acquainted with the original languages and makes use of scholarly tools, his reliance on them is never obtrusive.

The careful exegesis of relevant Old Testament passages quoted in Hebrews is a major contribution to this substantial work. A devotional theme is retained throughout, and the style is clear . . .

A helpful book for preachers and for lay readers who wish to understand this significant apostolic work better.

For those of our readers who might want their own copy of this issue of the *Banner*, send \$1.00 to: The Banner, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49560. Ask for the issue of February 4, 1985.

## BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

# Revelation — Christ's Victorious Return (2)

*Rev. J. Kortering*

Before considering an outline of this book, we should take note of two things. First, that the seals, trumpets, and vials mentioned in the book must not be interpreted to be historical sequence, as if the first seal introduces a series of historical events that are followed by events pictured in the trumpets, followed by events pictured in the vials. Rather, they are to be viewed as historical events running parallel. The seals, trumpets, and vials deal with events that began at the ascension of Christ and end in His personal return. The difference between them is the measure of intensity, or effect they have upon the world. The seals affect the earth by a tenth, the trumpets by a third, and the vials present total destruction. At any given period in history there may be seals broken, trumpets blown, and vials poured, but as the end approaches the total ef-

fect of the vials will be seen. Secondly, we must understand the time factor: "the things that must shortly come to pass," (1:1). The perspective is that of God's dealing with time. The next major event in God's calendar is the end of the world. And it will not be an interruption at the end, but will flow forth from all the events in history. Those things began to come to pass immediately after John wrote of them, and they are consummated at the end of time. Similarly, when Christ said, "Behold I come quickly" (22:12), He did not say I come immediately, rather quickly, with all due speed. The events of history are the means by which Christ will return.

## A BRIEF OUTLINE

1. Introduction (1:1-11). John received revelation from God (1:1). He bear record of it (1:2), and



announces blessings upon the readers (1:3). Greetings to the seven churches (1:4-8) come from the seven spirits and Jesus Christ the Faithful Witness (1:4-6). Behold He cometh and every eye shall see Him (1:7, 8).

2. The vision of the glorified Christ and John's task (1:9-20). John on the Isle of Patmos was in the Spirit on the Lord's day (1:9, 10). He is commanded to write the seven churches (1:11). He beholds the glorified Christ in the midst of the golden candlesticks (1:12-16). He expresses fear, but is encouraged by the Living Christ to write the things he has seen (1:17-20).

3. The letters to the seven churches (2:1-3:22). He writes to Ephesus that they had lost their first love and must repent and do the first works (2:1-7). To Smyrna — they were in the midst of tribulation and Christ exhorts them to be faithful unto death and receive the crown of life (2:8-11). To Pergamos — they lacked discipline and did not cast out those who held to the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans; they were to correct that (2:12-17). To Thyatira — they were given to mysticism by means of the woman Jezebel who taught them to experience the depths of Satan in order to enjoy grace; Christ said He would send judgment upon her and her followers and the church must triumph over her (2:18-29). To Sardis — they had a reputation of being a living (successful) church, but they were spiritually dead; they were to repent and overcome (3:1-6). To Philadelphia — they received an open door from Christ and were faithful in spreading the gospel (3:7-13). To Laodicea — they were neither cold nor hot, hence Christ said He would spew them out of His mouth; He stands at the church door calling those who are alive to receive Him (3:14-22).

4. The vision of God's throne (4:1-11). John was called to behold a throne in heaven; it reflected the glory of God (4:1-3; 5, 6). The twenty-four elders surround the throne (4:4). The four beasts adore God (4:6-9). The twenty-four elders join in praising the Lord (4:10, 11).

5. The vision of the book and its seals (5:1-6:17). Attention is directed to the book in the right hand of God (5:1). The question is raised, who is worthy to open the book? Silence indicates that no one is worthy, and John weeps. Only the Lamb as slain is worthy (5:2-7). All heaven responds with jubilation (5:8-14). The first seal is opened, a white horse (the gospel) rides forth conquering and to conquer (6:1, 2); the second seal is broken and a red horse rides, taking peace from the earth (6:3, 4); the third seal reveals a black horse, the rider of which has a balance in his hand and poverty and riches are described (6:5, 6); the fourth seal produces a pale

horse by which disease and death take one fourth of the earth's inhabitants (6:7, 8); the fifth seal shows the souls of the martyrs under the altar, crying for vengeance (6:9-11); and the sixth seal brings earthquakes and heavenly signs of judgment so that the great in the earth cry to the mountains to fall on them (6:12-17).

6. The vision of the sealing of the 144,000 (7:1-17). Increasing judgment is pictured as four winds (7:1). Before they are allowed to blow, the angels urge the sealing of God's people (7:2, 3). The number sealed is 12,000 from Juda, Reuben, Gad, Asar, Nephthalim, Manasses, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulon, Joseph, and Benjamin, totalling 144,000 (7:4-8). These same sealed ones are now pictured as a great number which no man could count, clothed in white robes before the throne in heaven (7:9). They join the four beasts, the twenty-four elders, and the angels, crying, "Salvation to our God and to the Lamb" (7:10-12). One elder asks the identity of this throng and John answers that they are those who came out of the great tribulation and are glorified in heaven, being delivered from all misery (7:13-17).

7. The vision of the seven trumpets (8:1-9:21). The seventh seal actually becomes seven trumpets (8:1). Silence in heaven represents the prayers of the saints that arise to God as they anticipate the coming of judgments (8:1-5). The first trumpet sounds and judgment is cast upon the earth; trees, and grass as a third part are burned (8:6, 7); the second trumpet brings fiery destruction to the inland waters and rivers (8:10, 11); the fourth trumpet brings destruction to a third part of the sun, moon, and stars, and terrible woe is pronounced (8:12-13); the fifth trumpet opens the bottomless pit, releasing locusts as scorpions to sting men, but not to kill them (9:1-12); the sixth trumpet releases the four angels which held back the hoards of men beyond the Euphrates. They come with power to kill and deceive and not repent (9:13-21).

8. The vision of the angel and the little book (10:1-11). A mighty angel comes from heaven, adorned in clouds and shining face, covered by a rainbow. He has in his hands a little book (10:1, 2). This book contains the remaining judgments that must still be brought to pass (10:17). Hence, John is commanded to take the book and eat it. It is sweet to his taste, but bitter in his belly (10:8-10). They represent the prophecies that John must yet bring to the people (10:11).

9. The vision of the two witnesses (11:1-19). John measures the temple, excluding the court which is for the gentiles (11:1, 2). Power is given to the two witnesses to prophesy for 1,260 days (11:3). They are the anointed servants of God and have



power to destroy the enemy with the word out of their mouth (11:4-6). The beast makes war with them and kills them, leaving their dead bodies upon the streets of Jerusalem for three and a half days (11:7, 8). The wicked celebrate the defeat of these witnesses (11:11-13). The seventh trumpet is blown and the kingdom of heaven is revealed in its victory as the temple of God that is in heaven (11:14-19).

10. The vision of the dragon and the woman (12:1-7). Satan is pictured as a red dragon who in the Old Testament days attempted to devour the man child as soon as the woman (the church) would bring Him forth (12:1-4). When Christ is born, He is caught up into heaven (12:5). The woman fled into the wilderness where God prepared a place for her (12:6). A reference is made to heaven where Michael and the dragon (Satan) fought. Satan was defeated and cast to the earth and his fallen angels with him (12:7-9). Heaven rejoices in the defeat of Satan, but the inhabitants of the earth and sea are warned of his great wrath (12:10-12). The dragon persecutes the woman who gave birth to the man child and she receives wings to flee into the wilderness. The serpent tries to drown her, but the earth swallows up the water and the dragon fights with her seed (12:13-17).

11. The vision of the anti-christ (13:1-18). A beast arises out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns with crowns upon each head. He is partly leopard, bear, and lion. The dragon (Satan) gives him power and authority (12:1, 2). One of his heads is wounded (12:3). The masses of people worship him even though he blasphemes God (12:4-6). He makes war upon the saints and persecutes them. This causes people everywhere to worship the beast

(12:7-10). A second beast arises out of the earth. He appears as a lamb with two horns, though he speaks as a dragon (12:11). This vision explains how the anti-christ succeeds in getting all men everywhere to worship the beast. He does wonders and miracles and pleases men (12:12, 13). In delight, the people make an image to the beast and give life to the image, so that all who do not worship the beast are exposed and killed (12:14, 15). He devises a mark on the right hand and forehead, so that without it one cannot buy or sell. His number is 666 (12:16-18).

12. The victory of the Lamb and the defeat of Babylon (14:1-20). The Lamb is presented as standing on a mount with 144,000 who had the Father's name on their forehead (14:1). All are singing a new song before the four beasts and the twenty-four elders (14:2, 3). They are described as virgins who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. They are without fault, and in their mouth is no guile (14:4, 5). An angel announces the everlasting gospel. All are to fear God and give Him glory (14:6, 7). Another angel announces the fall of Babylon (14:8). The third angel follows, announcing that all who have the mark of the beast shall drink the wrath of God and be tormented with fire and brimstone (14:9-12). Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; they shall rest from their labors and their works shall follow them (14:13). The Son of man is pictured on a cloud, having a sharp sickle (14:14). An angel calls to Him to thrust in the sickle and reap. He does that (14:15, 16). Another angel comes out of the temple and cries to Him to thrust in the sickle again. This time He gathers grapes in the winepress of God's wrath (14:17-20).

## THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

### For the Truth's Sake

*Rev. Ron Cammenga*

In the end, there is only one thing that matters in the life of a church or in the life of an individual. That one thing is that that church or individual has the truth. If a church has the truth, no matter how small it may be numerically, no matter how insigni-

ficant it may be in the eyes of men, no matter how it lacks resources and means, that church is great, and prosperous, and important. If a man has the truth, no matter how lowly his station in life, no matter how adverse the circumstances of his life,



he really has everything, and has every reason to rejoice and be glad.

How important is the truth! How we ought to value and cherish and be willing to give up every earthly thing, even our own life, as some have, for the sake of the truth! How miserable is that man, temporally and eternally, who is without the truth!

God Himself gives the truth this chief and primary place. Holy Scripture abounds with instruction in the importance and necessity of the truth. In I Timothy 3:15 the apostle Paul describes what the church is and what her calling is in the world. There the Apostle says that the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth." In Titus 1:1 Paul tells us the great aim of his gospel ministry. That aim was that through his ministry the elect of God might be brought to the acknowledging of the truth. We hear so much about love today; we're supposed to love everyone. In I Corinthians 13:6 Paul tells us about love: "Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." The importance of the truth comes out in Ephesians 6. In this passage the Apostle is busy describing the Christian armor which the believer must put on in order to stand against the wiles of the Devil. And what is the very first piece of that armor, the piece upon which every other piece of that armor depends? Verse 14: "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth."

This emphasis on the truth isn't found only in the writings of the apostle Paul. Jesus Himself emphasizes the importance of the truth for the Christian life in a passage like John 17:19, where He teaches that the believer is sanctified through the truth. The whole Christian life, our entire walk of sanctification, depends upon the truth. The apostle John writes in III John 4: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." Since the Apostle is God's Apostle, God Himself has no greater joy, this is His greatest joy, that His children walk in the truth.

Throughout history man's great sin is his rejection of God's truth. In Romans 1:18 and 25 Paul identifies the ungodly as those who hold the truth in unrighteousness, and who change the truth of God into the lie. The prophet Jeremiah points out Israel's chief sin, the sin for which God rejected the nation and caused her to be carried away into captivity, as her not being valiant for the truth (Jer. 9:3). Similarly, Isaiah laments in Isaiah 59:14, 15: "Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth." In II Thessalonians 2:10 the outstanding sin of reprobate men is that they receive not the love of the truth, and the Apostle goes on to say in verse 12 that they

shall all be damned who believe not the truth. Daniel, in Daniel 8:12, describes the coming Antichrist as the one who casteth down the truth to the ground. And Paul mentions as the outstanding sin of men in the last days their sin of not enduring sound doctrine, but turning away their ears from the truth (II Tim. 4:4).

How critical is the truth! Everything depends upon the truth! This is the line of demarcation among men, that which divides sharply and absolutely. Either a man knows and loves and adheres to and confesses the truth, or a man hates the truth, rejects the truth, and opposes himself to the truth. A third possibility there is not.

There is such a thing as truth. The truth exists and has objective reality. There are those today, as there have always been, who question and who deny the existence of truth. These men ask the same foolish question that Pontius Pilate asked of Jesus, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). These men claim that the truth cannot really and certainly be known by men. Men cannot know for certain whether there is such a thing as truth, whether truth exists. And if it does exist, at least men cannot know what the truth is and what are the contents of this truth. This is what we call "agnosticism" or "skepticism," something that has overrun the whole area of education today.

This skeptical attitude has also had its influence on the churches. The churches today are filled with this wickedness. That's plain from the low esteem that many in the churches have today for doctrine. That's plain from the people who view doctrine, truth, as something far too deep and irrelevant anyway for the ordinary Christian, and want only a gospel that tells them how to live a good life in the world.

This whole position is condemned by the Scriptures. There IS such a thing as truth. The truth exists and is real. And the truth can be known, and must be known by every believer.

This truth is revealed in Holy Scripture. The contents of the truth is the Holy Scripture. The Scripture reveals the truth to you and to me, and it is the truth in every book, in every chapter, in every verse, in every word. Jesus Himself says in John 17:17, "Thy word is truth." In Daniel 10:21 the Scriptures are referred to as the "Scriptures of truth." The Apostle writes in Colossians 1:5 of "the word of the truth of the gospel." The truth is all of the doctrine, the truth is all of the warnings, the truth is all of the history, the truth is all of the law and commandments of God in Christ contained in Holy Scripture.

This is why we can know and why we MUST



know the truth: God has revealed the truth in Holy Scripture. We're not left to wonder what the truth is. We're not in bondage to what this great man or that religious leader tells us is the truth. We're not left to our own opinion and we may not have our own opinion about what is the truth. God has made known the truth, and God has done that in Holy Scripture.

Because the truth is set forth in Holy Scripture, we stand so vehemently opposed today to those who deny the infallibility and trustworthiness of the Bible. What is happening as a result of this is that the truth is being taken away. The truth is taken away from God's people today by the many corrupt versions of the Bible that are peddled as Holy Scripture. The truth is denied by those who charge that there are errors and mistakes and inaccuracies, both in the history and in the doctrine of the Bible. Don't the people see what the outcome of all this will be? Don't they realize? Don't they see that what is being taken away from themselves and their children is the truth? And don't they see that if the truth of Holy Scripture is denied, God's people are completely at sea as regards the truth? Then where shall they turn for the truth? And who will give them the truth?

Having the truth carries with it certain definite responsibilities. First, the responsibility is to confess the truth. We must never minimize this aspect of our calling to have the truth. Especially the young people must take seriously this calling. They must confess the truth; they must confess Christ Who is the truth. We must not be silent about the truth; but openly and publicly we must confess that truth. In the particular calling and station in life in which God has set us, we must be a witness to His truth. We must never be ashamed of the truth.

Secondly, our calling to have the truth is the calling to live the truth. We must not only confess the truth, but we must live all of our life in harmony with the truth. The Apostle doesn't say in III John 4 that his greatest joy is that we know the truth. His greatest joy isn't even that we confess the truth. But his greatest joy is that we "Walk in truth." ALL of our walk must be in the sphere of the truth. Not the philosophy of men, not what the majority of the people are doing, not what my own feelings are inclined to, but the truth — this must be the standard of my behavior.

Thirdly, the calling to have the truth also carries with it the calling, both for the church and for the individual believer, to stand for the truth, to stand against and to oppose whatever is NOT the truth. Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is Himself the truth personally, did just this during His earthly ministry. He not only positively set forth the truth.

But He courageously defended that truth, condemned and exposed the lie. His stand for the truth was antithetical, as it always must be. Those who want only the positive aspect of the truth, who don't want to hear, for example, in the preaching the word of rebuke, warning, and condemnation, simply do not want the truth. Always the truth opposes the lie.

And finally, our calling to have the truth means that we must persevere in the truth. We can only do this by being members of a church that faithfully preaches and defends the truth. Church membership is of the utmost significance as regards this whole matter of the truth. This must determine our church membership. Not the personality of the preacher, not the size of the congregation, not the friendliness of the people, but the truth must determine our church membership. Where the truth is preached, and where that truth is further set forth in the sacraments and defended by Christian discipline, there I am called to be a member. I must be a member of the true church of Jesus Christ in the world. And that true church of Jesus Christ is found in the church that stands on the truth.

And then for no earthly reason may we withdraw ourselves from that true church. Not for the sake of a career, not for the sake of a boy-friend or a girl-friend, not for an education, not for any reason may we leave the church that preaches the truth. But we must remain where the truth is. This is why it is wrong, sinful, to leave a true church, such as our own is. God is the One Who commands us to have the truth by our membership in a church that preaches the truth. Since God requires this of us, it is simply wrong of us to leave and forsake that true church.

We must have the truth. We must have the truth for the truth's sake. We must have the truth for the sake of the salvation of ourselves and of our children. We must have the truth for the glory of the God Whose the truth is.

God grant that as churches and as individuals we continue to have and continue to walk in the truth. May God use us for a witness to His truth in all the world.

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## GUEST ARTICLE

# 1. Jesus Strengthened

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

*"There appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him." Luke 22:43*

**THE TEXT.** The first question here is whether the text is genuine or spurious. Some ancient authorities do not contain the verses 43 and 44. The New American Standard Version, the New International Version, and the Weiss Greek text call attention to this omission. The Nestle Greek text lists the authorities for the omission, basically on the authority of Manuscript (Codex) B. But these verses are supported by the Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, by Codices Aleph and D, the Caesarean Text, some Old Latin manuscripts, and by Justinus, Irenaeus, and Tischendorf. These latter authorities very definitely and absolutely place these verses within the text of holy Scripture as genuine. It is said that our text was omitted on dogmatical, not exegetical grounds, by the orthodox because heretics used it to deny Christ's deity. But Scripture teaches that Christ has both a divine and a human nature, and that the latter, wherever stressed in Scripture, in no wise denies the former. We are content to let the Bible speak for itself, whether for Christ's absolute deity, or for His true and complete humanity.

**THE INCIDENT.** This occurred immediately after the Lord's first prayer in Gethsemane (v. 42). He needed this strengthening, for as He continued even more earnestly in prayer He got into an agony of soul to the point of sweating as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. This He did "with strong crying and tears," His entire human nature shrinking from the horror of the Godforsakenness which was His Father's will for Him to endure. His supplications were heard as they were prayed from his godly fear (*apo tees eulabeias*, Heb. 5:7). In this way, the Father instantly replied to His fainting Son Who was suffering infinite sorrow (Matt. 26:38) in the place of His peo-

ple. True, He could have called to His own aid twelve legions of angels (Matt. 26:53), or He could have strengthened His weakened human nature by the power of His divine nature. But there is no need to argue against the biblical record of how it actually was done.

**THE APPEARANCE.** "There appeared an angel unto Him." The next question is whether this was only a subjective appearance, in the mind of Jesus, having no objective, visible manifestation. This would be docetic, in the sense that the angel was, or all angels are, fantasmal or apparitional, figment of the imagination. Angel appearances can be presented as real, historical, objective, and visible, and yet actually be spurious, as in the case of the accounts recorded in the Apocrypha and in certain Swedenborgian, Mormonite, and charismatic books. But this angel visibly and objectively appeared, just as one did to Zacharias, who with his natural senses saw him and received from him a rather lengthy audible message (Luke 1:11-22). This was no appearance *in a dream*, but just as objectively real as when the devil, a fallen angel, appeared to tempt the Lord, after which "angels came and ministered unto Him" (Matt. 4:11), a fulfillment of John 1:51.

**ANGELS TODAY?** Do angels appear today with messages and miracles? Is there today continued divine revelation in visions, voices from heaven, dreams, tongues, healings, appearances of God and Jesus? "Yes, definitely!" say the modern-day charismatics (Neo-Montanists), along with Roman Catholics, Christian Scientists, Mormons, "Children of God," Jehovah's Witnesses, and the "Moonies." A popular electronic charismatic club produces "witnesses" telling how Jesus suddenly appeared beside them in their car while driving along the highway, talked awhile, then as suddenly disappeared; or how they died, when an angel appeared



to their bodiless soul to say that it wasn't their time yet, and so brought them back to life from the dead. May we tolerate this sort of thing? Not for a moment! We have Moses and all the Scriptures. We must hear them. For "if one went unto them from the dead, they will not repent" (Luke 16:30). If they believe not the canonical Scriptures, "neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Why not? because the holy Scriptures alone have an incomparable sufficiency to be the only rule of faith and conduct (Belgic Confession, VII). "Nothing, at any time, is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men" to the whole counsel of God as contained in the holy Scripture (Westminster Confession, I, VI). The Scriptures alone teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man (Westminster Larger Catechism, Ans. 5). "The Word of God, . . . contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is *the only rule* to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy" God (Shorter Catechism, A. 2). Therefore, the true church takes the stand that no extra-biblical revelation is divine revelation.

**COME AND GET YOUR MIRACLE!** So cry the modern healers advertising their meetings. Thousands flock to these extravaganzas. They seek a big-name prophet. They want a special, personal revelation from God. They will not have a sermon based on a text from the Bible. They will not have preaching. They hope they can dream something, or hear a voice in the sky; then they think they have something. They prefer an angel who appears to tell them how to make a lot of money, rather than to have a humble, faithful (perhaps young) minister who breaks the bread of life to God's people. But in the Word of God purely preached right out of the Bible we have a more sure word of testimony than we ever could have in any of the modern sensational substitutions.

**A UNIQUE AGONY.** A liberalistic (or modernistic) humanizing of the gospel will speak of our own afflictions in which we, too, suffer our Gethsemanes. Refuse this sort of thing. You hear it from Jesse Jackson, who dresses up his political talks in shallow religious verbiage, telling us that the Blacks have had their Gethsemane, and their Crucifixion, but not yet their merited and long overdue Resurrection. However, that's coming! This is to make gospel grace common, for the Lord Jesus Christ trod the winepress entirely alone. Besides, it is extremely blasphemous, and God will not give His glory to another.

**HIS WEAKNESS.** The human physique, at its best, has its limitations: its infirmities (Belgic Confession, XVIII), its finitude, its relative weakness.

Think how the Lord experienced (1) fatigue (John 4:6), (2) sleep (Matt. 8:24) and (3) enervating hunger (Matt. 4:2, 11). Here, He had become extremely weak, for no less than a mighty angel was sent from heaven to strengthen Him, and angels are not sent on superfluous missions, nor does God do anything unnecessary. But here is mystery: the Creator (John 1:3) needing to be strengthened by one of His creatures! We ought not to cringe at the thought that the Son of God became so weakened as to need the divine means of angelic aid to strengthen Him. He was totally exhausted, mentally and spiritually, by the agony producing the terrible bloody sweat. Part of His prayer was, "Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death" (Ps. 22). He was tempted in all points like as we are, sin excepted; only, He suffered in the place of His people to redeem them from their sins. Christ's hellish agonies are absolutely unique.

**NOT DEROGATORY.** Why should the angel strengthening Him seem derogatory to His divinity? He was once a babe, and had to be strengthened and nourished from the womb and then from the breast of His mother. In infancy He was not only weak, but utterly helpless. The Mighty God veiled His omnipotence with the true humanity of infancy, childhood, boyhood, youth, and manhood. Because He got hungry, thirsty and tired, He had to be strengthened with bread, water, rest, and sleep. Will Arians, or other heretics, grasp this side of the truth to support their denial of Christ's deity? Let them; but Satan and his dupes are fools. On His human nature, Scripture says, "Jesus therefore being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well." On the divine side it says, "the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary." Angels must wonder at this, but there is more about Him at which to wonder. He was strengthened by the angel in Gethsemane lest He die; for there He nearly did die (Matt. 26:53). But He had to die on the cross. There He in weakness gave up His life. That completes the proof of His true humanity. Yet at the same time He was and is "the true God and the Eternal Life." Why did He become so weak? To make us, His weak ones, as strong as David, as strong as the Angel of God!

**HIS STRENGTHENING.** "There appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him." How could an angel strengthen Him? If we mean by that, how is that possible, we ought to understand that just one angel alone is mighty (Psalm 103:20), strong enough to shut the mouths of lions (Dan. 6:22), strong enough to strengthen any human being (and Christ was and is a human being without being a human person). Daniel had become so weak that there was no strength in him,



yet an angel strengthened him, making him strong (Dan. 10:13-19; 11:1; cp. 8:16-18, Gabriel = "God is my strength."). Perhaps we are unable to answer this "how." But at least we have shown the angels

can do this and actually have much experience in doing it. Let all the angels of God fall down in awe, wonder, and worship of this blood-red Son of God!

## QUESTION BOX

# Ignorance Winked At

Rev. C. Hanko

A reader writes:

"Acts 17:30: 'And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.' Does this mean that the heathen before Christ were excused and will be saved?"

As our reader obviously realizes, it would be contrary to the Scriptures to maintain that ignorance is an excuse to sin. It is true, of course, that to sin knowingly is far worse than to sin in ignorance. But Scripture does teach that sin committed in ignorance is still sin in the sight of God. We need only refer to the highpriestly prayer of our Savior on the cross, where He prayed for His people who had joined in with the others in committing that atrocious deed of killing the Lord of Glory without realizing the import of their offence, pleading, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." See also Hebrews 2:1-4.

That still does not explain what Paul meant in his address to the Athenians, who professed to believe in "an unknown god," when he said that in times past God winked at the ignorance of the heathen.

The first question that arises is, what is meant by "this ignorance?" The second question is, what does it mean that God *winked at* this ignorance?

In general, we can answer both questions by saying that the last part of the text interprets the first part. That is, God left the heathen of the old dispensation outside of the preaching of the gospel, and beyond the call to repentance. Now in the new dispensation the gospel is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, wherever God in His good pleasure wills to send it, accompanied with the call to all nations to repent of their sins and turn to the living God. There is a much broader and clearer presentation of the gospel, with an added responsibility to those who reject it.

More specifically, what, then, is meant by the "ignorance" of the pagans of the old dispensation? This cannot possibly mean that they were entirely ignorant of God, that they did not know that *God is God*. Their idol worship was not, as some would have it, an attempt to seek out and to find the living God, a reaching out for salvation. This is blatantly contrary to the Scriptures, particularly to Romans 1.

In the last part of Romans 1 Paul writes, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." The reference is to the heathen outside of the sphere of the gospel, who made themselves guilty of ungodliness, i.e., living apart from God, and of unrighteousness, that is, transgression of God's holy law. Moreover, they held the truth in unrighteousness. The idea is that they knew the truth, yet they suppressed it in their wicked opposition to the living God.

We ask, how is it possible for "ignorant" pagans to suppress the truth? The answer is in verse 19, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, *for God hath shewed it unto them.*" Even those who never heard the preaching of the gospel nor had any acquaintance with the Scriptures still have a certain knowledge of God. They not only know that there is a god, but they know also that *God is God*, for God shows it unto them. They know, Paul goes on to say, "God's eternal power and godhead." Creation speaks to them of God. The daily happenings of God's providence are a testimony to them that God is the almighty, sovereign God. There is a testimony of the Holy Spirit which no one can escape that God must be served. Imagine those foolish Athenians, who had a number of false gods, yet to play it safe also had an altar to "an unknown god." Paul exposes their ignorance by showing them how ridiculous it is to



serve all sorts of gods, when there is only one God, Whom they profess to serve in their ignorance. If they truly confess this God, there is no place left for their idols, which are mere sham, for the true and living God is in the heavens, besides Whom there is and can be no other.

Thus, specifically, in the old dispensation God winked at this ignorance, overlooked it, as it were, ignored it. The preaching of the gospel did not go out to these pagan nations, but was limited to the narrow confines of national Israel. Only with rare exceptions, as was the case with Nineveh, did God reach out to proclaim His Word to the heathen, calling them to repentance. In Jerusalem was the temple. There were the sacrifices. In Palestine the prophets lived and spoke. Even Christ limited His ministry almost completely to the Jews in Palestine.

But that was no longer the case in Paul's time, for the new dispensation had come. After Pentecost the church becomes universal, and the gospel goes forth even to the ends of the earth, "commanding all men everywhere to repent."

Even that does not mean that God causes every

man, woman, and child upon the face of the earth to hear the gospel, offering them salvation upon sincere repentance. The gospel comes only where God in His good pleasure sends it. "Everywhere" in the text means exactly that, "wherever God in His sovereign good pleasure causes His Word to be preached." And the "all men" refers to all nations, tribes, and tongues, in distinction from the narrow confines of Israel.

Paul speaks of that preaching of the gospel as the call to repentance. He impresses upon the Athenians that they may have served idols in the past in ignorance. In that ignorance they also had an altar to an unknown God. But now they can no longer plead ignorance. The preaching of the Word has come to them as a savor of life unto life and a savor of death unto death. God proclaims to them His glorious salvation of eternal life through the resurrection of His dear Son Jesus Christ. Anyone who rejects that gospel by refusing to repent from his idolatry and all his sins only proves the hardness of his heart and deserves a greater condemnation. Woe to those who reject so great a salvation!

## News From Our Churches

February 15, 1985

Rev. Slopsema has received the call to Lynden Church in Washington from a trio that included Rev. M. Joostens and Rev. R. Hanko. Prof. R. Decker declined the call from Hull Church in Iowa. Edgerton Church in Minnesota has formed a trio: Rev. M. De Vries, Rev. D. Engelsma, and Prof. H. Hanko. Rev. D. Kuiper, at the request of Hope Church's consistory (Walker), has agreed to teach in place of Rev. Veldman who plans, D.V., an extended stay in Lynden, Washington. Rev. Kuiper will be teaching two Monday evening catechism classes. Rev. Kuiper has also been busy preaching in our various churches from time to time.

Our brethren in Pennsylvania have asked and received the permission of the consistory of Covenant Church in Wyckoff, New Jersey to change their name to Covenant Protestant Reformed Mission Church. The main reason for the name change is that they are no longer meeting in Bluebell, but in Lower Providence, PA.

Cassette tapes of the series of sermons in Northern Ireland by Prof. Hanko and Rev. D. Engelsma on the Covenant of Grace are now available. The series includes "The Idea of the Covenant" (Psalm 25); "Christ, the Mediator of the Covenant" (Heb. 9:15); "The Covenant and the Fall" (Rom. 5:19-21);

"The Heirs of the Covenant" (Rom. 9:6-8); "The Covenant and the Jews" (Rom. 11); "Our Part in the Covenant" (II Cor. 7:1); and "The Covenant Home" (Psalm 128). The set of tapes costs \$10. Write or call: Mr. Clare Haveman, 1695 S. Maple, Zeeland, MI 49464. Telephone: 616-772-2808.

The Consistory of Southwest Church in Michigan has revised the procedure for admittance to the Lord's Table for members of other Protestant Reformed Churches as follows: All those who wish to partake of the Lord's Supper with us shall personally or in writing confirm to the Council that they are members in good standing of a Protestant Reformed Church. Requests may be made at a regular Council meeting or to the Council before the worship service.

After much waiting and government bureaucracy, Rev. Bruinsma has received his work permit for one year and his automobile. It was much in his favor to be able to take care of these things personally on the Island. He writes, "The news concerning our churches here is very favorable." A Classis meeting was held in Jamaica on January 5 to form several committees. One of these committees is to see to the beginning and forthcoming of a



Theological School under the instruction of Rev. Bruinsma. The ministers and elders are showing a great deal of interest in this possibility. Another committee will take up the work of attempting to incorporate the churches in Jamaica. There is a good working relationship between the ministers on the Island.

Rev. Joostens and his family visited the Bruinsmas in December. Rev. Joostens' daughter, Faith, wrote in a report on the trip: "Sunday morning we drove up to Cave Mountain. We took our rented brown jalopy up as far as you can go . . . Then we hiked up the mountain to the Church. Rev. Bruinsma and Mandy stayed at home because his foot was too sore to hike . . . The church building was in terrible shape, but we had a nice sermon by Dad and heard some Jamaican songs and choruses sung by the congregation."

The Building Committee of First Church in Grand Rapids, MI reports that progress of the construction is somewhat uncertain because of the winter weather and because of the need to wait for manufacture of some special products. At this time, delivery of four large, wooden arches for the sanc-

tuary is scheduled for the week of February 11. After they are erected, the roof can be put on.

Rev. Houck writes, "With much joy we have witnessed the Lord's use of our labors to instruct the members of our mission group in the Truth . . . Although no new members have been added to our group yet, we are working with many who are interested in the Reformed Faith . . . Many new opportunities have been given to us by the Lord so that we have much work to do."

The new clerk of First Church is Mr. Ted Looyenga, 1708 Radcliff, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506. Telephone 616-949-1914.

DH

### IN LOVING MEMORY

On December 12, 1984, it pleased our Heavenly Father to take unto Himself our beloved husband, father and grandfather, LEWIS J. BRUINSMA, at the age of 54 years. We rejoice that he is in glory with his Lord and we pray that Jehovah, our covenant God will uphold us by His grace and give us the peace that passeth all understanding.

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

Mrs. Lewis Bruinsma  
Don and Jann Bruinsma  
Debbie and Paul De Young  
Douglas Bruinsma

Duane Bruinsma  
Grandchildren — Daniel, Jennifer  
and Stefanie Bruinsma

South Holland, Illinois

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Society of the Doon, Iowa congregation expresses its sincere sympathy to Mrs. Maryann Aardema and her family in the death of her mother, MRS. HENRIETTA MANTEL.

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in Whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." (Psalm 18:2)

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Study Society of the SouthEast Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to our fellow members, Mr. and Mrs. Sid Vander Wal in the recent death of her father, MR. PETER VOGEL. May our Lord comfort the family through His Word.

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

Rev. C. Haak, Pres.  
Mrs. D. Hauck, Sec'y.

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The South Holland Ladies Society expresses its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Elaine Holleman, in the death of her father, MR. JAMES WIERS.

May she be upheld by God's grace and comforted with His Word as found in II Corinthians 5:1 — "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Rev. David Engelsma, Pres.  
Mrs. Kathy Vander Meulen, Sec'y.

### CALL TO ASPIRANTS TO THE MINISTRY

All young men desiring to begin studies for the 1985-86 academic year in the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches should make application at the March 21, 1985 meeting of the Theological School Committee.

Pre-Seminary Students:

A transcript of grades from high school and college (if any), a letter of testimony from the student's pastor or consistory, and a certificate of health from a reputable physician must accompany the application.

Seminary Students:

A testimonial from the student's consistory that he is a member in full communion, sound in faith and upright in walk, a certificate of health from a reputable physician, and high school and college transcripts must accompany the application. All applicants to the seminary department must have completed the equivalent of a four-year college education (125 semester hours) and must meet the course requirements for entrance to the seminary department. These entrance requirements are listed in the seminary catalog available from the school.

All seminary department applicants must appear before the theological School Committee for interview before admission is granted. In the event that a student can not appear at the March 21st meeting, notification of this fact along with a suggested interview date must be given to the secretary of the Theological School Committee before this meeting.

All correspondence should be directed to the Theological School Committee, 4949 Ivanrest Ave., S.W., Grandville, Michigan 49418.

Jon Huisken, Secretary