

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

In the great Day of days we shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ to carry away the deeds done in the body, according to that which we have done, whether good or evil. In that Day all that is of ourselves will be burned away like straw and stubble. All that remains will be only Christ's work wrought in and through us by a living faith in Him!

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THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

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

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.

Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

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

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

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

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

MEDITATION

Good Works

Rev. C. Hanko

Ques. 91 But what are good works?

Ans. Only those which proceed from a true faith, are performed according to the law of God, and to his glory; and not such as are founded on our imagination, or the institutions of men. Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 33.

The rich young ruler came to Jesus with the anxious question, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?"

Jesus first reminds him that he should not carelessly use the word "good," since there is none good but God. If Jesus is indeed the Good Master,

He is sent of God. That the young ruler should understand at the outset.

Then our Lord refers him to the ten commandments, particularly to the second table of the law. One can hear the ring of disappointment in his voice when he remarks that this is no different from what he had been taught by the scribes since he was a child. These commands he had scrupulously kept according to the letter of the law all his life. Yet this had not given him the sorely needed peace of heart, the assurance of eternal life.

Thereupon Jesus tells him of the basic principle of the law, which is to love God above all, by saying, "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me" (Matt. 19:16-22).

The young ruler went away sorrowing, as he pondered the lesson in his heart, that salvation is by grace through faith, all works excluded. As all Scripture teaches us: By the works of the law no man is justified before God. The just shall live by faith!

This our fathers understood very clearly as they point out to us in this Lord's Day that good works have their source in faith, have their perfect standard in the law, and have their one soul purpose in the glory of God! Such works are good in the sight of the living God, since of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things! To Him the glory!

Proceeding from a True Faith.

This saying is hard, who can believe it?

Ever since the fall in paradise man has been trying to merit his salvation by his own works. Cain presented God with the crops of his field and resented the fact that God rejected them. Carnal Israel boasted in themselves, saying, "The people of the Lord are we." How many do exactly that same thing in our day!

The Pharisees enjoyed telling God of all their virtues and good works, looking down with contempt upon others who were less worthy than they.

All exponents of men's free will, or of the good that sinners do, or who put their trust in their own works must necessarily say with the rich young ruler, "All these things have I kept, yet assurance of faith I lack!"

For all that is not of faith is sin!

Every desire that arises within me, every thought that flashes through my mind, every word I utter, every move I make or deed that I perform, if not rooted in faith, God brands as sin!

Well may we ask: Who, then, can be saved?

The answer: Those who are engrafted into Christ

and united with Him by the powerful bond of living faith, for both the ability to believe and the activity of faith are from the Fountain of life, Christ Jesus!

We are new creatures in Christ. Christ by His Spirit has implanted into our hearts His resurrection life. We live, yet no more we, for Christ now lives in and through us. From this must follow that all the good we do is Christ's work of grace in us. Apart from Christ we can do no good. Yet through faith in Him we can do all things, since He empowers us!

We are members of His body. We no longer function as individuals, but as members of Christ, some as eyes, some as ears, some as hands or feet, or possibly a mere finger, or less. Each member serves its purpose as a part of the body, and for the welfare of the body! Our span of life, our gifts and talents, our possessions, our place in the family, or in the congregation, all that we have and all that we are is not ours, but is God's gift entrusted to us as stewards of His house to be used by us as His peculiar possession, the heirs of His salvation!

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Christ claims our all as we live by faith and not by sight!

In the great Day of days we shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ to carry away the deeds done in the body, according to that which we have done, whether good or evil. In that Day all that is of ourselves will be burned away like straw and stubble. All that remains will be only Christ's work wrought in and through us by a living faith in Him!

According to God's Law.

We so readily set up our own standard of "good."

Anything that is of genuine quality, useful, or advantageous to others is good. But we have our own idea of what fits that definition and what does not.

We speak of a good farmer, or a good business man. Each may be well qualified for his work and may produce profitable results, even as a good baker bakes good bread. But the deciding question is, is he good in the sight of God? Does he carry away God's approval and blessing?

Glibly we talk of a good neighbor. We grant that he does not go to church, he will have nothing to do with religion, he uses profane language at times, but he is a very nice fellow, a good sport and a good golfing companion.

One hears much talk about love for the fellow man which is not rooted in the love of God. Whatever is done for the advantage of another is good. It is argued that it is perfectly proper, even good, to steal, to lie, to live with another sexually without

being married, to get a divorce when the marriage does not work out, or even to get an abortion, as long as the motive and intentions are good.

You and I become judges. We determine what is good according to our own standard. But who are we to judge?

God is God, not man! God determines the right and the wrong according to the perfect standard of His own righteous, sovereign Being. God Himself is the only standard of good, for He alone is good. Christ sums this up briefly in the great command: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Solomon brings the Book of Ecclesiastes to a close with these words: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

We must have God's law written upon our foreheads and upon our right hands, engraven upon the doorposts of our houses, ready at all times to apply it to our lives, to our families, whether we are sitting in our homes or walking by the way. This applies to every life-mate, parent, or child. There may be no double standard in our lives, as, for example, one for adults and another for teenagers. Scripture requires: Husbands, love your wives in submission to Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord. Parents, instruct your children both in word and deed in the fear of the Lord. Children, obey your parents in obedience to Christ.

The law of God is the straight and narrow way that leads us Home in glory! Anyone who departs from that way transgresses, wanders off, sins against God. There is no return except by a complete about face, a hearty repentance in true sorrow to walk humbly before our God in the way that He lays out for us.

That Word, which appears throughout the Scriptures, is at the same time the lamp before our feet and the light upon our pathway, leading us through this present dark night of sin and death to the eternal dawn. In God's light, by His Spirit in our hearts, we see the light. The Psalmist declares Thy law is in my heart! O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day! For it is joy to do Thy will!

To the Glory of God.

God alone is good. He is the God of infinite perfections, who lives His own blessed life of covenant fellowship within His own Being as triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He alone is the source of all that is good, the overflowing Fountain of every good and perfect gift in Christ Jesus.

In heaven the angels hide their faces in holy adoration, the saints bow in worship and praise. All the works of His hands declare His praises. For that His Name is near His wondrous works declare. And thou, my soul, bless thou Him above all!

Scripture reveals even greater wonders, as God makes Himself known to us as our heavenly Father who has redeemed us unto Himself by the precious blood of His dear Son Jesus Christ. By His Word and Spirit He creates in us a living faith, whereby we may know Him, love Him, and live in intimate communion of life with Him through our Savior, who is now our exalted Lord in the heavens.

We are taught to address God with that intimate name: Father! We are privileged to call on Him as our heavenly Father in Christ. As His children we learn to say, Hallow Thou Thy Name in us, through us, round about us! Thy kingdom come within us unto the final perfection of all the saints in Christ, our Lord! Thy will be done in all the works of Thy hands, no less in and by us. Feed us with the bread apportioned for us. Forgive all our transgressions, remove our guilty stain. Lead us not into temptation, but rather lead us ever onward to the perfection in glory!

For Thine is the kingdom. Thine the power. Thine the glory! Forever!

Editor's Notes

PRC of New Zealand

It gives me great pleasure to give my editorial space in this issue to the Rev. Rodney Miersma for his report of the institution of the infant Protestant

Reformed Church of New Zealand. If I may be permitted a personal word in this connection, I take this opportunity to extend to the new congregation warmest congratulations. "May the God of all

grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." (I Peter 5:10) All of you I know either through correspondence or personal contact, or both. Some of you, as Rev. Miersma indicates in his report, I have known for a good many years. I shared in your struggles. I think I can understand just a bit what an emotion-fraught occasion it must have been when at last you could begin to have a "normal"

church life once again.

* * * * *

Reformed Book Outlet

By the time this appears in print the new Reformed Book Outlet in Hudsonville should be open and thriving. Plans are to open for business on April 25. For any who might want to phone, the number is (616) 669-6730. The mailing address is: 3505 Kelly, Hudsonville, MI 49426.

GUEST EDITORIAL

The Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand

Rev. Rodney Miersma

It gives me great pleasure to be able to write this article under the above title. Such a title is possible because the Lord in His mercy and grace has blessed the preaching of His Word unto the organizing of the Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Wellington into an instituted church of Jesus Christ. It is our privilege to be able to share this joy with them, for the Lord has seen fit to use us as Protestant Reformed Churches in America as a means to bring this to pass.

Organizational services were conducted on the Lord's Day, March 17, 1985, during the morning worship service. The undersigned preached on Ephesians 2:20-22, emphasizing that they as an instituted church of Jesus Christ were a visible manifestation of the church invisible, the spiritual habitation of the living God as He dwells with His covenant people in Jesus Christ through the Spirit. Their strength, therefore, could only be found in the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ as its chief cornerstone, that is, in the Word of God as recorded and preached by the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being that Word, the revelation of the God of our salvation. The small flock was instructed that as a church this was the Word that they were commanded of God to preach, and that too, in all its purity. In addition, the officebearers which were to be elected

during that service were duty bound to carry out that mandate as officebearers of Christ.

After the sermon those who desired to become charter members of the church were asked to bring forward their membership papers which they had received from the churches which they had left. Five families, representing eighteen souls, came forward to have their names recorded as charter members of the Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand, a church which would stand on the



Meeting Place of the new Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand.

Word of God, a church which would hold high the Three Forms of Unity as her standard bearer, a church which would be governed by the principles of Scripture as set forth in the Church Order of the Great Synod of Dordrecht (1618-1619). Having received and examined the membership papers, they were declared to be organized officially as an instituted church of Christ. Thanksgiving was given to our covenant God for His faithfulness. These details are mentioned because we often wonder to ourselves and to each other what kind of churches are organized by our mission efforts. In that light it can be said that if it were not for the many miles of ocean between the Americas and New Zealand they would be heartily welcomed as a church within our denomination. For this we can be thankful to the Lord our God and repeat what was on the cover of the bulletin on that blessed day, "To God . . . Be glory!"

After the above organization the confessing male members proceeded with the election of officebearers which would comprise the session (consistory) of the church. Where churches are organized for the first time this is done by way of a free election which means that there is no nomination ahead of time, but that all confessing male members are eligible. Two elders and one deacon, thus elected, were then ordained into their respective offices.

The above described event was cause for joy and thanksgiving unto God. The significance of being a church was impressed upon the hearts of the little flock again that day during the evening service, at which time the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated. Some of the saints had not been able to partake of the Lord's Supper for fourteen years. One can not fully appreciate how much this means to one who has been deprived for so long. On March 31, the Lord willing, the sacrament of Baptism will also be administered.

As we look at the members of the flock and the history which stands behind their organization we can truly see that God does indeed gather His people from every nation, tongue, and tribe. Among these eighteen souls we find saints of Dutch, English, Irish, Scottish, and native New Zealand descent. Their church background is just as diverse, coming from Anglican, Brethren, Catholic, Presbyterian, and Reformed Churches.

How did we as Protestant Reformed Churches come into contact with these fellow saints? Let me brief you a little on the history. In the mid 1960s there was a certain Prof. Dr. Klaas Runia serving as professor in the Reformed Theological School in Geelong, Australia. In a paper called the *Trowel And Sword*, as well as in the class room, he began 1) to question the teachings of the Canons concerning



L to R: Mrs. Dilys Watson; Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Inskeep, Susanna and Jonathan; Mr. & Mrs. Bob van Herk and Joy; Mr. & Mrs. Anton Vooys and Tony; Mr. Bob Kane, Edwin and Brendan. (Not pictured: Jonathan, Elisabeth, Andrew, Lucy Watson).

the sovereign decree of God with respect to reprobation, 2) to question the historicity of beginning chapters of Genesis, and, 3) to teach that the authority of the Scriptures was qualified, not dependent on its infallibility. To review this in detail one can read issues of *The Standard Bearer* printed in 1970-1972. Concerned men in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand became alarmed, for their young men were being trained for the ministry in that school. Since they were denied access to the pages of the *Trowel And Sword* in which Dr. Runia was writing they formed the Reformed and Presbyterian Fellowship for the purpose of publishing a paper called the *Reformed Guardian*. This sounds very similar to the beginnings of our own RFPA and the publication of *The Standard Bearer*. Included in the membership of this Fellowship was W. van Rij (now of Christchurch OPC), B. van Herk and A. Vooys (now of the newly organized PRC of NZ), and A. van Echten (now of the Palmerston North PR Fellowship). The first three mentioned brought their concerns to the sessions of their respective churches. But the Reformed Churches of NZ did not stand up for the truth even at their Synod. Consequently the brethren were disciplined for voicing their objections to the heresy being taught, even to the extent that two were suspended from the office of elder. They now had no choice but to leave the Reformed Church of NZ. During this history, contact had been made with our churches through *The Standard Bearer* and Prof. H.C. Hoeksema. Little groups of families began to meet in homes to hear tapes from Hope Church, Walker. The immediate result was the formation of the Christchurch OPC in 1974 on the south island. In 1975 Prof. Hoeksema and Rev. C. Hanks made their Australian trip and visited



L to R: Elders A. Vooy and B. van Herk and Deacon R. Kane.

these men and others on both the north and south islands. As a result of this trip Bob Kane from Wellington, upon hearing a lecture by Prof. Hoeksema, began worshiping with the Wellington group. In Christchurch, plans were set in order for one of our ministers to help them.

Rev. R. Van Overloop and family were in Christchurch for the first part of 1978, with Rev. Heys and his wife coming in the end of 1978 and the beginning of 1979. Soon calls were extended for a minister-on-loan to Christchurch, but they refused to accept the man called. Prof. Hoeksema. Since then they have turned from us, and our efforts were directed to helping the saints on the north island.

The saints on the north island clearly wanted to

be Reformed in every sense of the word. Thus, they did not join with various church groups that courted them. They met in their homes listening to tapes from Hope Church, Walker, asking in 1981 permission to use the name Protestant Reformed in naming themselves the Prot. Ref. Fellowships of Wellington and Palmerston North. They also asked our churches for help. In 1982, at which time they began to meet in St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Rev. J. Heys came to help them for a period of seven months. He returned in 1983 for a similar period of time. In the fall of 1984 the Holland congregation, having sent its pastor emeritus for two seasons, now sent its pastor and family for seven months. It was in this latter stay that the fruit of our labors in the past years has manifested itself in the organization of this church of Christ.

In conclusion we may as a denomination extend to this little flock our warmest greetings as we share their joy with them. As expressed in the Holland congregation's greetings to the new congregation "We rejoice greatly that the Spirit of Christ has filled your hearts and brought you to this milestone. We are filled with joy that God has used our congregation, and more specifically our pastors, past and present, in a small way to accomplish His purpose. The comparatively slight sacrifice of our pastor's absence is far overshadowed by the blessedness we experience in this communion with the saints in a far land. May the God of all grace lead you all in the future as He has in the past."

FROM HOLY WRIT

Believing All the Scriptures

Rev. G. Lubbers

The Mystery Of The "Seventy Weeks" in Daniel 9 Chapter XIX

As we have said, this prayer of Daniel is truly a *historical* prayer. It is also very particular and unique. Daniel stands here praying at the crossroads of God's covenant dealings; he stands at the dawning of the morning of the day of Christ, the acceptable year of the LORD. Yes, it is really the cry for the

daybreak of the final fulfillment of God's promises, as they are all yea in Christ, and in Him Amen to the glory of God (II Cor. 1:20).

Daybreak, the light of God to shine in this benighted world in the face of Jesus Christ. Time for the people who sat in the darkness of the shadow of death to see a great light (Is. 9:2; Matt. 4:14-16). Forsoothe, what could all the types and shadows accomplish, yes, what did they accomplish toward

the finishing of the transgressions, making an end of sin?

Yes, watchman, what of the night?!

Watchman, there is no real sacrifice of animals; none of the burnt-offerings and sin-offerings can really take away one sin, nor can it cleanse the conscience (Heb. 8:6-8). God Himself finds fault with this entire typical and merely symbolical ministry in the worldly sanctuary. Did not the Holy Ghost proclaim clearly and loudly that the way into the most holy place was not made manifest yet (Heb. 9:8)?

Had not the best reformation which Hezekiah could institute to restore the Old Testament Pass-over really been of no avail? And must the same not also be said of the reformation of Josiah (II Chron. 31:2-21; II Chron. 34:3-17)? These two attempts could not and did not ward off the divinely destined destruction of the kingdom, nor did it prevent the sacking of Jerusalem and the temple by the Babylonian armies under Nebuchadnezzar. And what is so painfully true is that Satan knew the reason why these sacrifices were to no avail. Did not Satan point out the weakness and the sinfulness of the Old Testament priesthood, as represented by the high priest Joshua standing at the altar (Zech. 3:1)? It all cried for a better Priest, really a king priest, God's Servant, the BRANCH, Messiah. Yes, Satan and all his hosts knew it and they made war in heaven; Michael and his angels must war before God's throne in heaven with the Dragon and his angels.

Justice must be satisfied! Only then shall the heavens rejoice and they that dwell therein. Then shall all the angels of God sing: Glory to God in the highest, and peace among the men of God's good-pleasure! (Rev. 12:7-10). There must be a better covenant based upon better promise. There must be a complete and full end the transgression and sin! And it must be announced before all heavens, before all the demons in hell, before all the angels before God's throne, and before all the saints in the Ministry of reconciliation: "It is finished" (John 19:30; II Cor. 5:19-21).

Truly, if ever a man lived and experienced the utter failure of all salvation by the deeds of the law, for Israel as a people, it was the prophet Daniel. Even as Joseph's heart ever cleaved to the land of the promise, in Egypt, so Daniel's heart clung to the place of God's rest in Jerusalem, praying three times a day facing a city and a temple which were not, but which would one day be rebuilt; it would be the beautiful city of which Isaiah speaks when he says, "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires,

and I will make thy windows of agates and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders with pleasant stones, and all thy children shall be taught of the LORD, and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Is. 54:11-13).

Now we must keep sharply before our minds that Daniel prays this great prayer in this spiritual context, as a *prophet of God*, who by the Spirit of Christ is inquiring diligently and searching out the sufferings to come upon Christ and the glory to follow. In his prayer he is not at all interested in the realization merely of Israel in the earthly land of Canaan, but he is concerned about the sins, the backslidings and the great transgressions of Israel, which are such that they are an utter disregard of all that Moses and the prophets have spoken. They are mostly wilful sins of disobedience. They are such that the "curses" spoken of by Moses and predicted by him have been brought upon Israel in the just judgment of God.

And this explains the intensity of Daniel's prayers and supplications to the LORD, the God of heaven!

He prays according to the promised mercies of God spoken of by Moses in Leviticus 26:40-42: "If they confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers . . . if their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they accept the punishment of their iniquity — *then* will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember: and I will remember the land."

Truly Daniel prays a well-founded petition, based upon great and precious promises!

For *these* Daniel prays!

His prayer is, as it were, a storming of the gates of heaven. He asks and receives, he seeks and he finds, he knocks and it is opened to him. He is appealing to a merciful God, appealing to him to take reasons out of Himself to forgive and to cause his face to shine once more upon Jerusalem and the holy temple. He knows that the time has come on God's time table. The clock of God is about to strike the hour, the appointed time of God's salvation in Messiah, the Prince. We shall see more of this in subsequent chapters.

And Daniel may experience that God does not lie concerning His promised word through Moses in Leviticus 26:40-42. Heaven and earth may pass away, but every jot and tittle of God's word shall come to pass. God is faithful (in covenant faithfulness) Who has promised.

It is the hour of Daniel's prayer!

Before Daniel has finished his prayer, Gabriel comes to answer Daniel's prayer with the Divine

Disclosure and revelation concerning the fulfillment of the meaning of the "seventy years" of which Jeremiah spoke in chapter 25:11, 12 of his prophecy. Not only Jeremiah's prophecy is to be fulfilled, but the many prophecies which were being prophesied during the entire period, beginning with Isaiah. We see here the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:1, which is the keynote of all of the prophecies of Isaiah, as recorded in the chapters 40-66! For the very heart of all these prophecies we find in Isaiah 53. Here we read of Christ's suffering for our transgressions, of His being raised for our justification, and of His glorification in the redeemed saints.

The fulfillment of the promises, implied really in the seventy years of Captivity, are shown as fulfilled in the coming of Messiah. And this coming is symbolized in "seventy sevens," the realization of the covenant of God according to the full counsel of God.

When Daniel's prayer and supplications came before God in heaven, God heard the prayer of a righteous man which avails much. Fact is that, in this prayer, God hears the prayer of all His saints. Daniel's prayer is an intercessory prayer not merely for himself, but it is a prayer for Israel, for the holy city, Jerusalem and for the people of His choosing (Dan. 9:18, 19).

Daniel is a very godly man. He is called a man "of desires" as we have noticed.

We almost hear Gabriel say of Daniel what God says in the most absolute sense about His only begotten Son: in Him is all my good pleasure (Matt. 3:17). The endearment shown to Daniel is really: a man much beloved! He is a man, according to the Hebrew, "of desires" (Dan. 9:23; 10:19). He need therefore not fear, but may take courage that God has heard his prayer and will answer it.

And then we notice that also in this case God shows that He is able and willing to do far above all that Daniel can ask or think (Eph. 3:20, 21). God will do this for His great Name's sake. He cannot deny Himself. God is faithful to His own. And Daniel may rest assured.

GABRIEL THE MESSENGER FROM GOD'S THRONE (Dan. 9:20-23)

Daniel recognized this "man Gabriel." Truly, he was not a real man, flesh and blood, born from a woman. He was one of God's mighty angels, who came in the form of a man. It seems that Daniel sees him in a "vision." In Daniel 8:16 Gabriel also appears in a "vision." Daniel there saw a vision of the ram and of the rough goat, referring to world-powers, Medo-Persia and Greece.

Daniel recognized this angel as being Gabriel.

Now when we study the Scriptures, we notice that Gabriel is the one angel with the very special task of pointing out the fulfillment of our salvation in the Messiah, the Christ of God. Such was his task here in Daniel. First he must foretell and explain the history of the world-powers, the last Pan-Asiatic power, and the first Pan-European world-power, and Israel's place in this great unfolding of God's plan in world history, which is at bottom nothing but church history. It is the line of the coming of Christ, the birth of Christ as we read in Matthew 1:1-18. Secondly, Gabriel must unfold before the eyes of Daniel the central fulfillment of all God's promises in the death and resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ.

This truth of the Gospel-story here we must clearly see.

And, incidentally, we must not allow an exegetical juggling of dispensational-premillennialism to blind us for this very evident Gospel-content of the message of Gabriel to Daniel concerning the Mediatorial work of the Messiah of God, Who will be God's Son in our flesh.

We will attempt to show from careful exegesis that the entire meaning of the "seventy sevens" is that these cannot ever be correctly interpreted according to the "rule of faith," the infallible Scriptures, unless we see that the "last week," the "seventieth seven" is the Arch-Stone in the entire house of God. Those who refuse to see this in the symbolism of the "seventy sevens" reject the Stone laid in Sion, elect and precious, chosen of God. They fail to see the wonder-work of grace — and perish in their sins!

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ALL AROUND US

Was Adam a Neanderthal Man?

Rev. G. Van Baren

Some time ago we quoted parts of an article by Dr. Menninga found in the *Banner* of November 12, 1984. In that article, he expressed his conviction that the earth was very old — and that Adam was, perhaps, not created directly of the dust of the ground. Adam could well have been the fruit of evolution, perhaps a Neanderthal man. That article called forth letters of disagreement — and an issue of *Christian Renewal* (Mar. 4, 1985) containing several good articles in refutation of Menninga's position. One brief article quotes the late Dr. Abraham Kuyper in which he warns against the evil of evolution:

Hesitation in the face of evolution amounts to a betrayal of one's own convictions. Evolution is a new concept, a newly created faith which strives to encompass and dominate our entire lives. It has established itself in direct opposition to the Christian faith and seeks to establish its temple on the ruins of our Christian confession . . .

. . . In opposition to Nietzsche's law of evolution which proclaims that the strong must trample the weak, we cling to the teachings of Christ who seeks what is lost and shows compassion to those who are weak. In opposition to the mechanistic rootlessness of evolution, we affirm faith in God who has worked all things, and continued to work all things according to the counsel of His will. In opposition to so-called natural selection which seeks to establish the species but neglect the individual, we hold to Divine election which promises "a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it."

. . . I now consider it my calling to raise my voice against the even more subtle and deadly danger of evolution. It is a warning addressed not merely to people of Reformed persuasion, but to all those who walk on the holy ground of the Christian religion. I conclude by taking my stand where the Christian church on earth has always stood and will always stand by giving a reaffirmation, in the face of the false claims brought by evolution, of the first article of the Christian faith where we confess: "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

In another article in the same paper, Rev. John Hultink writes:

. . . The first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis are proving to be extremely problematic, if not downright embarrassing, for many Christians in the twentieth century. Especially those with a higher education suffer acute embarrassment when asked to state their views of Genesis 1-11. On the one hand, they do not want to treat the biblical revelation of the origin of the universe lightly, but on the other hand, they feel obligated to defend the theories of unbelieving scientists. For many Christians today, God's revelation in the Bible contradicts God's revelation in His creation. So they belittle the biblical account of creation or dismiss it as "time-bound." Unless the Christian community extricates itself from this morass, its distinctive Christian voice will be completely swallowed up by the godless views advocated by non-Christians.

History has convincingly demonstrated that compromise in the face of evolutionism will ultimately result in the irrelevance of Christianity. And how could it be otherwise? One would have hoped that by now reformed Christians in North America would have learned this lesson from the liberal professors in The Netherlands.

H.M. Kuitert, professor of ethics at the Free University of Amsterdam, has no difficulty with the problem, "How are we to understand the biblical revelation about Adam and Eve?" Kuitert simply dismisses the belief in Adam and Eve as historical persons. Adam and Eve never existed. The story of creation, as well as the story of early civilization recorded in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, were never meant to be taken literally, Kuitert argues . . .

When Kuitert first published his unscriptural ideas, he cautioned that the *core* of the Christian faith must remain intact . . . He emphasized that theologians should not be permitted to question the biblical teachings about the resurrection. The resurrection was not to be viewed as part of the time-bound baggage of Scripture that could be discarded. Kuitert considered the resurrection essential to the Christian faith. That is, until he changed his mind a few years later. Within a few short years he indicated that there were at least

ten different ways, all of them acceptable, in which one could believe in the resurrection of Jesus . . . And so it came to pass that for Kuitert the resurrection was no longer essential to the Christian faith . . .

The first step that Kuitert took upon this perilous journey was to discard the first eleven chapters of Genesis as part of God's divine revelation. Since God's Word disagreed with some of the theories posited by evolutionists, Kuitert chose to discard God's Word. Once he began this process, it was only a matter of time before the cancer of his unbelief ate away at all the essentials of the Christian faith, and he was left with only the carcass of his own pitiful ideas.

It is therefore all the more remarkable that no less than three professors at Calvin College have decided to set out on an equally perilous journey. Davis A. Young, Clarence Menninga and George Marsden no longer know what to do with the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis. Their embarrassment is everywhere evident from the articles they write and the speeches they give. Although some lip service is still being paid to the book of Genesis, their articles make it quite clear that their evolutionistic thinking takes precedent. Some of their published statements are so contradictory that one is inclined to dismiss them as incongruous and dishonest. But this doesn't make their views any less dangerous to impressionable school teachers who sit in their classes year after year. There is every reason to believe that if the Christian community travels the path chosen by these three professors, it will only be a question of time before we all arrive at Kuitert's destination.

One would at least expect that if a Christian academic teaching at a Christian institution of higher learning is going to treat the biblical account of the creation of the universe so lightly, he would do so on the basis of compelling and irrefutable evidence. One would also think that if such compelling evidence supporting the evolutionistic origin of the universe is so readily and convincingly available, it would be shared freely with the entire Christian community. But this is not the case . . .

Why is it, if, as it is contended, that man has lived on the earth for fifty thousand or possibly two million years, that there are no fossil remains to support this view? And how does one account for the continued popularity of the theory of evolution in some quarters when there are enough missing links in this theory to forge a chain and wrap it around the earth? Why is it that in the face of insurmountable contradictions, Christian scholars at Calvin College continue to insist not only on advocating evolutionistic views, but on placing God in charge of this highly dubious enterprise by calling themselves *theistic* evolutionists? . . .

Another writer, Dr. John Byl, comments about the assertions of Menninga and others:

. . . There are many possible theoretical interpretations of the present data: we can devise explanations in terms of constant laws, varying laws, miracles, catastrophic collisions with comets, etc. The problem

is that theories about the past can *not* be logically derived from the data. Rather, they are primarily the product of a scientist's creative imagination. Theories are not so much given to us by nature, as imposed by us on nature. As such, our choice of theories is heavily dependent on our philosophical biases.

Recently there has been considerable debate between two competing interpretations of the geological data. On the one hand, secular geology operates under the central thesis that all the data can be explained in terms of natural, evolutionary processes. On the other hand, creationists work on the premises of a young-earth, global-Flood, and the possibility of miracles. The former is ultimately based on non-theistic materialism; the latter on the traditional reading of Scripture.

Both strive to explain all things in terms of their own central thesis, fitting all the data into a preconceived mold. In so doing they must devise and apply secondary theories regarding specific geological mechanisms and processes. But, due to the subjective nature of theorizing, both sides are free to choose only those theories that are consistent with their own central thesis.

When Menninga and Young detect deficiencies in creationist explanations this does not falsify creationism, as they assert. For the fault can always be attributed to inadequate secondary theories. The creationists can always remove such shortcomings by making suitable adjustments to these theories. For both evolutionists and creationists their central thesis can never be scientifically either proven or disproven. It is a necessary presupposition that is chosen on the basis of prior philosophical commitments.

. . . Menninga and Young appear to be blissfully unaware of the deeper epistemological issues.

So the debate about creation vs. evolution continues — but, sad to say, it now exists *within* the churches. As some of the above writers pointed out, Kuitert in the Netherlands began his pilgrimage toward open unbelief just as do Menninga and others today. In the Netherlands nothing was done about Kuitert (I understand that he is still a member in good standing in the church and continues to teach); but also here in this land, there appears to be nothing done about professors who teach a so-called *theistic* evolution.

Yet even among some within educated circles of unbelievers, doubt seems to be increasing about the validity of the theory of evolution. One unbelieving scientist is said to have declared that man could as likely be the result of an evolutionary process as a tornado, sweeping through a junk-yard, could form a 747 jet-liner.

How beautiful, then, is the testimony of Scripture: "By *faith* we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of the Lord."

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

The Missionary a Slave to All (1)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

It is our purpose to expound I Corinthians 9:19-22 in this and succeeding articles. We are convinced that this passage has much to teach concerning mission work. The passage speaks of the proper attitude a missionary must have towards himself, towards his work, and towards those to whom he preaches the gospel. It deals with questions such as the following: 1) What is the proper motive behind missionary preaching? 2) How ought the missionary to conduct himself in relation to those to whom he preaches? 3) What ought to be the missionary's purpose in preaching the gospel? 4) In what relationship does the missionary stand to those to whom he preaches?

The passage records the following confession of the inspired apostle Paul: "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."

In order to acquire an understanding of what this passage means and how it applies to missionaries and mission work we shall have to pay attention to the context in which it occurs. In chapter eight the Apostle had admonished the stronger brothers to take care lest their liberty become a stumbling block to the weaker brothers (I Cor. 8:9). In chapter nine Paul demonstrates how he himself had always acted on this principle. He was an Apostle and, therefore, possessed all the rights of an Apostle. He had seen Christ, i.e., he had been confronted and called by the resurrected Christ. His divine mission as an Apostle, at least among the Corinthians, was

beyond dispute. They were "his work in the Lord" and "the seal of his apostleship" (vss. 1-3). Because he was an Apostle, Paul had the same right (the word "power" which occurs repeatedly in this chapter ought to be translated, "right or authority") to be supported and to have his family supported, had he chosen to marry, as did Peter or any other Apostle (vss. 4-6). This right to adequate support from those to whom he preaches the Apostle proves in the following verses. The laborer is worthy of his hire is the principle asserted in verse seven. This principle, furthermore, is taught in the Old Testament Scripture, even with application to oxen used to tread out the corn (vss. 8-10). The Apostle argues that if they have sown spiritual things unto the Corinthians then surely they have the right to carnal (material support) things from the people of God (vs. 11). Besides, other of their teachers possessed this right (vs. 12). Those who served in the temple in the old dispensation were supported by the temple (vs. 13). Christ ordained that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel (vs. 14).

But the Apostle chose not to receive this support from the church. He did this so that no one could accuse him of abusing his rights and privileges as an Apostle. The gospel which he preaches is "without charge." He preaches not for money but out of divine necessity. "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel," he declares. God called him to preach; God laid this necessity upon him. His reward is that the gospel which he preaches is without charge. He gives offense to no man. No one can question his motives in preaching the gospel (vss. 15-18).

This was not, however, the only case in which Paul abstained from exercising his rights as an Apostle. He was all things to all men that he might gain the more (vss. 19-23). This kind of self-denial the ungodly exercised to gain a corruptible crown. Ought not the Christian do as much to gain the spiritual crown? Without self-denial and strenuous effort the prize of their high calling in Christ could

never be attained! (vss. 24-27).

In verse nineteen the inspired Apostle confesses, "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more." Paul is saying here that he is free from all men, i.e., he is under obligation to no man. He is free from the support of those to whom he preaches. No one can question his motives and he gives offense to no one. Even though that be true, the Apostle makes himself a servant of all men. The word translated "servant" by the King James really means "slave." Paul makes himself a slave to all. A bond-servant or slave in New Testament times was in total subjection to his master. The slave lacked all the rights and privileges of the free. He had no property rights; not even his children belonged to him. He was subject completely to the will of his master and at his mercy. The Apostle confesses to be a slave to all men. What he means is that he stands totally in the service of the gospel. As an Apostle, Paul was the slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was called and qualified to be an Apostle by the risen Lord Christ. He was completely subject to the will of God in Christ. Christ was his master! Totally dependent upon Christ was the Apostle. Because that was true he makes himself a slave to those to whom he preaches the gospel. He is totally in the service of those to whom he preaches. The Apostle literally *spent* his entire life in the service of God and His cause in Christ. He was a full-time preacher of the gospel.

This ought to be the attitude of every missionary and, for that matter, preacher of the gospel. Preachers, missionaries are slaves of God in Christ. They are lawfully called by God through His church. They are qualified by God through His Spirit and Word. In a real, even unique sense, the preacher's life is not his own. He belongs to God. He is subject to God's will in everything. The office of the ministry of the Word, whether pastoral or missionary, is not just another profession along with other professions such as medicine, law, or engineering. The minister is a slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. His sacred commission is, "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2). What the inspired Apostle commanded his spiritual son, Timothy, applies with equal force to all preachers: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed to thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Tim.

4:13-16). To this great, sacred calling the preacher must give his all! He must make everything in his life subservient to his calling to preach the Word of God. He must not regard the work of the ministry, whether pastoral or missionary, as a forty-hour per week job. He stands in God's service twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, for his entire life! His chief task is preaching for, "... how shall they hear without a preacher?" (cf. Rom. 10:13-15). And preaching is hard work! To be prepared to preach, the preacher must spend many, many hours per week "meditating on the things of God." He must give attendance to reading. He must wrestle with the Scriptures and prayerfully expound the Word of God. Only then is he able to proclaim the gospel as it applies to the lives of God's people.

Precisely because the preacher or missionary is a slave to God he must make himself a slave to those to whom he preaches. The preacher must follow the example of his Lord and Master Who took a towel and basin and knelt before His disciples and washed their dirty feet (cf. John 13:1-17). Only in this way can the preacher be truly "happy" (John 13:17). The preacher is not called to be served by those to whom he preaches. He is called to serve them. They do not exist for his sake but he for theirs. Cheerfully, willingly, with much patience and love and longsuffering must the preacher serve His Master by serving His people. He must stand totally in the service of the church and the cause of the gospel. He must conduct himself in relation to those to whom he preaches so as to make the gospel "without charge" (I Cor. 9:18). The preacher must not abuse his authority as an officebearer. This was the Apostle's confession and it must be that of every faithful preacher and missionary.

The Apostle expresses his purpose in making himself a slave to all men in these terms: "... that I might gain the more." This does not mean that Paul regarded himself as the one who did the gaining or saving of those to whom he preached. Salvation is by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8-10). The Apostle is only the instrument through whom God saves His elect in Christ. The idea is that by giving no offense and by making himself slave to all he gains the more. This principle certainly applies. If Paul's motives were suspect, if his hearers imagined that he preached for money or to enhance his own reputation, or if the Apostle in some way offended the brethren by his conduct, his effectiveness as a preacher would be greatly diminished if not destroyed completely.

Let God's servants in the ministry take these matters to heart. They must give no offense to their hearers. They must make themselves slaves to all

to whom they preach. They must fight the great sin of pride and put away all self-serving, selfish motives. They must give themselves wholly to the work. These are the kind of servants God is pleased to use to gather His elect out of the nations to the

praise of His Name. May God continue to call such men to the ministry of the Word and give them the grace to confess, "woe is me if I preach not the gospel" (I Cor. 9:16b).

(to be continued)

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Old Testament Introduction (1)

Rev. J. Kortering

Having completed the study of the New Testament books of the Bible, we now turn to the Old Testament for a brief analysis of each of the books, especially seeking to understand the unique place of each book within the collection of all sixty-six. In this article we begin by way of introduction to summarize a few of the unique features of the Old Testament Scriptures.

THE BIBLE DISPLAYS UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The Old Testament is made up of thirty-nine books which, joined with the twenty-seven of the New Testament, make up the total of sixty-six books of the Bible. The name Bible is derived from the word *byblus*, a reference to the reed by that name which was used extensively in making scrolls. Hence, the Greek word *biblos* became descriptive of the collection of the sacred writings known as The Books, The Bible.

The unifying principle of the whole of the Scriptures is that they are the revelation of the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ His Son. It bears repeating that God has chosen to save His people through the death of His own Son. The Bible sets forth the glory of that salvation in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Already in the beginning, we learn of the need for the covering of His blood because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, a sinful act which the righteousness of God punished with everlasting death. The whole human race was plunged into the condemnation of that death. The Old Testament is a distinctive contribution to the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. From the mother promise, "seed of the woman" in Genesis 3:15, to the closing promise of "the Sun of

righteousness" of Malachi 4:2, the good news is that God is a God of salvation in Christ His Son.

Keeping this in mind, we can understand the basic distinction between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word "testament" was popularized by the Latin church fathers. Testament is another word for covenant, the covenant which God establishes with His people in Christ. God laid down the basis for His loving favor, namely, His perfect righteousness. God made man righteous through creation. Man, however, turned to evil and chose sin. God could justly have cast the entire human race into the judgment of hell. Instead, He graciously saves His people through the promise of the coming of Jesus whose blood is the satisfaction for sin. The righteousness of Christ is the foundation for the covenant of God with His people. The difference between the old and new covenant is the administration of the good-news of this covenant. The old looks forward to the coming of Jesus Christ, the new explains His presence and work. We sometimes say, "The new is in the old contained, the old is in the new explained," or "The New Testament is enfolded in the Old and the Old is unfolded in the New." Both Testaments belong together as one whole.

We also conclude from this that the Old Testament is not a message limited to the Jews or for God's people confined to a certain period of time and of no use to the church today. Rather, God speaks eternal truth both in the Old and New Testaments. We are able to learn gospel truth as we follow the unfolding of the covenant in the Old Testament. By means of such history, and the

distinctiveness of the Hebrew language, God conveys to us today the message of hope and salvation. We profit greatly from the study of the Old Testament Scripture.

THE OLD TESTAMENT DIVINELY INSPIRED

In the midst of many attacks upon the Bible as God's Word, we do well to emphasize that we believe that the Old Testament is God's Word, come to us by inspiration. The Holy Spirit places this conviction within our hearts, so that we assume by faith that the Bible is God's Word. This controls our dealings with the Bible. We do not set out to prove that each book is inspired and reason from the Scriptures that it is such. We believe through the Holy Spirit's guidance in our hearts (see I Cor. 2:14, 15), and confess with the church of all ages (see Netherlands Confession Articles 3-7), that God wrote His own Word. We seek to instruct God's people in the importance of each book and how the Holy Spirit speaks to us distinctly in each one.

We make a distinction between revelation, inspiration, and illumination. *Revelation* describes the work of the Holy Spirit in which He conveyed to the authors the knowledge of the truth that He wanted them to write down. This revelation came in different forms, by direct speech from God, by dreams, through events themselves, etc. The authors of the Bible frequently acknowledged that the message they brought was from God, not man. Hence they used such expressions as, "Thus saith the Lord" (Ex. 4:22), and "Hear the word of the Lord" (Isa. 1:10). God often commanded them to write down His words (Jer. 30:1, 2). By *inspiration* we refer to that work of the Holy Spirit as He overruled the actual writing so that in the process the authors were able to write that revelation accurately. Here we see how God used the agency of men for this purpose. It is not correct to say that the Bible is the product of God and man, it is God's Word conveyed to us through living instruments. God planned the entire Bible from eternity, He planned who would be the authors and governed their lives that they would be exactly the men He wanted. At the proper time, He moved them to desire to write what He revealed to them. The Holy Spirit controlled their writing and used their own personality and vocabulary so that each contributed in his own individual way exactly as God wanted it. By *illumination* we refer to the Spirit's guidance of the readers of the Word that they receive it as the Word of God and believe and follow it.

Surely the Holy Scriptures' claim to be inspired includes the Old Testament. The classical passages for inspiration refer first of all to the Old Testament. The passage, "All scripture is given by in-

spiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16, 17) refers first of all to the Old Testament writings. Similarly, in II Peter 1:20, 21 we read, "Knowing this first that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." This, too, is first of all a reference to the prophecy of the Old Testament. The warning is given, "But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods even that prophet shall die" (Deut. 18:20). Hence, we read that the prophets often prefaced their words with such divine authorship, "The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel" (Ezekiel 1:3). Similarly, Moses wrote, "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord" (Exodus 24:4). Jesus recognized the authority of the Old Testament in different ways. He declared, "heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). And why? "And Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). Repeatedly Christ quoted from the Old Testament and thus yielded to its authority, "It is written" (see Matt. 4:4-10). We conclude that the authors of the Old Testament were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write their books.

THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

By the term "canon" we have in mind the final selection of each of the thirty-nine books as being part of the inspired collection. The term canon is derived from the Hebrew *qanah*, meaning reed or measuring rod. The books that measured up to the standards were included. We believe that the same Holy Spirit Who guided the authors to write, also guided the people of God in selecting the books He wanted in the completed Scripture. This included preserving the original writing long enough so that copies could be made of them, and guiding the church to recognize the true Scripture over against spurious writings. There were more writings than those included in the canon of the Old Testament. Examples: Book of the wars of the Lord (Numbers 21:14); The book of Jasher (Joshua 10:13); The Book of the acts of Solomon (I Kings 11:41); and the Book of Samuel and seer, the Book of Nathan the prophet, the Book of Gad the seer (I Chron. 29:29). There is a large group of books called the apocrypha, which our Netherlands Confession designates as worthy of reading for its history and instruction, but not to be considered inspired (see Art. 6).

If we would take our Hebrew Bible in hand and

follow the order of books given in the Massoretic test, we would discover that there are only twenty-four books. The "discrepancy" is easily explained, our KJV follows the division of the books and the order presented in the Septuagint Bible, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament Bible which was made around 250-160 B.C. The differences are as follows: Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah are divided into two books each. The minor prophets are divided into twelve books instead of being counted as one. This accounts for fifteen additional books. Hence the material content is exactly the same.

The Hebrew Bible also follows a different order. Not only does the student of Hebrew have to learn to open his Bible at the back and read from right to left, he has to be familiar with a different arrangement of the books. The Hebrew Bible is divided into three sections as follows: the first is the *law*: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. The second is titled the *Prophets*, first the former prophets including Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, then the later prophets, being further divid-

ed into major: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and minor: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. The third are called the *writings* and are divided into Poetical: Psalms, Proverbs, Job; the Five Rolls: Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentation, Ecclesiastes, Esther; and finally the Historical: Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

According to Unger in his *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament* the reason for the three-fold division is that the law is identical with our pentateuch, the prophets are former and latter in relation to the time period covered by each, the minor and major are determined by length. The writings are mixed in character by writers who had the prophetic gift but not the office. The rolls are called that because they were written on separate scrolls to facilitate reading at the feasts. The third section is unclassified mostly as historical. Note Chronicles is called Paralipomenon meaning "the remainder" in the Septuagint and in our Netherlands Confession, Art. 4.

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

The Nicene Creed

Rev. James Slopsema

Article 11 — *We look for the resurrection of the dead,*
Article 12 — *and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

The final two articles of the Nicene Creed speak of the final glory of the church. Two spiritual realities are mentioned here. Article 11 speaks of the final resurrection. Article 12 speaks of the life of the world to come. These two are inseparably connected. For the resurrection of the dead is a resurrection to the life of the world to come. And they both mean our final salvation.

In Article 11 the early church confessed her faith in the resurrection of the dead.

The Scriptures speak quite often of a bodily resurrection of the dead in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. In John 5:28, 29 Jesus speaks of a general resurrection of both the righteous and the

wicked. The resurrection of the righteous is called the resurrection of life, whereas the resurrection of the wicked is called the resurrection of damnation. The exact words of our Savior are, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." In general, the Scriptures concentrate on the resurrection of the righteous unto life. There are many beautiful passages which instruct us concerning this resurrection, such as Romans 8:11, I Corinthians 15, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, etc.

The reality of such a resurrection was denied in the history of the early church by the world of pagan religion and philosophy. The prevailing

thought of the pagan world was that all things physical and material, the human body included, are inherently evil. Hence, although a certain immortality of the soul was acknowledged, there was no room for a bodily resurrection. The body was considered to be the prison house of the soul. At death the soul was finally liberated from the body, never more to be brought back into the bondage of the body. At death the body was happily destroyed forever. It was quite evidently this thinking that Paul encountered in Athens on his second missionary journey. "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him (Paul). And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection" (Acts 17:18). Continuing through this chapter we find that the Athenians brought Paul to the Areopagus on Mars' hill to hear more of his doctrine. "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them" (vss. 32, 33).

A similar position concerning the inherent evil of all things material, and with that a denial of the resurrection, was also to be found with certain heretical groups cast out of the Christian church at this time. This was true for example of the Gnostics, as well as the Manicheans.

Over against all this the early church maintained and confessed the Biblical teaching of the resurrection of the dead.

There were some in the church who tended to spiritualize the resurrection of the dead. But the church as a whole maintained that the resurrection of the dead was a bodily resurrection. The early church recognized on the basis of Scripture that the material and physical are not inherently evil. Not just the soul but also the body has been redeemed by the blood of Christ. Through regeneration the body even becomes the temple of God. Understanding these things the early church readily accepted the teachings of the Scripture concerning a bodily resurrection of the dead in the day of Jesus' coming. She even recognized that the body received in the resurrection will not be a new creation but that each will receive in the resurrection his own proper body that was committed to the grave.

To this belief the early church gave expression in Article 11 of the Nicene Creed: "We look for the resurrection of the dead." Here reference is not to the resurrection in general but specifically to the resurrection of life unto eternal life and glory. This is evident from the next and concluding article of this creed, "and the life of the world to come."

The Nicene Creed speaks literally of the "age" to come. The Scriptures speak of the age that now is in distinction from the age which is to come, that is, eternity. In this last article the Nicene Creed speaks of the age to come which will be ushered in at Christ's appearing.

The early church fathers did not have so much to say concerning the life of the world to come. This is no doubt because the Scriptures do not give a very clear picture of what this life will be. The Scriptures tell us that this life is everlasting. They tell us that this life will consist of perfect fellowship with God, not marred by the sins of this present time. It will be a life without suffering and pain. But this life belongs to another age and a new creation. Hence, it belongs to that which eye has not seen, nor ear heard. Neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive. The Scriptures are content to assure us that this future life is glorious beyond our wildest expectations. Certainly the present sufferings which are necessary to prepare us for this life are not worthy to be compared to the glory and bliss of this life.

The Scriptures make the future glory a matter of faith. And the early church acknowledged this future glory as an object of her faith in the final article of the Nicene Creed: "(We look for) . . . the life of the world to come."

There are two related subjects that are not touched on specifically in the Nicene Creed but are very closely related to the subject at hand. It would be worth our while to look at these briefly.

The first subject deals with the ultimate fate of the ungodly and impenitent. In the early church three positions were held. There were those who taught the annihilation of all the wicked. In other words, the ungodly either at death or at the day of judgment are destroyed body and soul so that they simply cease to exist any more. Then there were those who maintained a final restoration of all men to holiness and happiness. In other words, the ungodly after this life will be given a second chance and will all ultimately be brought to repentance and salvation. Finally, there were those who taught the Biblical truth of everlasting punishment of the wicked in hell where according to body and soul they will come under the eternal wrath of God for sin. Those who held to this position were by far in the majority. And in due time this became the sole view of the church, until the rise of the heresy of universal salvation in the last few centuries.

The second related subject of interest deals with the state or condition of man's soul after death but before the final resurrection, which we have come to call the intermediate state.

At first there was little thought or discussion on this. This was due to the anticipation of a quick return of Jesus Christ from heaven. But as time went on and Christ did not come, the church began to consider this matter.

The ideas and teachings of the early church fathers on the intermediate state were very vague. They spoke of *hades* or *sheol*, terms which the Bible uses to describe the state of the dead. The church fathers taught that in *sheol* the righteous enjoy a measure of reward not equal to their future glory in heaven, and the wicked suffer a degree of punishment not equal to their future torment in hell. Some spoke of a purifying process that takes place for the righteous in *sheol*. Some have understood this to be the beginnings of the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory. However, this is not the case. The doctrine of purgatory teaches that the righteous must suffer after death to make payment for sins committed in this life. The doctrine of purgatory is a doctrine that arose out of the error of work-righteousness. This however was definitely not the teaching of the early church fathers. They taught rather that through some mystical process the soul was purified from the defilement of sin and thus prepared for the life in the world to come. They viewed the intermediate state as a place not for justification but sanctification. Finally, the church fathers also spoke of paradise, which is far above *sheol*. It was to paradise that Jesus ascended. Into paradise also enter the souls of the martyrs. Yet paradise is still not the final glory for God's people. Final glory is the life of the world to come.

For the final resurrection and the life of the world to come the early church looked. This she acknowledged in the final two articles of the Nicene Creed: "We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."

This is a very clear expression of the Christian hope. The Christian hope is a confident expectation and an intense longing for the final salvation to be revealed in the day of Jesus Christ. Those who live in hope live in the expectation that Christ will one day come from heaven to make all things new. They are confident of a final resurrection into

heavenly glory. They long for the life of the world to come. Their constant prayer is, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

The early Christian church was very strong in this hope. Their hope in the resurrection and future glory was no doubt strengthened by the persecution she had endured for the first three hundred years of her existence. There is nothing like persecution for Christ's sake to turn the eyes of the church to her future glory. How the early church looked for the life of the world to come! To this living hope she gave expression in these concluding articles of her creed.

What a fit conclusion to the early church's confession.

All the great doctrines of salvation revealed in Holy Writ find their climax in the resurrection unto glory. Jesus Christ was sent of the Father into the world, suffered and died, was raised again the third day, ascended into heaven for one purpose — that one day He might return and through the resurrection glorify His people in a new creation. What a glorious salvation God has for us in Christ!

The early church in the Nicene Creed set out to summarize the great doctrines of salvation. This she did very beautifully. And quite in harmony with the great gospel of salvation the early church climaxed her confession with the crowning doctrine of salvation, the resurrection of the dead unto the life of the world to come.

We have seen that the Nicene Creed was more than a simple statement of doctrine. It was a living confession that arose from the believing hearts of God's people. The truths of this confession were near and dear to the early church. Her members embraced them and cherished them. They fought for them and defended them. Many even died for them.

These truths led the saints to look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. May these same truths so live in our hearts that we too with the early church and the church of all ages look for the final resurrection and the life eternal!

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

GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH

The Sole Authority of the Word of God and Its Sufficiency

Rev. T. Miersma

The Reformed doctrine of the exclusive authority of Scripture as the only and all-sufficient rule of faith and life stood at the heart of the reformers' controversy with Rome. This truth Rome denied and continues to deny. This principle, along with the truth of justification by faith, formed the key doctrinal dispute by which the reformers stood or fell.

Rome, as we saw in the previous article, maintained that Scripture derived its authority from the church, set forth in the visible institute, centering in the clergy and the papacy. The church, that is the clergy of the church, were considered the successors of the apostles, and it is this succession of apostolic authority receiving the books of Scripture which also gave to Scripture its authority. Moreover, limiting the activity of the Spirit of truth to the clergy as the "teaching church," Rome also removed the Word of God from the hands of the people. In the light of this position, Rome denied to Scripture its sole and exclusive authority in the church.

Over against this false view, the reformers maintained that the source of Scripture's authority was to be found in Christ, Who gave His Word to the church by the apostles. To the reformers, therefore, Scripture as God's Word possessed divine authority in itself, and was itself truth and the sole standard of truth. That word necessarily stood above every word of man or tradition of men, and indeed above the apostles themselves. This principle they found in the Word of God itself. Thus our Belgic Confession of Faith, when it speaks concerning this in Article VII, quotes Galatians 1:8, "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." To come therefore preaching any other gospel than the gospel of Christ is to

pervert it (Galatians 1:7). Since, as the reformers reasoned, that gospel is set down in Scripture according to Scripture's own claim and testimony, every tradition and word of men must be tried by its standard. The apostle himself says that if he himself were to preach anything different, it was not to be received.

In the same light the reformers maintained that the Spirit of truth was not limited to the clergy alone, but was given unto the whole church. This internal and subjective principle of the source of Scripture's authority was rooted in the truth of the priesthood of all believers. Upon this principle of the believers' spiritual anointing to know and understand God's Word, the reformers restored the right and privilege of the people of God to interpret and understand God's Word themselves. Not only therefore did Scripture have sole authority over the church, but the ordinary believer could understand that Word and could test and prove all things in the light of that Word for himself. If any came teaching another gospel, not only *might* he reject it, but he *must* reject it, according to the very calling of his anointing set forth in I John 4:1, "Try the spirits whether they are of God"

This set Rome and the reformers utterly at odds with one another. Rome wanted to maintain alongside of Scripture the higher authority of the church and clergy, and, as a second word of God, the supposed oral and apostolic traditions of the church. According to this theory, the preaching and teaching of the apostles was contained not only in Scripture, but had been also kept and preserved in the church in oral form. It had also been written down in part in the writings of the church fathers.

Rome gave this oral tradition equal authority with Scripture. In it, moreover, were taught things which supplemented what was contained in Scrip-

ture and which they claimed were necessary also to interpret Scripture. Scripture alone was insufficient. The traditions and practices of the church of long standing were all supposedly based on this apostolic tradition, and because of their antiquity were to be received as binding upon the church. Moreover the church, that is the clergy and the papacy, as the custodian of this tradition, was permitted further to expound and interpret this tradition, and by the Spirit residing in the priesthood of the church, might also expand this tradition and bring new truths to light.

Having an additional source of authority in an oral tradition which is ever expanding in its interpretation by the church, is a fundamental part of the Romish system and continues to be so. In the light of it Rome has, since the days of the Reformation, added the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary in 1850 (the idea that Mary was kept free from original sin), and the idea of the infallibility of the pope in matters of doctrine in 1870. This principle allows the Romish church, in effect, to teach whatever it wants to and to make that teaching authoritative doctrine in the church. The only restriction upon this "tradition" is a vague one to the effect that the doctrine must reflect a certain consensus or agreement of those considered to be church fathers. In reality, the doctrine of papal infallibility has now eliminated even this need.

Over against this serious error which throws open the door to almost any gospel other than the gospel set down in Scripture, the reformers maintained that Scripture alone has the sole right to regulate our faith and bind our conscience. All things, even the ancient practices of the church and the writings of the church fathers, as weak and fallible men, must be tried in the light of the Word of God. It and it alone is the authoritative will of God for the church. It alone has the power to compel the conscience of the believer by its testimony, and to guide and rule our faith and life. It alone is the standard of truth. This principle the reformers applied both to the life of the believer and to the order and worship of the church. It is this principle which our Belgic Confession of Faith embodies in Article XXXII which speaks of the order and discipline of the church, declaring,

In the meantime we believe, though it is useful and beneficial, that those, who are rulers of the Church, institute and establish certain ordinances among themselves for maintaining the body of the Church; yet they ought studiously to take care, that they do not depart from those things which Christ, our only Master, hath instituted. And therefore, we reject all human inventions, and all

laws, which man would introduce into the worship of God, thereby to bind and compel the conscience in any manner whatever.

In the light of this the papacy and the whole manner and order of the Roman worship must fall to the ground, since none of it is taught in God's Word. The reformers therefore began a thorough reform of the church in the light of the Word of God. This reform embraced the whole life of the church, not only its doctrine and theology, but its order, its worship, and its discipline. It set before the people also the calling to a Biblical walk in godliness. The reformation involved, in the light of this one principle, a spiritual transformation and renewal of the whole church and the life of the people of God upon the sound foundation of the absolute and all-sufficient truth of the Word of God.

Nothing might challenge this principle of the sole standard of Scripture, neither the persuasive arguments of men, the decrees of councils, nor the opinions of the church fathers. Whatsoever did not agree with the infallible rule of the Word of God was to be rejected. No practice, ceremony, or tradition which did not agree with it was either to be kept or introduced into the church. Our Confession of Faith in Article VII states this principle of the absolute and sole standard of the truth of God's Word and its sufficiency, when it states that this truth of God set down in the Scriptures,

. . . is above all; for all men are of themselves liars, and more vain than vanity itself. Therefore, we reject with all our hearts, whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule, which the apostles have taught us, saying, Try the spirits whether they are of God. Likewise, if there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house.

Our Reformed fathers understood the issue most clearly. Either we say with Christ, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17), and we bow before it, or we are left with the vanity and lie of men. To this truth of our Reformed heritage we also must cling. For it also we must contend, and that particularly in our day when more and more we see the Christian church, also those churches which have their roots in the Reformation, departing from this sole standard of the Word of God. It is the truth of God's Word which is at stake when we see about us introduced into God's house another gospel and doctrine, inventions of men in the order and worship of the church which God has not commanded, and a walk of life which is not according to truth.

Nor must we think that we are immune from this trend. That departure begins so easily when we as the people of God in our own life and walk become

hearers but not doers of the Word. It is so easy and so pleasing to the flesh and our sinful vanity to set alongside of Scripture our own feelings and experiences, our own wisdom and desires, as a second authority. It is so easy to allow the philosophy of

this world to intrude into the church. In this matter there is no compromise, for it is either Scripture alone as the sole foundation of truth, which is above all, fully sufficient for faith and life, or we shall be left with only the vanity of men.

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

The Apostles' Creed (2)

Rev. H. Veldman

Introduction (2)

We concluded our preceding article by calling attention, generally speaking, to the various doctrines as set forth before us in this beautiful confession, our Apostles' Creed. In our fourth and final observation we reminded our readers of what we read in Articles 4-7, which speak of our Lord's humiliation and exaltation. We now continue.

Fifthly, in Articles 8-12 we have the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and of the church and the related blessings of salvation. Here we have, first of all, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. And how important it is that this article in re the Holy Spirit appears here where it does, between the glorification of Christ and the church! We believe an holy catholic church. The Dutch translation adds the word "christian." Of this church we read that it is holy and catholic (universal). And all this is concluded in Articles 9-12: the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

* * * * *

All this, now, is necessary for us to believe. This is what we read in Question 22 of our Heidelberg Catechism: What is then necessary for a christian to believe? And the Apostles' Creed follows in Answer 23. Shall we and do we grasp this? Why must we believe all these things? Why must we take hold of all these fundamentals? Why must we believe in the Trinity, in the truth that our Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal, the only and natural Son of God, in the Incarnation, in particular atonement, in His wonderful exaltation at the right hand of God and His return to judgment? Why? Can we not be saved without these things? Is this doctrine,

after all, that important? Is it not far more convenient to have a gospel upon a thumbnail? . . . and, much more practical? Must we read and study and familiarize ourselves with all these doctrinal truths? Is it after all not the important thing that we are saved? And is it not true that, to be saved, all we need do is believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? This is all that Philip demanded of the Ethiopian eunuch, according to Acts 8. What does double predestination (election and reprobation) have to do with this? What does the truth of the eternal Godhead of the Son have to do with it? Why must we believe in the doctrine of the Incarnation? And must we understand and grasp His bodily and physical resurrection from the dead, His ascension, His sitting at the right hand of God, and His return to judgment? After all, the salvation of a lost sinner is really so very simple. All he needs do is to be sorry for his sin, accept the free offer of salvation, give his heart to Jesus and be saved. And now all this? Why complicate these really simple matters?

Why must we believe all the things promised us in the gospel and briefly summarized for us in the Apostles' Creed? The answer is this: these things are necessary for a christian to believe. It is exactly this that we read in Question 22. You either believe all this or you simply do not believe. To believe all this is necessary. Without it, your believing is impossible, and if you do not believe you cannot be saved. Perhaps you ask, but what must we say of an infant who cannot believe all this? To this we answer, first of all, that an infant is saved only because of God's eternal, unconditional, and sovereign love, because of Christ's particular atonement upon the cross and because of God's irresistible grace. And, secondly, as we grow up and

mature, we either believe these things, embrace them, or we deny and reject them. It is either-or. This is the truth. We must believe all this. Why? Why is this necessary?

Indeed, we can understand what is known as the "thumbnail gospel." This is the gospel that can be written upon a thumbnail. Now the sinner accepts this gospel, first of all, because he is interested only in himself. His only concern is his escape from the misery of his sin and from guilt and the wrath of God, that he may enjoy the blessedness of life forever. He is not concerned about the "how" of this, how it may occur, or about any details of the truth, but only what he must do to be saved. It does not concern him that the purpose of his salvation might conceivably lie elsewhere than in himself. As far as the truth is concerned, he really could not care less. In the second place, however, this sinner is not concerned about God. He does not care about the virtues of God's holiness and righteousness and glory. And he does not care what happens to the virtues of God's almighty and sovereign power and that a god (we deliberately write this word with a small "g") desires the salvation of all men and saves only a few; he really could not, we repeat, care less. He surely does not understand, does not care to understand, that the Lord never gives His glory to another and that He never shares it with another.

To understand the necessity of this content of the knowledge of our faith, we will begin with the doctrine of the knowledge of sin. Why do we begin with this? We are dealing, we must bear in mind, with this question: who are saved? And its answer is set forth in Question and Answer 20 of our Heidelberg Catechism: only they who are ingrafted into Christ by a true and living faith. Only believers are saved. However, when a sinner is saved, consciously, his first knowledge is that of sin. What is sin? Sin is transgression of the law, the law of God. Sin is exactly as terrible as God is great. Sin can be understood only when viewed in the light of Him against Whom it is committed. Sin is the unbelievably awful refusal of a sinner who is less than nothing to serve the living God Who is God over all and alone worthy of all praise and adoration. This is sin. It is wilful and deliberate. As a power, a spiritual power, it dominates us completely, all our heart and mind and soul and strength, so that we cannot possibly move except in the service of sin. We are dead and blind and deaf and lame and dumb. But there is also guilt. As guilt it is the obligation to pay, to bear, in full consciousness, the awesomely eternal and infinite wrath of God. To be saved, we must be delivered from this sin. All our guilt must be paid, and this spiritual power of evil must be broken. To be saved, through faith, it is surely necessary to know this power and guilt of

sin, and our absolute hopelessness; fact is, nobody is saved in any other way.

And now we go to the cross of Calvary. Why? The answer is obvious. When God saves a sinner He leads him to the cross, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And what do we see there? We see there the suffering Man of Sorrows, but then as He is the eternal Son of God. An eternal wrath of God must be borne in the obedience of perfect love. Consciously he must be forsaken of God and praise God in all the wonderful outpouring of His righteous love and indignation. To bear that wrath of God, to pay for the sins of others, is possible, as the Heidelberg Catechism and all Scripture teach us, by the eternal Son of God. This means that if Jesus be not the eternal Son of God, co-eternal and co-equal with the Father and the Spirit, there is simply no atonement. And if there be no atonement then there is no salvation. Then no sinner can possibly be saved. But we see more upon that cross. We do not merely see the dying of a martyr; we do not see the suffering of a universal Christ, a Christ for all men. A Christ for all is really a Christ for none. Then Christ also died for those who perish. And this means that He never paid for sin, because had He blotted out their sin they could never perish. Is this serious? Indeed it is! But we see Christ, the Lamb of God, of Calvary, as He suffers for and pays the debt only of His own, even as Jesus Himself declares in John 10:11, 14, 26-29, and we quote:

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep . . . I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine . . . But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand.

And why is it necessary to believe this? What really does this doctrine, the doctrine of particular atonement, have to do with our salvation? The answer to this question is really very simple. God's justice demands that all our sins must be paid. If Christ suffers and dies for all men (as we wrote a moment ago) then He also died for those who perish. And this means that He never paid for sin, because had He died and paid for their sins they could never perish. And, of course, if our sins are not paid, no salvation is possible. The Arminian may declare, believing in a universal atonement, that he is saved. We will leave that personal matter between him and the Lord. We will testify to him what Scripture says. And, the Arminian may boast that he has a richer Christ than we because,

whereas his Christ died for everybody, our Christ died only for some; we will declare to him that not all are saved for whom his Christ is reputed to have died, and also that the alternative is not between a Christ for all and a Christ for some, but between a Christ for some and a Christ for none. And now, as we stand at and before the cross of Calvary, we also see more. Fact is, Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. He came to us and we hated Him, despised Him, would destroy Him, and surely tried to do so. What does this mean? It means that He loved us notwithstandingly. It means that He loved us first. In fact, God so loved the world (*His* world) that He gave His only begotten Son. It means that, as we stand at the foot of the cross and look upon that great Shepherd of His sheep, our hearts and souls go back from that cross into the depths of eternity, and we see behind it all a wonderful, unconditional, unchangeable love of God, that He loved, first, a wretch as I am.

However, besides the knowledge of sin and the truth of Calvary's particular atonement, we must also believe the truth of God's almighty, irresistible grace. We are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. Indeed, no man can come unto the Father except the Father

draw him (John 6:44). The power that saves us is an almighty, irresistible, efficacious, explosive power and therefore also a very particular and sovereign power. Surely, if God must begin this work, He begins it as and where He wills. I ask, Is this necessary for us to believe? O, if this were not true how could a sinner possibly be saved? Can any saved sinner believe that he is saved because he chose and decided to believe? This is impossible. This is contrary to all the testimony of Holy Writ. That one believes is because it is God Who began His work in him. God alone caused him to see himself in all the filth and hopelessness of his sin; God alone made him free who was once a hopeless slave of his sin. Indeed, the Lord does not save in any other way. No sinner experiences salvation except as the fruit of divine grace. We will surely not permit any Arminian to lead us astray from these wonderful truths. Let us continue to glory in God, the God of our salvation, render to Him the glory due unto His Name. Of Him and through Him and unto Him must be all the praise and the glory, now and forever.

The Lord willing, we will continue with this in our following article.

News From Our Churches

April 15, 1985

Our congregation in Lynden, Washington extended a call to Rev. M. Joostens. Our congregation in Edgerton, Minnesota extended a call to Rev. M. De Vries, from a trio that included also Rev. R. Moore and Rev. C. Haak. The trio for Hull, Iowa is Rev. R. Hanko, Rev. R. Moore, and Rev. J. Slopsma.

At the March congregational meeting of Loveland Church in Colorado, it was decided to proceed with the building of a new church building according to the plan proposed by the consistory. First Church, in Grand Rapids, Michigan will remove the cornerstone from the old church, examine the contents of the cornerstone, and put it in the new church. They will replace the cornerstone in the old church with a new stone.

The Council of South Holland Church, Illinois has scheduled a public meeting on Friday evening, June 7, at which Rev. George Hutton, Pastor of the Bible Presbyterian Church of Larne, Northern Ireland will speak. Rev. Engelsma has given a two-part series on "The History and Theology of Presbyterianism" to South Holland's Reformed Fellowship. The series dealt with the history of the Presbyterian faith especially in England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland from 1560 to the present day,

and with the comparison of the theology of the Presbyterian faith and the Reformed faith. The Council also placed a new book in the church library, *Torchbearers of the Truth*, a history of Scottish Presbyterianism and particularly of Presbyterian martyrs.

Pastor Lau in Singapore is teaching the present group the catechism to prepare them for baptism. The congregation had a wedding in the church, at the kampong where they hold their worship services. There has been a great amount of pastoral work in the past weeks but Rev. den Hartog is happy to see that the members of the church visit their ministers freely. The elders and session meetings have been considering the matter of the tenure of the officebearers and the whole subject of the proper elements of the worship service. They are also deciding how much renovating to do of the Blair Road House to get it ready as a parsonage by May. It remains to be seen whether or not the contractors can complete the work in time for the den Hartogs to move into the parsonage before their furlough in May. When they held their special services in the church during the season of Good Friday and Easter, the members of the church tried very hard to bring friends and relatives to the church, who

may never have heard the gospel or been to church.

Rev. K. Hanko writes that a few months ago the Reformed Witness Hour sent them the names of a couple of men who had heard Rev. Van Baren on Family Radio. One of these men called Rev. Hanko and has been coming to their worship services every evening. They also plan another series of lectures this spring on the Five Points of Calvinism. Rev. Hanko and his family plan to take a week of vacation in early May, to go to Grand Rapids for classis and a wedding.

Southeast Church, Michigan plans on a Camp-day Workshop with Rev. den Hartog June 14 & 15. More details on this later.

The Spring Lecture will be delivered on Thursday, May 9 at 8 P.M. in Hudsonville Church. Rev. Engelsma will speak on the topic, "The God-fearing Family."

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Through the Lord's goodness, our parents, HAROLD AND SADIE GLUPKER, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary April 25, 1985.

We are grateful to God for them and all that they have given and done for us, in His name. It is our prayer that they may be given many more years together.

"The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."
(Psalm 126:3).

Craig and Janalyn Glupker

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Senior Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to our fellow members, Mr. and Mrs. Case Lubbers and Mr. and Mrs. John Flikkema, Jr. in the death of their father, MR. JOHN FLIKKEMA, SR. Our prayer is that the Lord will comfort them in their sorrow.

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

Mrs. B. Velting, Sec'y.

NOTICE!!!

According to the decision of Synod of 1984, the Consistory of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan was appointed the calling church for the 1985 Synod. The Consistory hereby notifies our Churches that the 1985 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America will convene, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, June 11, 1985, at 9:00 A.M. in the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, 5101 Beechtree Ave., Hudsonville, Michigan. The Pre-Synodical service will be held Monday evening, June 10, 1985, at 7:30 P.M. Rev. D.J. Engelsma, President of the 1984 Synod will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the Consistory before the service. Delegates in need of transportation from Grand Rapids or lodging in Hudsonville should contact Mr. P. Hoekstra, 1278 Greenly, Hudsonville, MI 49426. Phone (616) 896-9279.

P. Hoekstra, Clerk

Rev. Cammenga gave a public lecture sponsored by the Church Extension Committee of Loveland Church, Colorado on "Christian Liberty."

The Men's and Ladies' Societies and Adult Bible Class of Hudsonville Church, Michigan decided to sponsor a Bookstore in Hudsonville Plaza for the sale of our own literature as well as other good books. Mrs. H.C. Hoeksema will be the store manager.

For those living within the WKPR radio listening area, the Reformed Witness Hour is on Sunday at 4:00 P.M., and Christian Dialogue is on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at 11:30 A.M.

D.H.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 4, 1985, the Lord willing, our parents, MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM CORSON, will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren, are thankful to our Heavenly Father for the years they have had together. We have been blessed with God-fearing parents who have guided us in the truths of the Scripture. It is our prayer that God will continue to bless them and keep them in His care.

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

Ronald and Linda Corson	Randall Corson
Melissa, Chad, Rhonda	Richard Corson

IN MEMORIAM

On March 4, 1985, it pleased our Faithful Covenant God to take unto Himself our beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, LOUIS LOOYENGA, at the age of seventy-nine years.

To know that we belong to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in life and death, is our only comfort.

In times like these, we are thankful for the bond of fellowship and communion of the saints that only the children of God can experience.

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

Mrs. Bertha Looyenga	Raymond and Louisa Null
Theodore and Theresa Looyenga	20 grandchildren
Stuart and Marilyn Looyenga	35 great-grandchildren
Willard and Sophia Krommendyke	

Grand Rapids, Michigan

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church extends their Christian sympathy to their fellow office-bearer, Mr. Jacob Lenting, in the death of his brother, MR. HENRY LENTING. It is our prayer that Jacob, with all the other members of the Lenting family, together with Mrs. Henry Lenting and children, may experience that the grace of our Covenant God is sufficient for our every need.

"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 J. Engelsma, Pres.
Louis R. Regnerus, Clerk