

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

In the course of this Divine predetermination God elected or chose unto Himself a people, determining to save them in Jesus Christ. No, He did not determine the salvation of everyone, only of some. Those whom He did not choose unto salvation He reprobated, determining to destroy them in the way of their sin. This divine distinction between men is not based on anything in man. Certainly God's choosing and rejecting is not on the basis of foreseen good works or faith. God chose and rejected whom He did simply on the basis of His sovereign good pleasure.

See: Meditation, p. 314

**CONTENTS**

Meditation —	
Making Our Calling And Election Sure . . . . .	314
Editorial —	
Why Evolution? (5) . . . . .	316
Correspondence and Reply —	
About Seminary Students And	
Catechism Teaching . . . . .	319
Taking Heed To The Doctrine —	
God Is The Creator (2) . . . . .	320
Walking In The Light —	
Moral Aspects of Medical Technology (15) . . . .	322
From Holy Writ —	
Believing All The Scriptures (7) . . . . .	325
All Around Us —	
Church Union in the Netherlands . . . . .	327
To Pay Or Not To Pay (Quotas) . . . . .	328
The Day of Shadows —	
The Certainty of a Perfect Church . . . . .	329
In His Fear —	
Worldliness . . . . .	331
Book Review . . . . .	333
Directory, Protestant Reformed Churches . . . . .	334
News From Our Churches . . . . .	335

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

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

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

*Church News Editor:* Mr. Ben Wigger  
6597 - 40th Ave.  
Hudsonville, Michigan 49426

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*Business Office:* The Standard Bearer  
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr. PH: (616) 243-2953  
P.O. Box 6064  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49516

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

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**MEDITATION**

James D. Slopsema

**Making Our Calling And Election Sure**

*Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure . . . .*  
II Peter 1:10

Are you sure of your salvation?

Are you sure that Jesus Christ died for your sins  
and earned for you the salvation of God?

Are you sure that there is a place reserved in

heaven for you in Jesus Christ and that when you  
leave this life you will be taken up to the glory of  
heaven?

What a wonderful joy belongs to those who have  
this confidence!

And what agony of soul for those who earnestly desire this salvation but are not sure!

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

\* \* \* \* \*

Election brings us back into the endless ages of eternity when God eternally predetermined all things in His counsel.

In the course of this Divine predetermination God elected or chose unto Himself a people, determining to save them in Jesus Christ. No, He did not determine the salvation of everyone, only of some. Those whom He did not choose unto salvation He reprobated, determining to destroy them in the way of their sin. This divine distinction between men is not based on anything in man. Certainly God's choosing and rejecting is not on the basis of foreseen good works or faith. God chose and rejected whom He did simply on the basis of His sovereign good pleasure.

Peter views those to whom He writes this epistle as the elect of God. This second epistle along with the first are addressed to the "strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father . . . ." And now Peter speaks to these spiritual strangers of their election.

Peter also speaks of their calling.

Usually when we think of the calling we think of the call of the gospel which comes to all men. God will have the great gospel of salvation proclaimed to all. And in that gospel every hearer must be convicted of his sin; he must be called to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ; and he must hear the promise that there is salvation, full and free, to everyone who repents and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

However, it is also true that the vast majority who hear this call to faith refuse to believe on our Lord. They continue in their wicked and unbelieving ways to their own destruction. This is due to the fact that many are called but few are chosen.

In order to heed the great call of the gospel to faith, it is necessary to have the inner working of the Spirit. No one of himself can heed the call of the gospel. The call of the gospel can be heeded only when the Spirit of God accompanies that call and works faith in the heart of the hearer. Faith, remember, is the gift of God to His elect people. Through the gift of faith God will bring His elect into living connection with Jesus Christ and all the blessings of salvation. God works that faith in the

hearts of His elect exactly through the great call of the gospel as it is accompanied by the inner working of the Holy Spirit.

In this saving sense also the saints to whom Peter writes were called. Peter reminds them that they "are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). And now Peter reminds them here of this saving calling by which God brought them to faith and salvation in Jesus Christ.

\* \* \* \* \*

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

Certainly the meaning here is not that we must do something to solicit God's calling and election or to make ourselves worthy of it. Have we not seen that election is not based on foreseen faith and good works but is solely according to God's eternal good pleasure? And have we not also seen that the saving calling is God's free gift in Jesus Christ to His elect, who are of themselves least deserving?

Nor is the meaning that we must do something to maintain our calling and election, lest we somehow lose them and ultimately perish. There are many things that we can lose; our election and calling are two treasures we can never lose.

To make our calling and election sure means rather that we come to the subjective, personal assurance of our calling and election. This will become apparent if we understand that a more literal translation of this passage is: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure for yourselves". The meaning, quite obviously, is that we must make the fact of our calling and election sure in our own consciousness. We must come to the personal assurance that we are called and elected of God.

We must understand that it is possible to be one of God's elect, to be called by God to faith and salvation, and yet not to be sure of these things. There was a time that the Psalmist David was not sure of his salvation. After his sin with Bathsheba he wrote, "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit" (Psalm 51:12, 13). In Psalm 77:7 Asaph wrote, "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will he be favorable no more?" In harmony with this experience of the Old Testament saints, there are many in the church also today who have agonizing doubts concerning their own salvation.

The Lord will have us be sure of our own salvation. We may not accept doubt as the norm. Nor

may we make doubt a mark of true piety in the church. God will have us be assured of our calling and election unto salvation.

And notice, we are to root our assurance of salvation in our eternal election. Salvation without eternal, sovereign election is a salvation that can be lost. It is a salvation that we may possess today but be without tomorrow. However, salvation rooted in the election of God is a salvation that is eternally secure. It is a salvation that not even the prince of darkness himself can take from us.

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

\* \* \* \* \*

We make our calling and election sure not by waiting for some divine revelation from heaven. The day of revelations is long past.

Nor do we make our calling and election sure by "inquisitively prying into the secret and deep things of God." (Canons, Head I, Art 12)

Rather, we make our calling and election sure by living a godly life in the power of Jesus Christ.

In the preceding verses Peter exhorts the saints to grow in Christian virtues and thus live a godly life. They are to give "all diligence to add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance . . . ."

Peter goes on to point out that those who lack these godly virtues have forgotten that they were purged by Christ from their former sins. The implication is that having forgotten this they continue in their former sins.

Now in the verse we are considering, Peter makes a sharp contrast to that: "Wherefore the rather, brethren . . . ."

In the light of the preceding we would expect the apostle to admonish the saints to a godly walk in the power of the cross. We expect Peter to write, "Christ has purged you from your former sins at

the cross. Remember this so that you lay hold of the cross and in its power live in all godliness." And this is Peter's intent. But instead of pointing out what is his obvious concern, Peter rather points to the fruit of such a godly life — the assurance of one's own election and calling. Peter's exhortation, therefore, is that in that power of the cross the saints are to live in all godliness and thus make their calling and election sure.

That we make our calling and election sure through a godly life is consistent with the realities of our calling and election. Scripture emphasizes that the fruit of election is godliness. Are we not "elect . . . unto obedience" (I Peter 1:2)? Obedience and godliness are the inevitable fruits of election exactly because those whom God chose unto salvation He also calls out of darkness into His marvelous light. And so it is through a godly walk that we make our calling and election sure.

However, let us be warned of two errors.

Do not make the mistake of seeking the assurance of these things by examining your past life for the godly fruits of election and calling. The more you look the more you will be filled with doubts as you see your horrible sins. One's calling and election are not made sure by looking backwards but by living every day in the godliness of the cross. For it is only in connection with a daily godliness that the Spirit of God, Who alone can give us assurance, grants this blessed assurance to us.

And be careful lest you also have too shallow a conception of what is the godly life to which the cross of Jesus empowers us. The cross leads not to a mere outward keeping the law. The cross is the power to love the LORD our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

In that godliness live.

And the Spirit of God will grant us the blessed assurance of our calling and election.

## EDITORIAL

### Why Evolution? (5)

We should remember that our little digression into what John Calvin thought was after all not fundamentally a digression, but intrinsically related to

our subject. Dr. Van Till in his *The Fourth Day* only does lip service to Calvin's teaching on this subject. That is, he does not really believe that we can only

properly view God's book of creation and history through the spectacles of the Scriptures. Instead, he constantly adjusts Scripture in the attempt to make it conform to his evolutionistic view of the universe. This has become evident in our consideration of Van Till's view of Scripture thus far in this critique. It will become clearer as we proceed.

Now we should bear in mind that this is the fundamental issue in all consideration of the creation *versus* evolution conflict.

One can, of course, bring many arguments against any evolutionistic approach to the natural sciences. To me, a most interesting and cogent argument has always been that of the *unreliability* of evolutionism, for example. On the question of the age of the universe evolutionism has changed its view many times. Theories have advanced from millions to hundreds of millions to billions to more billions. In fact, one can say that evolutionists can change their theories in this regard almost as easily as they can change their shirts. Evolutionistic science surely cannot boast a record of reliability!

Nevertheless, we should keep in mind the fact that the one, fundamental, all-determining factor is the testimony of Scripture. One must beware of adjusting the testimony of Scripture to make it somehow harmonize with the alleged results of scientific investigation. That is putting the cart in front of the horse. The matter stands just the other way around. The question is: what does Scripture say? And for the Christian scientist this implies that if and when the results of his scientific investigations do not conform to the testimony of Scripture, he must *a priori* conclude that he has erred in his science. Even if he cannot discover his scientific error, he nevertheless maintains that the testimony of Scripture stands.

It is for this reason that I refuse to become involved in a discussion of the science of astronomy in this connection. In such a discussion a lesser light than Dr. Van Till could lose me in less than ten minutes, I am sure. Nor do I have to disprove the scientific contentions of Dr. Van Till or any other astronomer in order to disprove their evolutionistic claims. The testimony of Scripture *stands* regardless!

Now Dr. Van Till seems in his book to sense something of all this. After all, he teaches at a Christian college; and he is obligated to teach in conformity with the Scriptures. He must needs leave the impression that his teachings are in harmony with the Scriptures. And this puts him in a bind. What is he to do? He must somehow leave the impression that he believes and holds to the testimony of Scripture in his astronomical science.

Hence, he begins his book by writing about "The

Biblical View" and follows this with "The Scientific View."

However, he does not present the "Biblical View" at all, but destroys it and substitutes a pseudo-Biblical view, in order to make room for his scientific opinions which conflict with the true Biblical view.

This is the reason why I am preoccupied in these editorials with a critique of Van Till's "The Biblical View."

There is an important lesson here for all of us, and especially for those of us who are confronted in our studies or in our work by evolutionistic science. The lesson is this. Negatively, you need not meet the evolutionistic scientist on his own ground, so to speak. You may very well fail if you attempt it. Creation cannot be scientifically proved; it can only be believed. Positively, your approach must always be that of the testimony of infallible Scripture; and you must be very careful to insist upon this testimony of Scripture and not to be misled by any pseudo-Biblical view.

Having made this point, I now turn to Chapter 3 of Dr. Van Till's book in order to demonstrate that he does not really honor the testimony of Scripture though he seems to leave the impression, at least superficially, of doing so.

This chapter is entitled "The Heavens according to Scripture." It is not my intention to offer a paragraph by paragraph critique of this chapter, in which the author cites many passages of Scripture concerning creation — mainly passages from Job, from the Psalms, and from Isaiah, plus a few New Testament passages. Rather will I point out three fundamental errors.

In the first place, Van Till's position with regard to Scripture is very plainly that of higher criticism. What is higher criticism? Very briefly, it implies that the interpreter places himself *above* Scripture rather than *under* Scripture and its authority.

How does this become evident in this chapter?

It becomes evident from the fact that Van Till adopts, without criticism, the view that the Prophecy of Isaiah is really *three* separate and distinct books of which only the first (Chapters 1-39) is of Isaiah the prophet in the period from King Uzziah to King Hezekiah. "Second Isaiah," according to this theory, is "The Book of the Consolation of Israel," consists of Chapters 40-55, and is of unknown authorship. And Third Isaiah consists of Chapters 56 to the end and is of still different authorship. Here is the evidence. On page 43 Van Till states in a footnote: "'Second Isaiah' is the common designation of the unidentified prophet whose writings appear in chapters 40-55 of the book of

Isaiah." And on page 47 he writes:

Another portion of Scripture rich in references to the Creator is "The Book of the Consolation of Israel," chapters 40-55 of Isaiah. Written toward the end of Israel's exile in Babylon, Second Isaiah has as one of its principal themes the praise of Yahweh, who is now redeeming his created nation from a second captivity. Israel evidently needed some reminders concerning the identity of their God, because the prophet (and skilled poet) repeatedly appears to address the question of who Yahweh is and what he is like.

The reader should understand that by this theory the very prophetic nature of Isaiah is denied. For example, according to this view the entire section concerning Cyrus, who is mentioned by name by Isaiah long before he appeared on the stage of history, is changed from prophecy, proclaimed and written beforehand, into history written after the fact. (cf. Isaiah 44, 45) Now it might be objected that this has nothing directly to do with the passages which Van Till cites concerning creation from this part of Isaiah. However, the important thing to remember is that it reveals Van Till's fundamental view of Scripture.

In the second place, from his discussion of "The Heavens according to Scripture" Dr. Van Till adroitly eliminates *a priori* Genesis 1-3:

Now, where shall we look to find Scripture's references to stars as Creation and its instructions concerning what it means for something to have the status of Creation? I strongly suspect that most Bible readers would look first at the creation narratives of Genesis 1-3. However, since these particular accounts and their varied interpretations within the Judeo-Christian community play such a prominent role in current discussions about creation (the revived creation/evolution debate, for example) we will deal with Genesis 1 in a separate chapter. In any case, the book of Genesis is not the only place in which the Bible speaks of creation. The most extensive Old Testament references are found in Job, Isaiah, and the Psalms. We will explore these first, and then consider what is contributed by the New Testament.

The fact of the matter is, however, that Genesis 1 is the only place where Scripture offers us a historical account of creation. Van Till is going to deny this in a later chapter and call Genesis 1-11 "primeval history" (whatever that may be) and he is going to adopt the framework hypothesis with respect to the days of creation-week (and a *hypothesis* it is, indeed!). But the fact of the matter is that one can only properly understand the poetic references to creation in the light of and on the basis of the historical, prose account of creation found in Genesis 1. Divorce such passages as Psalm 33:6 ("By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.") or Psalm 33:9 ("For he spake, and it was

done; he commanded, and it stood fast.") from Genesis 1, and it becomes impossible to understand them. In other words, Van Till violates flagrantly the principle that Scripture is its own interpreter, or that Scripture interprets Scripture.

I will be brief about my third objection. Dr. Van Till knowingly and arbitrarily decides upon the meaning of Scripture by arbitrarily deciding with what question he will approach Scripture (pp. 40-41). First he writes, "Instead, I believe we should bring appropriate questions to Scripture and search for answers in a way that gives evidence of our taking the Bible seriously." Then he writes (and correctly so): "It might be objected that even the bringing of questions to Scripture gives opportunity for human bias to enter into Bible study. The selection of which questions to bring allows for the exercise of personal prejudice." Hence, he proposes that the questions must be "appropriate." And then he proceeds to determine arbitrarily what constitutes an appropriate question. That question, according to him, is as follows: "I am convinced that it is the question of their (the heavenly bodies, HCH) *status*." And to this question concerning "status" he gives the vague answer: "Stars have the status of Creation." That is all. Thus he generalizes and beclouds the testimony of Scripture concerning creation and eliminates all the detailed language of Scripture concerning this wonderful work of God.

Again, of course, the fundamental error is that he violates the rule that Scripture is its own interpreter. Both *questions and answers* concerning Scripture must be derived from Scripture itself. But if one arbitrarily and on his own authority approaches Scripture with questions of his own choosing and delimitation, he is bound to end with wrong answers. Thus it is that Van Till destroys the testimony of Scripture under the guise of presenting "The Biblical View." HCH

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

## CORRESPONDENCE AND REPLY

Barrett L. Gritters

# About Seminary Students And Catechism Teaching

### Correspondence

Dear Rev. Gritters,

I enjoyed your article in the *Standard Bearer* relating to "Catechism: Official Ministry of the Church" in the February 15, 1987 issue. However, I have a question which I wish you would address in a future article.

You state, "1. Teaching catechism is the work of the minister or elders in the local congregation." Then in the paragraph following "If, for some reason, the minister cannot teach, it is the duty of no one else but the elders to take over." Again in the following paragraph, "As in the pulpit, we allow only ministers or elders officially called by the church to bring the Word, so in catechism."

The question I have is this: What then is the status of the Seminary students that teach catechism classes in our churches? I think it is fair to say that all of our ministers taught catechism classes while in seminary. And this was good for our churches especially during periods of vacancy. Good also for our students. But, they are not ordained to office. What should be the position of the elders in the case of a vacancy? . . . .

Your brother in Christ  
Phil Lotterman

### Reply

Dear Phil,

March 11, 1987

Let me say first that, while perhaps it should not have been, the matter of seminary students teaching catechism was far out of mind when the statements were made regarding who ought to teach. This gives you a hint whence I come in this response. My concern in that article was that not just any Tom, Dick, or Harry should instruct our

children in this important ministry of the church, if not in the office. God has given this work to the ministers of the gospel, teaching elders. If the minister is absent or the congregation vacant, the ruling elders should take up the task. This happens in most churches. I remember well the times that my father taught us in catechism when our congregation was vacant or minister was ill. The consistory had no question that teaching catechism was the work of the elders.

An answer to your first question is that, being neither ministers nor elders, seminary student teachers have a *unique* and *important* status. Unique, because this is the only situation (besides speaking a word of edification) that our churches allow for non-ordained men to lead the official work of the church. Important because, even if it constitutes an exception to the general rule laid out above, the health of the churches requires this exception.

I believe these reasons may be given to support the practice of seminary students teaching:

1. This has been done *historically* in reformed churches. Reformed people always ask this question of history first. Before they set aside the practice, they ask why the church has done it in the past (see Van Dellen and Monsma *The Church Order Commentary* on articles 2, 16, and 20 of the *Church Order*.)

2. Article 20 of the *Church Order* says that seminary students "be allowed to speak a word of edification in the meeting for public worship." One of the grounds attached to this rule is that this is "for their own training." The instruction in catechism is considered, in reformed churches, preaching for the youth. The *training* of seminary students in preaching requires some "hands on" practice not only in public worship, but also teaching catechism. That comes most easily in a catechism room. For those who desire well trained ministers,

these practices ought not easily to be discontinued. Therefore, whether a church is vacant or not, if it is in the location of the seminary, it is profitable for the church to let the seminary students take at least some of the classes. There accrues a long term benefit for the denomination with this practice.

3. Closely related to "2" is the fact that the Lord would have the church *judge the qualifications* of men aspiring to the ministry. For the sake of the student as well as the churches, there ought to be some opportunity given for judgment of qualification *before* he gets to synod or into a church. To find

there that he has little aptitude to teach spells grief for all involved. The qualifications for the ministry can be determined in part in these catechism sessions if the elders and professors take the time to look. (Our professors do.)

There are other possible ways to answer this question. This is the way with which I am most comfortable.

Thanks for your interesting question.

Cordially,  
Barry Gritters  
Byron Center, MI

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## TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

Ronald J. Hanko

# God Is The Creator (2)

When we understand that the eighth commandment is founded on the truth that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," we will not only have a better understanding of what the eighth commandment requires of us, but the only possible motive for obeying it. We have seen that God's sovereign ownership of all things, as expressed in this verse from Psalm 24 (vs. 1), and His sovereign right in distributing them, are aspects of His glory as Creator, and therefore that we confess the sovereignty and glory of God as our Creator in a very practical way in obeying the eighth commandment. We should also see that it is the knowledge of God as our Creator that must move us to obey this Commandment. It is from Him as Creator that we receive life and breath and all things. It is to Him as a faithful Creator that we are able to commit the keeping of our souls (I Pet. 4:19). And because the eighth commandment is a revelation of God the Creator, our life of obedience to it is the way that we express our gratitude to Him for what He as Creator has done for us.

The better understanding we have of the requirements of the eighth commandment in light of this, its deepest meaning and significance, involves a clear insight into the fact that the commandment does not only forbid outright acts of robbery and theft, but also many other things that we do not usually think of in connection with the commandment. Certainly all forms of robbery that are punished by the civil authorities are specifically forbidden by this commandment, but also those forms of robbery that are practiced or legalized by the magistrates are forbidden. The most widespread violation of the eighth commandment which is practiced by the magistrates is in unequal and oppressive taxation, especially for the support of various social welfare programs, public education, and assistance to the unemployed. Since the civil government has no authority from God to be involved in social reform, education, and such-like, its support of them out of public taxation must be considered a form of robbery, and a violation of the eighth commandment. It represents the efforts of wicked men to redistribute this world's wealth according to their own humanistic and godless principles. It flouts God's sovereign right in ignoring or



bypassing the means He has provided for the care of the poor and the education of children. It also ignores in many cases His command that the idle may not eat (II Thess. 3:10) and that the wicked ought not be allowed to profit from his wickedness (Deut. 23:6, Mal. 3:13-15).

It is quite a commentary on the perversity of sinful men that in the areas where God gives the civil government authority, i.e., to defend its citizens, wage war, and punish evildoers (Rom. 13:3, 4, Ps. 82:3, 4, I Tim. 2:1, 2), that authority is widely denied. Where He does not give authority, wicked men clamour for the civil government to take authority or allow it to do so, without question.

All this does not mean, of course, that we may rebel against the authority of civil magistrates or seek to overthrow them for their evil practices. For that there is no warrant at all in Scripture. We may not even rebel, so Scripture says, in refusing to pay our taxes, in spite of the fact that they are misused by the authorities. Paul specifically commands obedience in the matter of taxes in Romans 13 although the government of his day was as much in violation of the eighth commandment with its program of "bread and circuses" as our government with its welfare programs, all supported out of the public treasury. Therefore, though our understanding of the evils that are practiced against the eighth commandment by governments may not move us to sedition, it certainly ought to give us pause in making use of these government "benefits."

The civil government also legalizes disobedience to the eighth commandment in its support of labour unions and gambling. The labour unions have come to power and retained their power not so much because they have struggled against injustice and oppression in the work-place (and that in violation of the fifth commandment), but rather because they allow greed and discontent with one's God-given lot in life to proceed unchecked. That same greed and discontent is the motive behind all gambling. Solomon might have been writing of just these things when he said that "hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied" (Prov. 27:20). Gambling is, however, an even greater evil against this commandment in that it is an attempt to satisfy greed apart from the means that God has provided for the support of our earthly life, really apart from God Himself. How different from Abram who refused to receive anything of the riches offered him by the King of Sodom, fearing even the suggestion that he had sought or obtained any wealth apart from God. His motive is clear in his confession of God as "the most high God, the Possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:21-23). We must have that same faith in God as the power of our obedience to his com-

mandment.

To our condemnation of labour unions and gambling might be added a condemnation of the common practice of suing for huge sums of money by way of compensation for various injuries, real or imagined. In many cases at least this practice has nothing to do with justice and simply constitutes another legalized means of robbery and of getting what God has not given.

We might also notice in this connection, that because the truth concerning God lies behind the eighth commandment, it is impossible that wicked men make good use of the gifts God gives them. I Corinthians 13:3 teaches us that even if a man give all his goods to feed the poor, if he have not charity, that is, the love of God, it profits him nothing. Then his "charity" is an abomination before God. Scripture even goes so far as to say that God's curse is in the house of a wicked man: that is, if we may put it that way, in his pots and pans, upon his fork and his table, in his chair and his bed, upon all his use of his possessions (Prov. 3:33). Even his plowing is sin (21:4). David echoes this in Psalm 69 when he prays that their table may be a snare to them and that which should have been for their welfare a trap (vs. 22).

Another form of robbery which is practiced in the name of Christ and His Kingdom is that of extorting from widows and from the poor their very livelihood, by persuading and cajoling them into giving everything they own "for the kingdom," leaving them and often also their families in great need. The popular evangelists and so-called churches which do this not only shear the sheep for their own popularity, prosperity, and power, but bring great dishonor to the name of God, especially when "the kingdom" only means fancy buildings, enormous religion-factories, huge social projects, showmanship, and waste.

Much closer to home, the eighth commandment also forbids various forms of stealing that cannot be punished and are not recognized by the civil authorities. When we understand that *all* we have belongs to God, including our talents and time, then it is also clear that laziness, wastefulness, miserliness, and all misuse of God's gifts are in violation of this commandment. Jesus tells, for example, of a steward who misuses his position as caretaker in his Lord's house by wasting and gluttony. Jesus speaks of this in a "story" but the story touches us too closely and is too real to be considered among the parables of Jesus. In other words, it is not part of the "mysteries of the kingdom" but a very plain and stern warning to us. The punishment of such an unprofitable servant is just. He has portion among the unbelievers, because he

does not acknowledge in his stewardship the sovereign right and rule of his master (Luke 12:42-48).

Proverbs condemns the sluggard (the lazy man) as a brother to him who is a great waster (18:9). When we are idle we steal from God, for we misuse the time He has given us. There is certainly good reason why Ephesians 4:28 says that the opposite of stealing is labour and doing an honest day's work. For that same reason the fourth commandment speaks not only of resting the seventh day, but of working the other six.

Boasting in our wealth is also forbidden. The parable of the rich fool (Lk. 12:16-21) brings that point home to us. But Deuteronomy 8 makes that boasting a matter of the heart also, so that although we may not boast openly of what we have, we nevertheless boast against God and commit great sin against the eighth commandment when we forget Him, especially as the One who gives us even the power to get wealth (vss. 11-14, 17, 18). We forget Him most of all when we do not bless and thank Him for all the good He has given.

The negative emphasis of the eighth commandment is not directed, therefore, only at the ungodly who openly practice their greed, but is directed to us, that the wickedness of our own natures may be corrected and admonished as far as this commandment is concerned. In light of the revelation of God that is given in the eighth commandment we cannot help but see our sin, so that in confessing our sin,

we pray: "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight" (Ps. 51:4). And humbled before God by that knowledge of our sins we flee to Christ, Who was crucified between two thieves, and for the salvation of one of them.

To Him we go also for grace to live a life that is in harmony with God's glory as Creator and Owner of all things. We need that grace because the calling to be a steward in the house of God is a calling which requires a great deal of self-denial. The calling to use all that God gives for His glory in the work and maintenance of the church, in the support and care of our families, in the Christian education of our children, and in the care of the poor, will often mean that we have nothing extra for our own pleasure and enjoyment. But even then we have the promise of Jesus: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

By that grace of our Lord we not only look forward to inheriting the wealth of His heavenly kingdom, but we are able now to enjoy what God has given us — something the wicked man cannot do. All these things, Paul says, are created by God to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth (I Tim. 4:3). There is, then, nothing better for a man in this life but to enjoy what God has given, but this also is from the Lord (Eccl. 3:12).

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## ***WALKING IN THE LIGHT***

*Herman C. Hanko*

# **Moral Aspects of Medical Technology (15)**

In our last article we concluded a discussion of various medical means which have been employed to enable childless couples to have children. A few other scientific techniques, techniques which we have not yet discussed, are so closely connected with this subject that they should be at least briefly addressed in connection with our broader subject.

Four such subjects have often been treated by ethicists as they ponder the problems which advances in medical science have created. These four are: frozen embryos, sex selection, cloning, and genetic alterations to improve the quality of life. We shall deal with each separately.

As we mentioned in an earlier article, various techniques have now been developed whereby embryos can now be preserved through freezing. *U.S. News & World Report* in the issue of Nov. 11, 1985 writes:

Through cryopreservation, eggs are fertilized and cooled to minus-321 degrees Fahrenheit in liquid nitrogen. In that condition, embryos could remain safe for centuries — and a couple could have their own genetic offspring even if one or both became sterile.

Yet frozen embryos present major ethical problems. "To whom do such embryos belong?" asks Michael Flower, a professor at the University of California at San Diego. "To living parents, to the estate of deceased parents, to the storage facility that maintains them, or to the state?"

I have read reports, whether they can be confirmed or not I cannot tell, which state that this practice has already been tried and living and healthy babies produced by such means. In fact some have even used the success of this program to prove that small embryos are not persons, but nothing more than globs of tissue, for, they say, if such an embryo were a person, it could not be frozen and put into a state of total hibernation.

Whether scientists have actually succeeded in accomplishing this we are not sure. We do know that God gives the wicked surprising room to develop their science and enables them to perform deeds which only fifty years or so ago would have seemed impossible. Who of us, e.g., who lived during World War II would have believed that rockets would be made which could land men on the moon for exploratory purposes? I well remember that when moon flights were first mentioned in the news media, the editor of *The Banner* confidently predicted that God would never allow men to do this. But they did, and space travel has become old hat. If God also allows men to freeze embryos for later thawing and development, God is able to do this. But it must be remembered that God allows such great sins to be committed by wicked men as they make the powers of creation subservient to their use in order that the full wickedness of men will be revealed. In this way the wicked become ripe for judgment and God is shown to be righteous in His punishment of them. One thinks of what God said at the time when men pondered the building of Babel's tower: "And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (Genesis 11:6). The confusion of languages at Babel was God's providential restraint upon the

wickedness of men so that the Church could be born and saved. But as we near the end and God gives men over to the lusts of their flesh, nothing will be restrained from them so that they may fill the cup of iniquity.

That such processes, if possible, prove that embryos are not persons, we deny, because the Scriptures are unmistakably clear on this point — as we pointed out in an article on abortion.

There is something in this practice which, in its very nature, violates the moral sense of a person who is steeped in the Scriptures. He knows it is wrong, whether he can lay his fingers on the precise reason or not. But a little thought will quickly reveal to us why this practice is wrong.

We are not now immediately concerned about the legal problems which this practice involves — which *U.S. News & World Report* refers to — although the magazine calls them "ethical problems." Nor are we primarily concerned about the motives for doing this, although we cannot think of any good motives. Some have said, as we mentioned in an earlier article, that this will guarantee the future of the race if this world and its population should be destroyed by nuclear warfare. Others want to do this because they do not want any more children than they have, and take steps to make this impossible, but are concerned that in the future they might change their minds. All these points are worth considering, but are not the real reasons why this is so terribly wrong.

In our last article we spoke at some length of the implications of the covenant for various techniques which are now in use to give childless couples children. The same truth of the covenant applies here. Children are given to parents by God. These children belong to the parents who brought them into the world and to no one else. They are given to parents to love and nurture, to bring up in the fear of the Lord and to learn the covenant ways of God's precepts. When a husband and a wife, with the children given them of the Lord, form a covenant family, then in that family is the earthly picture of the covenant-family life which God lives in Himself. The motivation for bringing forth children on the part of believers is always and only to bring forth the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not difficult to see that the freezing of embryos is in direct contradiction to this.

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Various techniques have now also been developed which enable parents to determine the sex of a child before conception. We need not go into the scientific processes which are involved in this, although up to this point, such efforts have had on-

ly partial success. It is clear that some, even within the church, may consider this to be eminently desirable. Usually parents are content with whatever sex the Lord is pleased to give to parents, thankful when the Lord has made all things well for the mother and the new-born child. But sometimes parents are, for one reason or another, bitterly disappointed. How they desperately wanted a girl when they received a boy; or how they would have liked a boy when they already have four girls. To be able to determine the sex of a child seems desirable.

I personally have no doubt that science will perfect these techniques and will even make great use of them. It will, I fear, become very common for parents to select the sex of their child in every instance of conception and childbirth.

Is this so very wrong?

John Jefferson Davis in his book, *Evangelical Ethics*, gives his approval to this technique. He writes:

At the personal level, it would seem that such techniques are a legitimate extension of the moral argument for the proper use of contraception. Men and women as the image bearers of God have the responsibility to exercise their procreative powers for the glory of God and the advancement of his kingdom, and this includes exercising those powers in the light of rational planning and forethought. The right of dominion would extend to the choice of seeking a desired gender balance within the family.

He includes, however, some qualifications. In some instances, after a child is conceived, the sex is determined by various tests. If the child is not of the sex the parents want, abortion is considered. This type of sex selection Davis condemns. He also points out that, while at present various methods of sex selection have not been shown to produce a greater number of birth defects, this still remains a possibility, and it ought to be considered. He addresses, too, the possibility of social problems

which might arise because of sexual imbalances in the general population, but points out that no evidence of this exists.

In spite of his approval, there are, I think, two considerations which enter into the picture. The matter of sexual imbalance in the population is, in spite of Davis' remarks, something that needs to be considered. I have read somewhere, although the article is long lost, that over the whole earth slightly more men are born than women. Although the number of baby boys just about equals the number of baby girls, a few more baby boys are born than girls. If this is true, then one can see the wisdom of God also in this. God sees to it that about an equal number of both are born so that the population of the world can remain in sexual balance. But a few more boys than girls are born because the life expectancy of the male sex is lower than that of the female. Imagine what could happen if a sizeable fraction of the babies born are now chosen as to sex by silly parents who operate in their choices only on the basis of personal whims.

But another point has to be made. And I can make this point best by way of personal experience. After three boys were born into our own family, our fourth child was also a boy. We cannot deny that there was just a bit of disappointment involved in this, although we were thankful that the Lord gave us another healthy child. I remember my father saying to us that we must be careful lest we question the wisdom of the Lord in this. He reminded us that when we try to determine the sex of an unborn child, what we are really doing is trying to determine the entire life of that child, for the life of a girl would quite obviously be altogether different from that of a boy. He warned us that this determination of the life of a child is God's business, not our's. And so indeed it is.

A consideration of the subjects of cloning and genetic manipulation will have to await a future article.

**T**he first truth which we must somewhat understand in this connection is that Christ is our salvation, and that all the spiritual blessings of salvation which we need to become and to remain children of God, redeemed, delivered, sanctified, and glorified, are in Him. This truth is frequently expressed in the Word of God. The apostle Paul writes in I Corinthians 1:30 that Christ Jesus "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." In Ephesians 2:14 he writes that Christ is our peace. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to Colossians 1:14; and in chapter 2:3 of the same epistle we are told that in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. For it pleased

the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell, and in Him does dwell all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (Colossians 1:19, 2:9) Our Lord Himself proclaims that He is the bread of life, so that if anyone cometh unto Him, he shall never hunger (John 6:35, 48); that He is the living bread, which, if any man eat, he shall live forever (John 6:51); and He presents Himself as the water of life, and calls the thirsty to Him that they may drink. He is the light of the world; and he that follows after Him shall have the light of life. (John 8:12) He is the resurrection and the life; and he that believeth in Him shall never die. (John 11:25, 26) He is the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14:6)

H. Hoeksema, *The Wonder of Grace*, page 34

## FROM HOLY WRIT

George C. Lubbers

# Believing All The Scriptures (7)

*"THE RIVER OF GOD IS FULL OF WATER"*

(Gen. 2:10, Psalm 65:9)

When one reads Genesis 2:10 there comes to mind a beautiful symbolic picture of heaven's glory; it is the earthly picture of the heavenly paradise of God. Truly, we have here some indication of what makes paradise the garden of God's delight: Eden!

There is great speech in this "river of God" in the flowing of this river out of Eden to water the garden. We read: "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads."

Surely we ought to take notice of the teaching of the Bible concerning God's river in both the earthly and in the heavenly paradise. Each had its own river, the one is an earthly, the other is heavenly. Howbeit, the earthly is a figure of the heavenly river to come.

Surely this is not some fantasy of man, but it is really the warp and woof of the clear teaching of the Bible. Without seeing this relationship in the work of God we are unable to form any real knowledge of the heavenly paradise. Also in the earthly Garden of Eden we see already something of the hope of heaven and earth. Here in this earthly paradise there is nothing of the vanity of vanities yet to which the "creature" was subjected in hope. However, the basis of this hope of heaven and earth was increased in Paradise, and that, too, possibly on the third day of creation week, of what is called the *Hexahemeron*. God created the world in six days. On the third day He created grass, herbs, fruit trees yielding their fruit. Amongst all these trees stood also the three of knowledge of good and evil, as well as the tree of life.

It is likely that these two trees are placed there by a special dispensation of God. It is beyond doubt the finishing touch of the prefiguration of the new heavens and of the new earth. When God saw all that He had made and "behold, it was very good" this surely included the fact that the earthly would serve the heavenly, and that indeed all things were "made by Christ and for him," (Col. 1:6b). For the eternal Son is the Firstborn of all every creature, (Col. 1:15; Rev. 3:14 and I Tim. 1:17).

Hence, we may indeed say that in Gen. 2:10 we read some wonderful revelatory language; the Scriptures must interpret the Scriptures. We hear the glad strains concerning the heavenly grace and glory from out of God's holy temple.

This is particularly true of what we read concerning the river which flowed out of Eden to water the garden. As we hope to point out, this river is very unique indeed. The water flowed out of the most holy place in the garden of Eden; it went out to water the garden, and from thence watered the entire earth. We ought to notice the following particulars a bit in depth:

1. It is called a "garden eastward in Eden." It faced toward the east, toward the rising of the sun. It was, as such, the garden of God's delight. Here the Lord of hosts placed, so to speak, His throne on earth, as dwelt among man; it was His holy habitation on earth, where man could dwell with God, hearing his voice upon the wind of the day. Here God walked with man, whom He had created in His own image, in true knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Man might thus know his God and serve Him in love and have fellowship with God, reading the Word of God in creation, (Gen. 2:19, 20). This description of delight is picked up in the *Song of Songs* by Solomon: "A fountain of waters, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Awake, o north wind; and come thou south: blow

upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into my garden, and eat his pleasant fruits", (Song of Solomon 4:15, 16).

2. Now we read that God "planted the garden eastward in Eden and there He put the man whom he had formed." The *entire earth* was for the animal world and for creeping things, but *the garden* was the habitat of man, in the covenant of fellowship with the living God, creator of heaven and earth. The garden was the dwelling place of Adam, the son of God, (Luke 3:38b).

3. It is quite clear from the description of Paradise that that which made Eden such a wonderful place, was that it was the center of the earthly creation. All life, joy, and peace for the creature came from out of God's holy place. It all proclaimed that the world and its history was God-centered. Here stood the tree of life; it was a *tree* and not a mere vine or shrub. It was something great and royal. The tree in Scripture is a picture of a place where man, animals and birds seek and find shelter. Besides, it was *fruit* tree. It was the tree which yielded life to those who ate from it, (Matt. 13:22; Dan. 4:12-14).

4. It is safe to say that this tree was indeed a *Wonder Tree*; it was different from all other trees in the garden. However, it found its antithesis in the tree of knowledge of good and evil And the wonder of this tree of life was that it was connected with the Word of God to Adam. It was not standing there as a mere enigma for man to decipher, but it was connected with the Word of God as He called Adam unto obedience of love and godliness. Adam stands here not merely as an individual, but he represents Eve his wife, and the entire human race. He is their legal head, (Rom. 5:12).

5. All other trees were made with *the seed* in the fruit. These trees all propagated themselves. Not so this tree of life. This tree was not designed for becoming other young saplings, which would grow into "tree of life" species. It was a one-time tree. Its fruit was more wonderful than the manna which later fell from heaven in the desert. One ate of the bread from heaven and died in the wilderness (John 6:31-33). Not so this fruit of the tree of life. When one ate of this tree he would not die physical death. It had life-sustaining power. It was indeed a Wonder tree, different from all other trees. It stood in the holiest place of God in the garden. It was a "figure" of the tree of life in the heavenly Paradise of God (Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14). The entire symbolism of Rev. 22:7 is based upon, finds its picture in what we read of the earthly paradise in Genesis 2 and 3.

In close connection with the foregoing is what we read concerning the river which flowed from

Eden, the center of the garden, where stood the tree of life. It appears that the river which flowed from Eden into the garden to water it had its fountain-head at the tree of life. In a sense this water, too, was water of life — life, earthly life for man, beast, and all the other trees of the garden. For this water and this river were quite different from any river which we know. Let us attend to the following matters:

1. There was only one river which flowed from the garden. It had its source from one fountain, and only one. There is not evidence in all of the Scriptures prior to the flood to believe that there were other rivers in existence.

2. It was one river that watered the garden. After it left the garden it became into four heads of four rivers to irrigate the earth. It was God's great irrigation system.

3. These heads which controlled this great irrigation system are *four* in number. Yes, these were very literally, historically four branches of the one river of God. At the same time the number four in Scripture often symbolizes the four corners of the earth, to the east, west, north and the south. All the earth surrounding Eden and the garden of God was watered by these rivers. Yes, the river of God was here, too, full of water. There was abundance for the creature; not a groan or a sigh was heard from the throat of man or beast or bird. There was no evidence of the vanity of vanities of which the Preacher speaks, (Ecclesiastes 1:2-11).

These rivers, spoken of in Gen. 2:10, did not empty into the sea, nor did they have their source high up in the mountains, as do the great rivers which we know in every continent of the world! Our State of Colorado has evidently more rivers starting in it than any other state in the United States. Rivers from both the east and the west start at the continental divide where we find the never-summer range of snow and ice. These rivers run down the mountain-sides, gathering momentum as they proceed. Unless these waters are arrested by dams, harnessed in water canals, they serve no useful purpose for any farmer or industry. Not so this river of God flowing from out of Eden's fountain near to the tree of life. These were indeed not like the restless waters of the sea which cannot be quieted; they were not angry waters. Here Adam could jubilate: O, God, thou leadest man and beast and bird besides still waters! What a feeling of quiet and security Adam must have experienced beside these waters which flowed from out of the earthly holy place of God unto the four corners of the world!

Yes, these waters were in a sense the archetypal prefiguration of the waters which would one day

flow from out of the heavenly temple of God — from under the east gate of the temple as envisioned by Ezekiel. For these waters were not murky, death-infested waters due to malaria-carrying mosquitoes. They were not the waters of Egypt turned to blood, nor the waters as in the cursed Dead Sea, (Ex. 7:19-25; Gen. 19:23-25). Thanks be to God, they were not like the waters of land, sea and rivers spoken of in Rev. 8:6. They were pure life-affording waters. Death and sorrow were not aided by these waters. They were pristine waters, abundant waters flowing from the fountain of God's love, fresh and clean!

If we keep the foregoing in mind we shall also be able to see, that when God subjected the earth to vanity, this subjecting of all things had its starting-point in the Garden of Eden. This Eden, too, be-

longed to the earth which was cursed for Adam's sake. Judgement ever begins at the "house of God". This is also true at the time of the fall of man. Also here in the garden of Eden God visited Adam and Eve. However, He did so in such a way that the earth, the creature, was subjected to vanity in hope of one day sharing in the redemptive labors of Christ, who is the Firstborn of all creatures, as the Firstborn out of the dead! God removed these waters of the garden of Eden. (Col. 1:18).

This too belonged to the things which shall be shaken that God might bring in the inheritance which cannot be shaken or moved, yea, the River of God which is full, and which shall never go dry, (Ps. 65:5 ff.; Ezekiel 47:1 ff.; Rev. 22:1-6).

Yes, these sayings are faithful and true!

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## ALL AROUND US

Gise J. Van Baren

# Church Union in the Netherlands To Pay Or Not To Pay (Quotas)

## Church Union in the Netherlands:

The *Clarion*, Feb. 2, 1987, quotes from an Australian church magazine, *Una Sancta*, Dec. 20, 1986, concerning the developing church union between the (synodical) Reformed Churches and the state church, the Reformed (hervormde) Church. The article correctly points out that this union can surely not be reason for any kind of joy in Reformed churches. Rather, it is part of the continuing activity of the churches of the world to seek union — not on the basis of the truth, but simply to erase all distinctiveness.

Two large church groups in the Netherlands have reached the final stage of their preparations for unification. The (synodical) Reformed Churches and the (old) Reformed (hervormde) Church are the two partners in this historical process. In the past our (Free) Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and in

Australia have had close ties with both church groups. It was as follows: in the beginning of the 19th century the (old) Reformed Church had seriously deviated from the way of God's Word and the Confession. The result of a heavy struggle was that in 1834 under the leadership of Rev. H. de Cock the separation took place. The faithful people who left the old church continued their church life under the name of the *Reformed Churches in the Netherlands*.

Unfortunately, years later the Reformed Churches, too, came into serious crisis of unfaithfulness. In the years about 1944/1945, again, a separation took place, the so-called *Liberation of 1944*. The people who wanted to remain faithful to the Reformed Confession continued their church life under the name of the *(Free) Reformed Churches*.

So, the two large church groups which are preparing the above mentioned unification are churches which in the past had left the way of the Scriptures. After many years they try to re-unite, to become one again.

Recently, a so-called *Combi-Synod* was held; that is a sort of combined Synod from both groups. That

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Gise J. Van Baren is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.



meeting decided that both churches are now *in the process of unification*. The decisive step has been made. There is no way back. Soon, the — what they call — unity, will be a fact. It means that after the final date both churches will discontinue their existence; they will establish a new church with a new name; and another identity.

It is certain that several of our brothers and sisters will feel this development as a painful experience. The church to which they have belonged seals and confirms its way of apostasy by an amalgamation which has no Scriptural basis, does not lead to a real unity in truth and confession, and is not a fruit of a sincere conversion from ecclesiastical injustice and un-Scriptural manipulations. Both churches ignore the unrighteousness which in the past has caused much bitterness, pain and disunity. In this atmosphere, there is no reason for joy. On the contrary, this development increases the darkness in a country in which the unfaithfulness, ungodliness and normlessness have already reached an alarming level.

### ***To Pay Or Not To Pay (Quotas):***

One hears increasingly of the withholding of quotas within the Christian Reformed Church as a means of protesting actions which some regard as anti-Scriptural and anti-confessional. The withholding of such quotas is having a definite effect upon some of the agencies within that church. And while one can sympathize with the agony of soul of many who deplore the drift in the CRC, still the question does arise whether this is the proper method of protest. If one does not gain relief from the church bodies, does not one either have to submit — or withdraw from the denomination? Even while withholding quotas, one remains part of the larger body, and thus also corporately responsible for the actions of the body. The anguish is expressed in an article appearing in *Christian Renewal*, Feb. 23, 1987 (Rev. John Hultink):

... May our synod and may our church visitors insist that it is the obligation of the individual churches to pay its quotas 100 percent regardless of what is being taught? Why would a congregation want to pay church quotas to a cause which it sincerely believes is undermining the reformed character of the denomination? Whom must it obey? God or man?

But hold it a minute, you say! Are there actually instances where a cause we support is in conflict with what we believe? Friends, there are so many instances that it is dizzying. Here are just a few.

**Calvin Seminary:** The Board of Calvin Seminary recently hired Dr. Henry De Moor. They hired him to teach church polity at the seminary. Dr. De Moor has written a dissertation in which he argues, very eloquently, that women should occupy all offices in the church. De Moor's views are in fundamental conflict with the position taken by the denomination. Yet the Board has chosen to hire him without a word of explanation to the denomination.

**Calvin College:** A number of college professors teach evolution which members of the denomination believe to be in open conflict with Scripture and our confessions. Yet on numerous occasions the Executive Committee of the College Board through the Board's secretary has defended the views of the professors as biblical and reformed.

**The Banner:** Over the years the editor of *The Banner* has unashamedly used its pages to promote his conviction that women ought to occupy all offices in our church. In an editorial in the December 1, 1986 issue of *The Banner* entitled, "Poles Apart" he reveals how biased he is on this issue. Open defiance of the church order at Eastern Avenue CRC is discussed as normal. *The Banner* has contributed much to the confusion surrounding such issues as abortion, homosexuality, and more recently via the article by Prof. Stek written about common-law marriages. An attempt by Classis Florida requesting the editor to account for some of his views and practices ended in frustration and red tape . . .

**Home Missions:** Meadowvale Community CRC was started as a Home Missions church in Mississauga, Ontario. During the last number of years this church has distinguished itself by being more Pentecostal than reformed both in its teachings and conduct. The practice is allowed to continue. As a matter of fact, Meadowvale is in the process of urging others within the denomination to move in a similar direction. It has even started faith healing sessions. Unordained members preach from its pulpit on a regular basis. Why would anyone within the CRC want to support this kind of activity with quota support to Home Missions?

We have come together to be a church. And we have agreed to be reformed in doctrine and practice. We don't have to be. But we have agreed that is what it means to be CRC. The centrality of the proclamation of the Word, God's Word and not the personal experiences of one minister or another. We confess belief in God the Creator, not God the evolutionist, and we take Genesis literally. Published materials prepared by CRC Publications should be in harmony with Scripture and our confessions. So why would we want to give quota monies to causes which teach and practice otherwise? . . .

*During this busy  
Spring season, make  
time to read and study  
the Standard Bearer!*



## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

John A. Heys

# The Certainty of a Perfect Church

There are certain truths that are taught in Scripture which must be borne in mind, if one is to understand and appreciate the book of Jonah. And having followed the incidents recorded in that book, we do well to look at the entire book in the light of all that happened before the days of Jonah, happened afterward in the Old Testament times, is recorded in the New Testament Scriptures, but also is the situation of the church of today.

Let it first of all be recalled what we read in Colossians 1:18, where Paul wrote: "And He is the head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence." Plainly Paul is speaking about Christ, for surely He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. And He is the Head of the body, that is, the church.

Now turn to I Corinthians 12:12-18. There we read, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ . . . For the body is not one member, but many . . . If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him."

These passages plainly teach the truth that the church is the body of Christ and has many members. These members are not alike but differ in many ways. Bear in mind also that the members of that church who dwelt in Colosse and in Corinth were not Jews but Gentiles, even as the saints in Nineveh who were converted through Jonah's preaching were Gentiles. All believers then, regardless of nationality and genealogy, belong together;

the people of Nineveh needed Jonah, and he needed them.

Consider also the truth that God designed that body, even as He designed the bodies of Adam and Eve. They had bodies with exactly so many fingers and toes, arms and legs, eyes and ears, teeth and bones. And these differ not only in size but also in color, shape, and in the work they will perform. All was designed in God's wisdom and realized in His power. And although Jonah questioned not the inclusion of some Ninevites into that body, he sinned against members of the same body to which he belonged when he took ship to flee to Tarshish. He sinned against the body to which he belonged, and in doing so hurt himself. A finger that pokes its own eye hurts itself.

Jonah, therefore, deserved that storm of God's wrath at sea. And it was God's grace that kept him from dying in his sin. He was saved through the cross of Christ, to which his own three days and three nights in the belly of the fish pointed, even though it did not take place yet for many years. It *did* picture what God would do in His grace for the members of that body of Christ, and how there could be such a body. Jesus Himself pointed to this in Matthew 12:40. It was the same grace that God showed to the elect in Nineveh. And even as He brought Jonah safely to land, He spared the city, wherein these Ninevites lived, for their sake.

It is also worth noting that by sending Jonah to Nineveh, God was teaching the church of that day, but also teaching us, that a number of Gentiles were going to be added to the body of Christ. Jonah did not see that or want a prophet sent to gather them; but the time was getting ripe for such an addition to the body of Christ. The shingles of a house cannot be laid before the foundation is dug and the walls are erected. A child is born without teeth, and

they come in many months later. A beard does not appear on the face of a man for many years after the day of his birth. So there is a time when this and that member is added to the church and can be added to it. And the time had come for certain Ninevites to be added.

Not only does the church which God eternally planned call for more Gentile converts to be added to it than in the Old Testament dispensation; but it is an undeniable fact that the nation of Israel, out of which the overwhelmingly larger number of members to that body of Christ were joined, was becoming more and more wicked and like unto Nineveh. After the death of Solomon, the kingdom was divided. A relatively small group from two tribes formed the Kingdom of Judah and continued to worship God in His temple, as He taught them through Moses. Ten tribes formed the Kingdom of Israel and initiated a national idolatry of worshipping God by golden calves, as Aaron had taught them at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Then their King Ahab turned them into greater idolatry by turning them completely from God to serve Baal. It did not take long before Judah's king, Jehoram, married the daughter of Baal-worshipping Ahab and Jezebel and introduced Baal worship into the Kingdom of Judah. And what Jonah failed to see was that his own nation with Baal-worshipping kings was becoming so much like Nineveh. It was not too long after his days that God, Who did not overthrow Nineveh, overthrew not only Israel but also Judah, and sent the two tribes into Babylonian captivity. Jonah should not have been surprised that God would send him to Nineveh to preach.

Now we do well to bear in mind the fact that the Nineveh, to which we belong, is being spared for the sake of the members of Christ's body who are in it, or will be born in it, and it must be spared for them to be gathered into His church, and many Jonahs must be sent to bring them to repentance and faith. A Rahab had to have spies sent to her. A Ruth had to have a family from out of Israel come into Moab to teach her, and a Lot and his daughters had to be spared the overthrow of Sodom. And Jonah should have gone to Nineveh without complaint. God also asks him, "And should I not spare Nineveh?" He does not ask, "And may I not spare Nineveh?" Jonah did not question God's right but His wisdom.

And let it be stated here that, though it may have looked that way to Jonah, it was not a "common grace" that spared Nineveh. It was for the sake of these believing children of God, not for the wicked, unbelieving element in that godless city. In fact it would look more like "common grace" for God to destroy the city! Now they were given added years and added earthly goods with which they sinned.

Had God in forty days overthrown Sodom, these wicked inhabitants would have gone to hell. But their degree of punishment would not be as great as it now is. It is not grace to give sinners more opportunity to sin. It increases their punishment.

No, God had that body of Christ in mind when He spared Nineveh from overthrow. At the right time He gathers the right people and implants them in the church, the body of Christ. And we do well to hold on to the truth of His omnipotence and wisdom as well as His grace. He may take a loved one away from us by the cold hand of death. But He does it at the right moment and in the right way, because the body of Christ in glory needs that person at that time. It may be an infant that is only a few minutes old, or an aged person who has spent many years as a helpless invalid in a nursing home. But the particular place in that body of Christ that God eternally designed determines when that person with this or that nature — which is now sanctified — with these talents, of this color, race, brought up in this culture, having this language and psychological makeup, realized by being born from this and that man and woman, will be brought into it. All is in the wisdom of God. It is not what He finds, but what He planned and made that assures us that a perfect body of Christ will appear in the day when He returns upon the clouds of heaven. Everything, without the smallest exception, happens in our lives with a view to that day. We are being trained and prepared in this life, with a view to that life to come. With God there are no mistakes. And He is never frustrated in gathering the members of that body of Christ. Not one of the innumerable host — innumerable as far as man is concerned — will fail to reach the place eternally planned for him, and he will be there to do exactly the work in that new Jerusalem that God in His wisdom eternally planned. A perfect church is coming!

Moved and guided by the Spirit, the psalmist in Psalm 107:1-3 wrote, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy. And gathered them out of all lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north and from the south." And surely there is something prophetic here. For today Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19 are surely being fulfilled. He said unto the disciples, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." That is being done today. And with much improved means of transportation and communication, the church is being built up, with the members of Christ's body that were eternally decreed being contacted with the Word of God. There are people east and west of the land of Canaan, north and

south of no matter where you stand, and from this race and that race, this color and that color brought not only much closer by jet aircraft transportation, but by means of radio and television are contacted from a point that may be on the other side of the world. The God Who sends His Jonahs today also led man into all these discoveries and inventions, because He is going to bring forth a perfect church, the body of Christ with no members missing; and no overthrow of any nation, no nuclear devastation that would take away the life of one of those decreed members of that body before the right time and before that one has been brought to conversion, can or will take place.

What happened Nineveh is normal, even though Jonah considered it abnormal. Look at the church, not at the world, if you want to see the wisdom of God as well as His grace, mercy, kindness and slowness to anger. It was for the sake of the church, not for the sake of the enemies of that church who were living in Nineveh, that God spared it.

The book of Jonah ends with silence on Jonah's part. He has nothing to say that should be said, unless it is to praise and thank God. There is no room to complain or question what God does. Before we speak, we had better change our minds as to what ought to be done. God's church comes

first. The unbelievers are here to serve that church, even though it may look to us, with our limited vision, as though they are ruining the church of God, and are keeping Christ's body from being perfect. Nothing is farther from the truth. They look to us as a hammer and saw, fire and storm; and we feel the pain of being pounded, cut and burned. But rest assured that they are completely under God's control and do not hurt His church one bit. As God used the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, together with Pilate and the Roman soldiers, to get Christ on His cross, so it is with all the unbelievers. They serve the fulfillment of God's counsel, not only to prepare the way for Christ to return, but also to do all that is necessary to every member of the body of Christ, so that he reaches his place.

Jonah did not see how the sparing of Nineveh would be good for the church; but it was. As Paul encourages us with the truth that all things work together for our good, and that nothing separates us from the love of God, so it is. The church of Christ will have all of its members in a perfect condition and in the right places as members of the body of Christ. When that day comes, we will see the wisdom of God and what a wonderful plan He had eternally with Him and executed perfectly in the smallest detail.

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## IN HIS FEAR

*Arie den Hartog*

# Worldliness

Worldliness is one of the greatest dangers that constantly faces the individual Christian and the church as a whole. Many a Christian has been ruined by worldliness. Whole churches have been destroyed by it. When the Christian or the church becomes worldly it loses its testimony in the world, it is no longer worthy of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, it ceases to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. When the church becomes

worldly, she becomes the object of mockery to the world, and the occasion of reproach of the name of the Lord she worships and serves, and of the truth she confesses. Scripture warns us so very strongly against the evil of worldliness. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God," James 4:4. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of

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*Arie den Hartog is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Randolph, Wisconsin.*

life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever," I John 2:15-17. How very serious these passages of God's word are! There is an absolute antithesis between the love of the world and the love of God, so much so that anyone who loves the world is called an enemy of God. *All* that is in this world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of God. What absolute language. There can be no compromise. The Christian must constantly maintain the absolute antithesis with the world in which he lives. There can be no engaging in and taking pleasure in the things of this world. In the measure in which the Christian does this he does not possess the love of God. The great call of the Lord is, "come out from among them, and be ye separate," II Corinthians 6:17. And again in Revelation 18:4 we read this warning from the Lord; "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." These are words of warning given in connection with the announcement of the fall of the Babylon of this world. Constantly, and under the instigation of the devil, the world is seeking to build its Babylon. The purpose of the devil is to try to get as many of the members of the church as possible to become citizens of Babylon. His purpose is as much as possible to obliterate all distinction between the world and the church. His purpose is somehow to tempt every Christian to follow after the abominations of the world.

God Himself has made us to differ from this present evil world by the wonderful work of His grace and Holy Spirit in us. Scripture often reminds us of this. It speaks of the wonderful and absolute difference that God has made. "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in time past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others," Ephesians 2:1-3. That must all be left behind us. We have now been made new creatures in Christ Jesus, fashioned after the image of Christ Jesus, renewed in the true knowledge of God and created in true righteousness and holiness. We are called to walk in the good works which God has ordained for us and to show forth the glorious praises of our God who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. We will never do that if we are worldly. We must be a separate, holy, and peculiar people unto the Lord our God.

We must not set our affection upon the things in this present world, but on the things which are

above. Our whole conversation as Christians must be heavenly in perspective. This alone by the grace of God will keep us from worldliness. We must always remember that we are but pilgrims and strangers in this world. We have the hope of the glorious inheritance that is reserved in heaven. Because of this hope we have to forsake the world and its lusts and keep ourselves pure and holy unto the day of the coming of our Lord.

Worldliness is a subject little spoken of in modern day churches. It is considered to be a subject which the old Puritans discussed and wrote books about but which is not very relevant for today. It is considered a matter of greater urgency for the church to accommodate as much as possible to the world and seek to be relevant to the people of the world. At all cost the modern day church does not want to be considered too conservative and out of step with the times. The church must bend over backwards to prove to the world how tolerant it can be and how free in permitting any and all sorts of life styles that men might choose for themselves. Discipline and excommunication from the church because of worldly and ungodly living is almost unheard of. We must tolerate all things in the supposed "love of Christ" spirit. Because of the awful state of gross worldliness in so many churches, it is necessary for the true church of Jesus Christ to maintain a separatist stand. We as Christians and as churches must condemn the great evil of worldliness that is so prevalent in many churches. We must not imagine that all who call themselves Christians are truly people of God whose teaching and example we can follow.

Besides taking a separatist stand over against the modern apostate church and condemning the worldliness in her midst, we must also be constantly on our guard against worldliness coming into our own lives as Christians, and into our own churches. In order to do that we have to identify worldliness in our own life and in our own midst. Worldliness takes on many forms. Each age brings new forms of worldliness. It is not good enough to imagine that we have kept ourselves from worldliness if we have merely avoided the areas of worldliness which have for many years been condemned, such as worldly entertainment, dancing, and movie attendance. There are many more forms of worldliness than these. It is often the case that people who condemn worldliness in these areas are grossly guilty of it in other areas of their lives.

We must maintain our doctrinal foundations if we are to stand fast against the tide of worldliness. The origin of our churches had to do with the whole issue of common grace. One of the great reasons why our spiritual forefathers condemned the teachings of common grace is because this false

doctrine seeks to make a compromise between the Christian and the world, between Jerusalem and Athens. We must maintain steadfastly the doctrinal heritage of our church. But we must also maintain our doctrinal position in our practice lest we compromise the very thing which our forefathers fought so hard to maintain by the actual conversation of our life. We must always ask the question very directly; "Are we becoming worldly?" It is with this in mind that we purpose to write something further on this subject in coming installments for this department.

We are aware of the great dangers involved in approaching this subject directly and from a practical perspective. The whole matter of worldliness and our calling to be separate from the world has often been misunderstood. Many well-meaning Christians have failed to see that the antithesis between the world and the Christian is not a physical but a spiritual one. These have advocated that we must totally isolate ourselves physically from the world, restricting as much as possible any contact we have with the world. This of course is wrong. This kind of teaching does not guard against real worldliness. History has proven again and again that advocates of such a position have often themselves lived in the grossest worldliness. The Lord calls us to live in the midst of this world and yet be truly spiritually separate and distinct from it. The real test of the Christian life comes as we live next to and in the midst of the world. There we must bear our Christian testimony and there we must show forth the distinctive virtues of the grace of God in our lives. There have also been many advocates of separation from the world who have in fact been nothing but legalists and Pharisees who have sought to restrict again the liberty which we have in Christ. We may not lay upon the conscience of the Christian any burden which our Lord Himself does not give to us. The position of legalism will only lead to a spirit and attitude that is judgmental of our fellow saints. There are things of our Christian life that belong to Christian liberty. On the other hand we need

always also to take heed to the warning of the apostle Paul that we use not our liberty as an occasion to sin. We must not excuse in our life what is clearly condemned in the Word of God. With this in mind we seek to consider some of the areas of worldliness that threaten us, and by contrast how we as children of God ought to live.

We are called to live in spiritual separation from the world as the holy and peculiar people of the Lord. Separation is first of all a matter of the heart of the child of God. He must not love the world nor set his affections upon the things of this world. We must separate ourselves spiritually from the world in its worldly purposes and objects and desires. We must be absolutely separate from the materialism, selfishness, man-centeredness and covetousness of the world. We must be separate from the lust and adultery and fornication that characterizes so much of what the world does. We must separate ourselves from the ungodly speech of the world. Our whole life must be different: all our goals and purposes. Our conversation must be different. The things we spend most of our time and money on must be different. This must be real and evident. If our conversation is largely about the same things as our neighbor's, who is not a Christian, then we are in danger of becoming worldly. If most of our talk is about making money, about our businesses and farms, about sports and vacations, then we are in danger of becoming worldly. The question of worldliness must be answered on the basis of how we spend our time, what brings us the greatest joy, what is the chief interest of our life. Is the Lord really central in our life? Are our hearts and souls and conversation filled with the things of God and of His truth and kingdom? Do we know the statistics of our favorite sports heroes but very little about the truth of the Bible? Then we have become worldly in that area of our life. As we continue to consider this subject in future articles, let us humbly examine ourselves before the Word of God. May the Lord by His grace make us more truly God-centered and less worldly in all our life.

## Book Review

**SALVATION — THE GIFT OF GOD OR THE CHOICE OF MAN?** by W. H. Molland; A. Wheaton & Co. Ltd., Exeter. 86 pp., 3 pounds (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

This book was sent to me by the pastor of the

North Road Chapel (Evangelical) in Bideford, England, along with the note: "This . . . book just published . . . has been written out of a deep concern as to the need in this present day for a clear statement of the 'Doctrines of Grace.' If after

# Directory, Protestant Reformed Churches

(For our readers who may be traveling or may wish to visit one of our churches in their area.)

<p>Covenant Prot. Ref. Church 454 Pulis Ave. Franklin Lakes, N.J. (Meeting in United Methodist Church) Services: 11:30 &amp; 7:00 Phone: (201) 790-4732</p> <p>Byron Center Prot. Ref. Church 8840 Byron Center Ave. Byron Center, MI (Meeting in Byron Center Chr. Jr. High School) Services: 9:30 &amp; 5:00 Phone: (616) 878-3255, 534-1927</p> <p>Hope Prot. Ref. Church 1580 Ferndale, SW (Corner of Riverbend &amp; Ferndale) Walker, MI Services: 9:30 &amp; 7:00 Phone: (616) 453-3253, 453-2524</p> <p>Kalamazoo Prot. Ref. Church 4515 Green Acre Dr. Kalamazoo, MI Services: 9:30 &amp; 6:00 Phone: (616) 381-3385, 349-4420</p> <p>Randolph Prot. Ref. Church 229 Hammond St. Randolph, WI Services: 9:30 &amp; 2:00 Phone: (414) 326-5642</p> <p>Hull Prot. Ref. Church 1204 Third St. Hull, IA Services: 9:30 &amp; 7:00 (May to Sept.) 9:30 &amp; 1:30 (Oct. to April) Phone: (712) 439-1326, 439-1283</p> <p>Hope Prot. Ref. Church Isabel, SD Services: 9:30 &amp; 2:00 Phone: (605) 466-2450</p> <p>Hope Prot. Ref. Church 1307 E. Brockton Ave. Redlands, CA Services: 10:00 &amp; 7:00 Phone: (714) 792-0307, 792-4923</p>	<p>First Prot. Ref. Church 2800 Michigan St., NE (1/2 Mi. SW of I96/M44 interchange) Grand Rapids, MI Services: 9:30 &amp; 6:00 Phone: (616) 247-0638, 245-4339</p> <p>Southwest Prot. Ref. Church 4875 Ivanrest Ave., SW Grandville, MI Services: 9:30 &amp; 7:00 Phone: (616) 532-6876, 532-4846</p> <p>Faith Prot. Ref. Church 7194 20th Ave. Jenison, MI Services: 9:30 &amp; 7:00 Phone: (616) 457-5848</p> <p>First Prot. Ref. Church 290 E. 18th St. Holland, MI Services: 9:30 &amp; 6:30 Phone: (616) 396-8303</p> <p>Pella Prot. Ref. Church 410 Franklin St. Pella, IA Services: 9:30 &amp; 7:00 Phone: (515) 628-4747</p> <p>Doon Prot. Ref. Church 6th Ave. &amp; N. 2nd St. Doon, IA Services: 9:30 &amp; 2:00 Phone: (712) 726-3382</p> <p>Loveland Prot. Ref. Church 709 E. 57th St. Loveland, CO Services: 9:30 &amp; 6:00 (Oct. to May) 9:30 &amp; 7:00 (June to Sept.) Phone: (303) 667-1347</p> <p>Lynden Prot. Ref. Church 108 Beernink Lane Lynden, WA Services: 10:00 &amp; 8:00 (summer) 10:00 &amp; 2:00 (winter) Phone: (206) 354-4337</p>	<p>Southeast Prot. Ref. Church 1536 Cambridge, SE Grand Rapids, MI Services: 9:30 &amp; 5:00 Phone: (616) 452-7047</p> <p>Grandville Prot. Ref. Church Wilson Ave., SW Grandville, MI (Meeting in Grandville High School) Services: 9:30 &amp; 7:00 Phone: (616) 538-2575</p> <p>Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church 5101 Beechtree Ave. (1 Blk. East of Public High School, 32nd Ave.) Hudsonville, MI Services: 9:30 &amp; 7:00 Phone: (616) 669-0755</p> <p>South Holland Prot. Ref. Church 16511 South Park Ave. South Holland, IL Services: 9:30 &amp; 6:00 Phone: (312) 333-1314, 596-3113</p> <p>Trinity Prot. Ref. Church 214 Barker-Clodine Rd. Houston, TX Services: 9:30 &amp; 6:00 Phone: (713) 492-0844</p> <p>Edgerton Prot. Ref. Church 3rd &amp; Maple St. Edgerton, MN Services: 9:30 &amp; 7:30 (March to Nov.) 9:30 &amp; 2:00 (Dec. to Feb.) Phone: (507) 442-4441</p> <p>First Prot. Ref. Church 11533 135th St. (Mt. Zion Lutheran Church) Edmonton, Alberta, Canada Services: 11:15 &amp; 3:00 Phone: (403) 455-9803 (also a service in Trinity Lutheran Church, 5259 49th St. Lacombe, Alberta, 7:30 P.M. on 2nd &amp; 4th Sundays of month)</p>
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reading it, and should you consider it worthy, any publicity or recommendation which you can give, would be much appreciated."

I consider the book worthy indeed of recommendation. It is written by one who himself has come out of Arminianism and is a clear exposition of the five points of Calvinism. Particular attention is paid to the truth of limited atonement, mainly because, while people can be found who have partly abandoned Arminianism and hold to one or more of the five points, almost none of these will admit to the truth of limited atonement. This is often the stumbling block. Not only is the author thoroughly Biblical in his development of these five points, but he also takes specific issue with Arminian errors and points out their unbiblical character and their danger when taught in the church. He even does this with the error of the well-meant offer of the gospel, though not in detail.

The only criticism I have of the book is that in its treatment of election, the author has nothing to say about reprobation. It seems as if he believes this doctrine, for passing reference is made to it elsewhere, but the truth is not developed, even though it has been a part of the historic faith of the church.

We recommend this book to all who love the truths of salvation by sovereign grace. It is simply written and easily understandable and can well serve as an introduction to those who know not these doctrines. That is, it can be used by those who encounter Arminians and are looking for an easily understood book on the truth of Scripture. The book has John Bunyan's famous "Map Showing the Order and Causes of Salvation and Damnation" appended to the back. It can be obtained from: Mr. G. Jackson, Bookroom Secretary, 7 Stanhope Terrace, Northam Road, Bideford, Devon EX39 3JZ. When ordering, add 50p for postage and packaging.

*Take the time to  
read and study  
the Standard Bearer  
with your family today!*

## News From Our Churches

*Ben Wigger*

April 15, 1987

The Church Extension Committee of our Randolph Church reported to their congregation recently on some very ambitious plans. "We want to continue to emphasize in our congregation the need for doing the work of evangelism in our community. In the past we have sponsored lectures to which we have invited people of our community. Though the fruit of our efforts has been small by human standards, let us not be discouraged. We must continue to do the work which the Lord calls us to do. For this reason we have planned several programs for the future. We plan some time in the beginning of April to conduct a short series of study classes dealing with the subject of personal evangelism. After this short series of studies we want to have a special community evening at our church where Pastor den Hartog will present a program on the work of our churches in Singapore. We

*Ben Wigger is an elder in the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.*

hope very much to invite some people from our community to our church for this meeting. We are also working on plans to hold Bible discussion groups especially adapted to invite non-members of our church."

And some news from Kalamazoo similar to the above. A committee there has begun to lay out plans for a series of seminars during the month of May.

I would say to you all; watch this news column for more details as they become available. It sounds like some exciting times coming in these two congregations.

The Building Committee of First Church in Grand Rapids brought a proposal to their Council last July to air condition the church sanctuary and narthex. This proposal was voted down at the Council's February meeting. One can only wonder how the vote would have gone if the Council had voted on a hot summer night instead of a cold



winter one.

The Building Committee also is examining the pros and cons of selling their present parsonage and building a new parsonage on the church grounds.

The Consistory of Byron Center has given their Building Committee permission to do minor site improvements on their land purchased on 84th Street. Though plans for building are not finalized, the Building Committee is working on them and they should be presented to the congregation for suggestions and response soon.

Byron Center also held their Church Potluck Supper-Volleyball Night on March 31, all those 9th Grade through adult were invited.

Rev. R. Dykstra was the featured speaker at the Spring Ladies League Meeting held in Doon, Iowa on April 2.

Rev. M. De Vries gave the Meditation at the Men's Lenten Breakfast on Tuesday, March 17 at the First Ref. Church. All the men of the congregation in Edgerton were invited to attend all of these breakfasts.

The Ladies of our Doon congregation have a Cash-for-Trash project for the Organ Fund of their church. For those of you who may not be familiar with what this is, it is simply saving your wrappers, boxes, labels, etc., and turning these items in to their respective companies for cash refunds.

As the ladies of Doon no doubt know by now, it is a lot of work but well worth the effort.

As this year's Young Peoples Convention looms closer and closer, our churches' Young People's Societies are gearing up by sponsoring many varied fund-raisers.

March 21, the Faith Church Y.P. held a pancake breakfast, which also featured french toast and sausages at the Hope Christian School gym.

March 26, Southeast's Y.P. sponsored a pot luck supper. After dinner the young people also auctioned off their services.

Southwest's congregation was also reminded recently to attend their Young People's Societies' Soup and Sandwich Supper, also held at Hope School.

And the Y.P. of Randolph also invited their fellow members to a Soup Supper on Friday, March 27. The Y.P. promised that this year they won't run out of soup.

Parents and Grandparents Visiting Day was held March 18 at N.W. Iowa Prot. Ref. Christian School in Doon. And in connection with Christian Education Week, Heritage Chr. School in Hudsonville also invited parents, friends, and grandparents to come and visit their school. Along with visitation they held an Art Fair so the students could display their art work, projects and crafts. On Tuesday, the 31st, those who were visiting were invited to an all school assembly. During this assembly the students sang, spoke and performed on musical instruments.

And one last item to leave you with, taken from the Reflector, a school paper published by the Prot. Ref. Christian School in South Holland, Ill.

Be careful of the words you say  
Keep them soft and sweet  
You'll never know from day to day  
Which ones you'll have to eat.

### NOTICE!!!

The Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed Christian School is in need of two teachers for the 1987-88 school year. One of these positions is for Grades 3, 4, and 5, and the other is for the kindergarten. Please contact Mr. Hunter, Box 67, Doon, Iowa 51235, phone (712) 726-3381 (home) or (712) 726-3200 (*school*) or Mr. A. Bleyenbergh, Box 151, Doon, Iowa 51235.

### ANNIVERSARY ANNOUNCEMENT

On March 18, 1987, our parents, MR. AND MRS. G.J. MAATMAN, celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary.

We rejoice with them and are thankful to our Lord for covenant parents who sought to teach us the way of God. We pray that they will continue to experience the blessings of our faithful God in the years that He may give them.

Norm and Jacque Maatman	11 grandchildren
John and Jackie Kucaj	3 great-grandchildren
Rodger and Sharon Maatman	

### NOTICE!!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, May 13, 1987 at the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. Material to be treated at this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least three weeks prior to the convening of this session.

Jon Huiskens  
Stated Clerk