

# THE STANDARD BEARER

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## **Office Bearers' Conference** **South Holland, Illinois** **March 6, 1990**

*See "Protestant Reformed Conference  
on Preaching" — p. 294*

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## In This Issue . . .

" . . . that they may be one, even as we are one." To that part of Jesus' high-priestly prayer Rev. Kortering calls our attention in his Lenten season "Meditation."

A wonderful concept that is. "Even as we are one." Christ's design, in those words, according to John Calvin, was "very different from that of raising us to a bare speculation on His divinity." Not simply, in other words, does Christ mean to tell us that, as the Son of God, He partakes of the divine essence. Rather does Christ speak, in this prayer, of Himself as the *Mediator*, as the *Head of the Church*. Thus, *we* are involved. For, as Calvin continues, "if the unity of the Son with the Father is not to be fruitless and useless, its power must be diffused through the whole body of believers."

And that's the marvelous, glorious truth involved in the answer to Christ's prayer. In Christ is the fullness of the Godhead. And, in the way of the answer to His high-priestly prayer, He communicates to us, by the Spirit, from that fullness, His life and all of the blessings He has received from the Father.

The prayer was uttered, really, as Rev. Kortering points out, at the foot of Calvary. And it was answered, first of all, *at the cross*, where Christ as it were by His hand presented us to God reconciled, holy, unblamable, unprovable in His sight.

Lovable we are, therefore . . . but only *in Christ*, and by His atoning death.

May we meditate on *that*, as we read "Jesus Prays That They All My Be One."

—D.D.

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## Meditation

Rev. Jason Kortering

# Jesus Prays That They All May Be One

*"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."*

John 17:20-23

Stand with me before Calvary.  
Gaze with me upon the suffering Savior.

If there is ever a time that we are inclined to question the reality of hell and God's punishment for sin, we had better pause a moment at the cross. Listen: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!" This is the Son of God crying out of hell.

But why?

The answer is in the words of our text.

Father, that they all may be one!

The Lord Jesus is very much conscious of two worlds. Concerning the world of the lost, He prayed in verse 9: "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou gavest me." Here in verse 21, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them which shall believe on me through their word . . . that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." You see, there are two worlds, the world of the lost and the world of the saved.

Our great High Priest presses to His bosom the world for which He was about to shed His blood and who would believe on Him through the gospel. These included not only the disciples, not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles. Jesus is fully aware that, not very far in the future, the veil of the temple will be rent and the darkened windows of men's hearts would see the light and come to faith.

That unity could be accomplished only in the death of the Son of God.

The focal point of faith is that cross.

Literally verse 20 reads, ". . . believe into me." The idea is that man comes from the outside and by faith comes into the inside to abide with Christ.

Such a union with Christ produces a twofold confession.

First, verse 21, ". . . that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." This deals with the true identity of Jesus. He is not

the son of Joseph and Mary. He dwelt with the Father in eternity, and in the fullness of time was sent into the world. He is the only begotten Son of God! Upon Him the Father laid the guilt of the sins of all His elect, appointed Him to endure the sentence of death that followed, and opened the way to the heavenly glory.

Secondly, verse 23, ". . . that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." What a wonder. Such knowledge is not of the flesh, it is the knowledge of faith. With such knowledge of faith we know that even while Jesus hanged upon the cross the Father loved Him, and in that way of the cross opened the way of love to us His people.

The banner over Jesus was love.

Amazing love: My God, why hast thou forsaken me!

That the world may know that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Such love produces true unity.

For that unity Jesus prays, that those who believe on Jesus may be one.

Three different times Jesus expresses this in this portion of His high priestly prayer. In verse 21 He says, ". . . as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us"; and in verse 22, "the glory which thou gavest me I have given them that they may be one even as we are one"; and finally in verse 23, "I

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in them and thou in me that they may be made perfect in one."

From these expressions, we conclude that Jesus is saying two things about this unity. First, there is a beautiful union between Jesus as Mediator and His Heavenly Father, the Triune God. This union which they enjoy together is the model for union between the saints, that they may be one even as we are one. Second, the union between the saints is not independent of Jesus, but draws its life from the union Jesus has with His Father and that makes it real. "... that they also may be one in us."

This is profoundly spiritual.

It ought to caution us that Jesus is not here praying for outward, denominational unity between churches. Much less does He pray for such unity at any cost. The ecumenicalists of our day ought to study this passage more carefully before they quote it so glibly in support of their compromising and apostasy.

Indeed, we must labor for specific expressions of the true unity of the church while we are on earth. Such outward unity must not be separated from, but founded upon, the prayer of Jesus.

Think of this: "the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them that they may be one." What is that glory? In verse 5 Jesus spoke of it as "the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Being the only begotten Son of God, Jesus partook of the divine nature. In that intimacy with the Father, Jesus participated in the divine activity, the eternal counsel of peace, the creation of the world, the providential care of the universe. He emptied Himself of that glory and became a man. He Who was rich became poor. While on earth He prayed that all His own might enter into such intimate union with the Father as He enjoyed

with Him. He gives to us the "glory" necessary to accomplish this by renewing us in the image of the Heavenly Father, as Paul wrote later: "... be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:23, 24). This forms the basis for true fellowship one with another.

There is more.

The unity for which Jesus prayed also includes a communion of love: "... as thou Father art in me and I in thee." God loved His Son, and that love was expressed most intimately in the eternal decree when the triune God spoke His eternal good pleasure into the ears of His Son. Jesus prayed that the church might be so united with Him that He would speak the words of His Father into their ears and they might hear and rejoice in Him.

Finally, Jesus prayed for the unity of purpose: "... that they may be made perfect in one." "Perfect" here is "complete." Jesus seeks the completion of the church, the gathering of every member and the ultimate consummation of all things, that this church would bring unto the Father praise and glory. As all things begin in Him, so all things must end in Him. To Him be glory forever.

The urgency for this unity is expressed by Jesus in two ways. First, verse 21: "... in order that the world may believe that thou hast sent me," and the second in verse 23: "... that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved me as thou hast loved me."

This unity within the church is crucial for the success of the gospel which is preached.

If the world (not the ungodly, but those to be saved) is to believe and know that God sent Jesus, the world of the believers must be one and united. This is

what makes the church attractive and draws others into her midst. The opposite is also true: if the church is divided, separated from the Father and Jesus His Son, forsakes the truth, and even forces a union without unity, this is an offense to the believer. Jesus prayed for true unity. That is essential for the complete gathering of the church throughout all ages.

Well may we bow before this high-priestly prayer as we consider the wonder of Calvary.

Jesus realized that the unity of His own, both with Him and with His Father, was exclusively in the hands of His Heavenly Father. For that reason He prayed. He prayed at the foot of the cross, "Father, that they all may be one!"

The answer to this prayer came to Jesus in two ways.

First, the answer came at the cross. Unity required the payment of sin. This Jesus did in humble submission. From the cross He cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He gave His life a ransom for many. With a loud voice He shouted, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost. To be sure, the earthquake, open graves, rent veil followed; but most of all the resurrection of Jesus from the dead sealed the unity of the believers in the forgiving love of God.

Second, the answer came on Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was given to Jesus so that the gospel might be preached throughout all the world and the world might be brought to their knees and confess that salvation is by grace alone. The church is made one by the effectual preaching of the gospel, for then believers come to know God as the Sovereign God of salvation from eternity to eternity.

(con't. on page 310)



## The Covenant of God and the Children of Believers (2)

### Protestant Reformed Conference on Preaching

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#### ■ The Covenant of God and the Children of Believers (2)

The covenant is not a contract consisting of the mutual obligations of God and the believer. Although earthly marriage includes the mutual duties of husband and wife, these duties do not define the marriage. Marriage is not the duties, but the one-flesh union. The covenant is not a treaty (much less a treaty modeled after the profane Canaanite treaties), any more than the relation between a believing father and his children is a treaty. Nor is the covenant a promise, although God establishes the covenant with His people by promise. Ezekiel 16:8 clearly distinguishes between the promise by which the covenant is made and sealed and the covenant which God enters into by way of the promise: "yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest Mine." Although the bridegroom takes his bride by means of a vow — a solemn oath and promise, this vow is not the marriage. The marriage is the life together of the two.

This understanding of the covenant makes clear what the true covenant members ought to expect from God and what we are required to give to God. We

expect, and ought to enjoy, God's wondrous love, God's delightful friendship, and God's comforting assurance, "I am your God, and you are My dear friends." With this, of course, we expect His care and blessing as regards both this life and the life to come: salvation! Think of the husband's nourishing and cherishing of his wife and of the parents' nurture and protection of their children.

In the covenant, God calls us to give Him our love, our friendship, and our exclusive, wholehearted service: thankfulness! Think of the devoted help that the husband desires from his wife and of the honor that parents look for from their children.

Since the friendship of God is enjoyed only through His Word, the covenant people will be marked by reverence for Scripture, for the preaching of the gospel, and for sound teaching. Since we express our friendship in prayer and in obedience to the law, the covenant people will be characterized by prayer and obedience.

At their very heart, Christian experience and Christian life are friendship with God in Jesus Christ. "Henceforth I call you not servants . . . but I have called you friends . . ." (John 15:15). This is the Reformed answer to the view of the Christian life as a "personal relationship with God." This guards the Reformed Christian against the dread error of

conceiving the life of the Christian as a cold, formal, outward observance of prescribed rules and accepted customs. And this determines the lives of Reformed Christians with each other: Marriage is friendship; family life is friendship; life in the congregation is friendship.

Two vital truths about the covenant must be noted before we go on to the matter of the place of children in the covenant. First, the covenant is God's. Deliberately, we frame our subject as we do: "The Covenant of God . . ." The covenant of God's because He conceives it, He promises it, He establishes it, He maintains it, and He perfects it. He alone does all this. He does this without the help of Abraham, of Israel, or of the church. Again and again, God says, "I will establish My covenant." When Jerusalem has broken the covenant with her abominable idolatries so that no other judgment can be expected than that God solemnly declares the covenant null and void, God amazingly says, "Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with thee . . . and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant" (Ezek. 16:60). Never does God say, "Let you and Me make our covenant." Never does Scripture teach that the covenant depends for its fulfillment upon sinful man.

The covenant is a covenant of



grace. Never is this more clearly evident than in the incarnation of the Son of God. In sheer mercy and awesome power, God did the impossible thing: He established the new covenant. We had nothing to do with it, except that our dreadful guilt, total depravity, and utter helplessness and misery made the incarnation and death of the Son of God necessary for the establishing of the covenant.

To err here is no minor matter, for all of salvation flows from the covenant. If the covenant depends upon man, so also does salvation depend upon man. A doctrine of the covenant that denies the graciousness of the covenant necessarily undermines also the "five points of Calvinism."

But the covenant is God's in a yet deeper sense. It is the revelation to us and the sharing with us of God's own, inner, trinitarian life. God's own life is friendship. The life of God is *family* friendship. The Father loves the Son Whom He has begotten and the Son loves the Father Whose image He is; and They are friends in the Holy Spirit Who proceeds from Them both and in Whom They embrace.

A mystery? Granted, if you mean that there are depths here that surpass our understanding. Nevertheless, this is revealed. The life of God is covenant life — life of the nature of Father-Son. And this life, God "lets us in on," in Christ, so that the relationship between us and God is Father-son and Father-daughter. How are we to pray? "Our Father!"

This leads to the second truth about the covenant that is vital. The covenant of God with us is all-embracing and all-dominating: The entire life of the believer — body and soul, physical and spiritual, temporal and eternal, God-ward and man-ward — is taken up into this covenant and

is controlled, arranged, and structured by the covenant. As a believer, my whole life is covenant life. God is my God, not alone on the Sabbath, but also through the week; not alone in my worship, but also in my work; not alone in my devotions, but also in my marriage and family; not alone as regards my church life, but also as regards my behavior to the State, to my employer, and to my neighbor. The friendship of God lays claim to everything, controls all, and shows itself everywhere. It makes a radical difference in the believer's experience and behavior. On the one hand, he now possesses joy, contentment, and hope. On the other hand, he walks in holiness.

This all-embracing character of the covenant is implied in the biblical figures of marriage and of the parent-child relationship. The whole life of the young woman is affected by marriage and is claimed by her husband. The relationship in which my three-year-old daughter stands to her mother and me controls her entire life. She behaves as she does, she speaks as she does, she thinks as she does, she is who she is, because she is our daughter. The relationship with her parents molds her (a thought that makes God-fearing parents tremble, and should).

One important aspect of lives that are embraced by the covenant is the family of believers. For the children of believers are included in the covenant. —DJE

## ■ Protestant Reformed Conference on Preaching

On March 6, one hundred men and women gathered in South Holland, Illinois for a day-long conference on preaching. The conference was arranged by a committee of Classis West of the

Protestant Reformed Churches in connection with the spring meeting of Classis in South Holland the next day. Classis West and its committee — Rev. Ron Cammenga and Rev. Ron Hanko — deserve the thanks of those who attended for a profitable, well-structured conference.

The theme of the conference was expressed in the keynote address: "Preaching in the Reformed Tradition." The structure of the conference was different from that of similar conferences in the past. Instead of two or three papers on a theme, an opening address was followed by three sets of "sectionals," each set consisting of three different aspects of preaching. In the sectionals, the audience split up according to preference to hear a brief introduction to a certain aspect of the theme and to discuss that aspect.

The keynote address by Professor Robert D. Decker, professor of practical theology in the PR Seminary, was a strong defense of preaching as the chief means of grace for the people of God, a fervent plea for exegetical preaching, and a compelling advocacy of the "art homily" method of constructing the sermon ("thematic preaching"). Taking note of the dismaying disappearance of this kind of preaching, indeed of preaching as such, in our time, the speaker demonstrated that such preaching is both biblical and "deeply embedded in the Reformed tradition."

The speech will be published in the April, 1990 issue of the *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal*. Readers of *The Standard Bearer* can obtain a copy of this issue of the *Journal* by writing the Seminary at 4949 Ivanrest Ave., Grandville, MI 49418, or calling (616) 531-1490.

The nine sectionals that took up the rest of the day treated the



following aspects of preaching: "Organization and Homiletics"; "Preaching from the Old Testament"; "Heidelberg Catechism Preaching"; "The Importance and Improving of Delivery"; "The Elders' Oversight of the Preaching"; "Missionary Preaching"; "Series Preaching"; "Preaching as Teaching"; and "Applicatory Preaching." A preacher introduced each topic; and discussion followed. There are benefits to structuring a conference this way. Many aspects of the theme can be treated. Participants can choose the sessions that most appeal to them. There is opportunity for questions, discussion, and debate. If this format is used in the future, it is important that the

introduction be brief and pointed and that lively discussion be encouraged.

It would be good to conclude such a conference with a plenary meeting at which the speakers and the leaders at the sectionals would answer questions arising from the sectionals and questions directed to the speeches. This would enable all who attend to share in the discussion that took place in the sectionals and would serve as a wrap-up of the conference.

As is invariably the case with conferences of this kind among us, there was the enjoyment of fellowship in the unity of the Reformed faith and life according to the "Three Forms of Unity."

We officebearers were reminded of the high calling that is ours, that there continue to be a faithful explanation of God's Word so that the congregations are built up through the preaching. It is a source of no small encouragement that there is unity of thought and purpose in the PRC concerning the vital activity of the preaching of the Word. Preachers, elders, and people are one in the confession that "the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel" (Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 65).

The women of the South Holland congregation served the conference with fine lunches and dinner. —DJE

## Response to "The 'Other Side' of Postmillennialism"

(see Letters, March 15, 1990)

### Letters

#### ■ Response to "The 'Other Side' of Postmillennialism"

There are a couple of misunderstandings which ought, perhaps, to be cleared up before I enter the substance of Rev. Jones' article.

The purpose of my article was not to refute the error of postmillennialism by means of a thorough exegetical study. If Rev. Jones is interested in such a refutation, he may consult an article I wrote earlier for an Officebearers' Conference and which was subsequently published in the *Protestant Reformed*

*Theological Journal*. The purpose of this article was to demonstrate that the biblical position, sometimes called "the Amillennial position," is not a pessimistic interpretation of Scripture, but an eminently optimistic viewpoint for the church to take. In connection with this purpose, I was compelled to warn God's people against the spiritual dangers involved in postmillennialism. It is my fervent hope and prayer that those who hold to postmillennialism "do not actually promote the kingdom of Antichrist"; but Herman Hoeksema was right when somewhere he warned God's people of the spiritual danger involved. It is not inconceivable that, if the saints are looking for

a glorious kingdom here on earth, they will be tempted to identify the kingdom which Antichrist establishes with the kingdom of Christ. It will be hard enough in that dreadful day to stand for the cause of Christ without putting other spiritual temptations in the way.

In no way did I suggest that the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is not manifested in this world. The kingdom of Christ is manifested in this present age in the preaching of the gospel to the ends of the earth; in the gathering of the church; in the establishment of covenant schools; in the godly and holy walk of the saints as they reveal in all their lives the sovereign



rule of the grace of Christ in their hearts; in the throngs of faithful in every age who do not bow the knee to Baal, but bow instead in humble worship of King Jesus.

But this manifestation of the kingdom here in the world is in sharp antithesis to the all-pervasive rule of the powers of darkness. The saints walk here in this world as citizens of the kingdom of heaven. They are, and one can consult the apostle Peter's first letter as proof of this, pilgrims and strangers in the earth who seek the heavenly kingdom and live in hope of its realization in the coming of the day of the Lord. In the meantime, they suffer persecution at the hands of the ungodly; but they rejoice even then in the hope of another day. To use the words of the Holy Spirit in Hebrews: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (vss. 13-16). And these were not simply old dispensational saints who did not understand that this "better country" was to be realized in this world, but they were that "cloud of witnesses" which surrounds us and encourages us to "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set

down at the right hand of the throne of God" (12:1, 2).

This great antithesis between the citizens of the kingdom in the world and the citizens of the kingdom of darkness is rooted in the great "antithesis" of the rule of Christ in the world. Christ indeed rules over all, including hell's demons. But Rev. Jones knows too that this rule of Christ is a rule of grace in the hearts of the elect, and a rule of power in the lives of the ungodly. Psalm 2, of all the texts in Scripture, can hardly be a support for a kingdom in the world in which all the nations shall bow in humble worship to King Jesus. If the postmillennialists are right that Psalm 2 refers to an earthly kingdom, why then does the Lord laugh? Does He laugh because He has made all the nations His willing, joyful subjects? No, the Lord's laughter is the laughter of derision. He has set His King upon His holy hill of Zion. The heathen rage and imagine vain things. They take counsel together against the Lord and His anointed. But the awful, bone-chilling laughter of the God of heaven and earth is because in all their raging they serve the purpose of the establishment of the kingdom of heaven. Indeed He *rules* them with a rod of iron; but it is nevertheless to *break* them, for He dashes them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

I am aware of the fact that the final question between amillennialism and postmillennialism is a question of the interpretation of prophecy. It sometimes seems to me that there is very little difference between the interpretation of prophecy used by the postmillennialists and that used by the premillennialists. However that may be, we had better get straight some basic principles of Old Testament prophetic interpretation before we apply such passages as Isaiah 9:7, Psalm 2,

Psalm 22:27, 28, Psalm 37:9-11, and others to a kingdom of Christ here on earth.

The limitations of an article in *The Standard Bearer* make a thorough discussion of this question impossible, although it is something that needs very much to be done.

Prophecy is part of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. In prophecy God speaks of His eternal purpose and will with respect to the salvation of His church, the triumph of the kingdom of His dear Son, and the way in which history as a whole serves His great purpose. Sometimes prophecy is predictive, sometimes not. Sometimes prophecy discusses in bold detail the "day of the Lord," sometimes it zeros in on particular circumstances in the life of the nation of Israel as the life of that nation was part and parcel of the realization of God's purpose.

The "day of the Lord" is that great day when, in distinction from the dispensation of types and shadows, God realizes His purpose. That day began with the incarnation. It ends with the return of Christ upon the clouds of heaven to make all things new. You say: "But 2000 years have elapsed in that one day?" Peter reminds us that a day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. It is the one great day of the fulfillment of God's unchangeable promise.

In speaking of that day, prophecy in the Old Testament was given within all the "trappings" of the dispensation of types and shadows. It was given within the context of the time in which God spoke typically and symbolically to a nation typical of the church of all ages, living in the typical land of Canaan, surrounded by typical ceremonies of the law; and, therefore, in all the typical language of that time. It is no



more right to identify the kingdom of Solomon spoken of in Psalm 72 with a kingdom of Christ here upon earth than it is possible to identify the raising up of the tabernacle of David (Amos 9:11) with the rule of Christ with the Jews in Palestine and the rebuilding of the old temple — especially when the Scriptures themselves inform us that the fulfillment of Amos is in the gathering of a catholic church (see Acts 15:15-18). It is a mistake to identify the rule of Christ as described in Psalm 2 with a post-millennial kingdom when Scripture itself tells us that verse 7 was fulfilled in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead (see Acts 13:33).

It is easy to refer in passing to many passages of Scripture. But one ought really to consider their meaning. Just a glance at a few of them will show how far from any postmillennial conceptions of a kingdom they are.

Psalm 22:27, 28 appears in the context of Christ's suffering. How beautiful that already in the Old Testament we have the assurance that Christ's atoning sacrifice was to exalt Him in the highest heavens so that He might gather a catholic church in which "the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him." There is no reason in the verse itself or in the whole of its context to apply this to an earthly kingdom when all the Scriptures (including the great commission — to which Rev. Jones refers) speak of that great work of God in gathering His church from all the nations of the earth.

Psalm 37:9-11 seems hardly to be a text to which a good post-millennialist would appeal, unless the reference is to the one statement: "The meek shall inherit the earth." But so far as I know, no one ever has disputed this point

that Jesus Himself makes in His sermon of the mount. That is, in fact, why believers, though beleaguered and hard-pressed in the world, live in joyful optimism. The day is coming when they shall inherit the earth. That this earth is the renewed earth when heaven and earth are joined in one perfect kingdom of righteousness is exactly the promise of Revelation 21:1.

That Isaiah 9:7 speaks of an *increase* of Christ's government is beyond dispute. But to hang a postmillennial viewpoint on that word seems to be stretching things a bit. The LXX has (translated from the Greek): "His rule shall be great." The German has: "*Auf dass seine Herrschaft gross werde.*" And this surely is the idea of the Hebrew.

And so we could continue to look at dozens of individual texts, all of which can not be interpreted as referring to an earthly kingdom of righteousness.

There are some passages in the New Testament to which Rev. Jones refers, which require a brief answer.

I am aware of the many who interpret Matthew 24 as referring only to the destruction of Jerusalem. That the Lord has this in mind is readily granted. But that the Lord speaks of His own coming at the end of the age and gives signs of that coming is His own testimony. The disciples ask: "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" The Lord does not say: "Never mind those questions; I want to discuss something else with you." He answers their earnest questions and gives them the signs of His coming and of the end of the world. That He does so in the context of the destruction of Jerusalem is not surprising when we consider that Jerusalem's destruction was the end of the dispensation of

shadows and the dawn of the age of the realization of the promise.

Presumably the reference to the Lord's parables in Matthew 13 is especially to the parables of the mustard seed and the hidden leaven. I have treated these in my book, "Mysteries of the Kingdom," and need not repeat here what was said there.

Hebrews 13:26-29 would surely not be the kind of passage a post-millennialist would appeal to. So far as I have noticed, no post-millennialist would ever say that the kingdom of Christ to be realized here upon this earth is brought about by "the removing of those things that are shaken (which, according to vs. 26, refers to heaven and earth); nor that even this glorious kingdom to be realized here on earth is a "kingdom which cannot be moved." Even an ardent Calvinistic postmillennialist believes, I think, that this earthly kingdom, as glorious as it is, shall be moved when Christ comes again.

Neither Ephesians 1:20-22 (I think this is the passage Rev. Jones refers to — his article has Eph. 21:20-22) nor I Corinthians 15:24, 25 refers to a postmillennial kingdom by any stretch of the imagination. Christ is exalted in the highest heavens over all God's works, sovereign in all history, with "all things under his feet," because He is "the head over all things to the church." And I Corinthians 15:24, 25 emphatically states: "Then cometh the end!" Christ indeed rules universally and puts "down all rule and all authority and power." He rules till He has "put all enemies under his feet." Then He delivers up "the kingdom to God, even the Father." Both, quite obviously, refer to Christ's universal rule over all the wicked by which He makes them serve the purpose of the full salvation of the church in the day of His



coming.

I am thankful that Rev. Jones refers to our Three Forms of Unity, for in all these Forms there is not so much as a breath concerning a postmillennial kingdom. Article XXXVI of the Belgic Confession I have explained in a recent issue of *The Standard Bearer*.

The explanation of the second petition in Q. & A. 123 exactly militates against such a postmillennial kingdom. We pray that God may rule *us* so by (His) word and Spirit, that we may submit ourselves more and more to (Him). We pray that the church may be preserved and increased; that the works of the devil and the world may be destroyed "*until the full perfection of thy kingdom take place, wherein thou shalt be all in all.*" It seems beyond dispute that this heartfelt prayer of God's people is answered only in the day of Christ's coming at the end of time. Certainly "the full perfection" of Christ's kingdom does not come until that day when Christ returns. I know of no postmillennialist who believes that this earthly kingdom of which they speak is the *full perfection* of Christ's kingdom. What a beautiful prayer for the second coming of Christ this becomes!

Rev. Jones does not like my explanation of Luke 18:8 and prefers to interpret it as meaning "that when the Son of Man comes to destroy Jerusalem, He will not find faith in the land of Israel in that generation." But this is surely reading into the text something which is not there. The words of the Lord are appended to a parable which Christ taught to encourage "men always to pray, and not to faint." The parable is applied in verse 7. If the unjust judge avenged the widow only because "by her continual coming she wearied" him, "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night

unto him, though he bear long with them?" The elect suffer untold agony in this world at the hands of the wicked. It seems as if God does not hear their sobs, for they are not delivered. But we have the sure promise that God, though He bears long with them, will nevertheless avenge them speedily. To that is appended the rhetorical question: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" How can this be interpreted to mean: "When Christ comes to destroy Jerusalem He will not find faith in the land of Israel in that generation"?

But there are so many more words of the Lord. How often did not the Lord have to instruct the disciples that His kingdom was heavenly when they always had their hopes set upon an earthly kingdom? And when the Pharisees demanded of Him when the kingdom of God should come, "he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20, 21). When Pilate mockingly asked the Lord concerning His kingdom as its King stood bound and helpless before him, the Lord answered: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

Rev. Jones wonders, if the world is getting worse, "where was the high point from which the decline supposedly began?" The answer to that question is, of course, Paradise just before the fall. What Scripture constantly teaches is that, with the fall sin entered into the world. From that moment on, as the catholic church is being gathered, the history of the world is

characterized by the organic development of sin as "all those ominous signs (of Christ's coming) become increasingly more apparent." That organic development of sin finally culminates in the "man of sin" (II Thessalonians 2:3-12). That is the kingdom of Antichrist.

Anyone who asserts that Calvin was a postmillennialist ought to reread his Calvin. That other reformers were postmillennialists is an assertion without proof. That some, especially among Presbyterians, were postmillennial cannot be denied. That Scripture militates against postmillennialism at every turn of the page is clear beyond doubt.

May God lead us by His Word and Spirit to wait patiently, walking as pilgrims and strangers in the earth, for the great day of the coming of our Lord.

—(Prof.) Herman Hanko

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## ■ A Reformed Oasis on a Semi-Pelagian Landscape

I am a new subscriber to *The Standard Bearer* and would like to request a reprint of your review of the book, *A Case for Arminianism: The Grace of God, The Will of Man* (December 1, 1989). I just received my first issue (February 15, 1990) and am singularly impressed!

I have just read an essay by Clark Pinnock (editor of *A Case for Arminianism* — DJE) entitled, "The Arminian Option," in which he has the temerity to declare that Calvinism is predominate in evangelical circles and is prejudicial to Arminianism. Would to God it were so . . .

Your periodical is a Reformed oasis on a semi-Pelagian landscape of arid scholasticism.

I would be happy to remit the cost for the photocopy of your



article or any other article germane to this issue.

Once again, my Reformed brethren, thanks for your God-exalting periodical.

Greg Fields  
Hamilton, Ohio

## Response

We have sent you the copy of the book review that you request. We have also sent you several articles, pamphlets, and books on the truth of salvation

by sovereign grace. There is no charge.

As you suggest, evangelical Christianity today is thoroughly corrupted by Arminian free willism with all its attendant evils. The few remaining advocates of the sovereignty of grace have made their peace with the lie of free will and accept the free willists as legitimate, worthy colleagues in the work of the gospel. *The Standard Bearer* is determined to witness to the gospel that proclaims

salvation by the mercy of God alone, and that repudiates both the gospel of salvation by man's running and the gospel of salvation by man's willing (Rom. 9:16).

Our desire is that all of evangelical Christianity be thoroughly Calvinistic and that Arminianism be driven from the field, that is, that evangelical Christianity be truly evangelical.

Welcome to the world of *The Standard Bearer*. Thank you for your encouragement. Spread the word.  
—Ed.

## The Reader Asks Rev. Cornelius Hanko

# Speaking in Tongues

*A reader from Burnie, Tasmania asks whether the speaking in tongues in I Corinthians 12 and 14 is the same as in Acts 2.*

This is a very interesting question. Before Christ's ascension into heaven, Jesus promised His disciples that "they shall speak with new tongues" (Mark 16:17). Here Jesus speaks of "new tongues" in distinction from the Hebrew spoken by the church of the old dispensation and still by the disciples in Jesus' time. This obviously refers to the speaking in tongues on the day of Pentecost.

In Acts 2 we read, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Again in verse 6, "Every man heard them speak

in his own language." And in verse 8, "And now hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born." Whereupon follows a list of the various languages spoken.

Some are of the opinion, that this was not a miracle of speaking, but of hearing. This is based on the fact that twice we read that the Jews and proselytes heard the one hundred and twenty speak to them in their own tongue or language. Yet this is impossible, since the miracle of speaking is ascribed to those who were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:6).

Evidently this is what happened: A large number of Jews and proselytes from practically every part of the known world were gathered in Jerusalem to keep the feast of Pentecost. It has been estimated that as many as two million people came from far and wide to keep the most important feasts in the Holy City. Thousands of these Jews and

proselytes were drawn, possibly by the "sound as of a rushing mighty wind," to the place where the one hundred and twenty were gathered and where the Spirit had been poured out. Now those who were filled with the Spirit moved among that multitude, speaking to each one in the language of his native country. We read literally in verse 8, "Every single man was hearing them speaking in his own language." Thus, one of those who had received the Spirit walked up to a Parthian and spoke to him in his language. This same one may have approached a Crete or an Arabian and spoke to him of the "wonderful works of God."

Actually a double wonder was performed upon them. In the first place, they were able to speak in languages which they had never learned. In the second place, they now understood the wonder of the cross, the resurrection, and the ascension of their Lord and Savior as never before. Those

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were the "wonderful works of God" of which they spoke. The church had broken out of the narrow channel of the Jewish nation to become the universal church of the new dispensation. This is evident, not only from their speaking in tongues, but also in the fact that three thousand were converted and added to the church that same day.

Turning now to I Corinthians 12 and 14, we are confronted with the question whether the speaking in tongues in the congregation of Corinth was the same as the momentous event on the day of Pentecost.

There is an obvious difference between what took place on the day of Pentecost and in the church at Corinth. Those who spoke in tongues in Corinth did so publicly, in the audience of the entire congregation (I Cor. 14:2). As a result, the entire congregation heard them speak, and failed to understand them. For that reason the apostle stresses that if anyone spoke in an unknown tongue, he should be able to interpret what he said (verse 5), or there should be an interpreter (verse 27). Evidently there were many who desired to be able to speak in tongues, so that there arose confusion in the congregation. It must have sounded at times like a mad house, as each one thought he was gifted with the ability to speak in tongues (verse 23). This the apostle condemns in no uncertain terms. Paul adds that speaking in tongues should be limited to two or three persons (verse 27). Most emphatically he wants the church to know that the gift of prophecy, by which the entire church could be edified, was far more important than the gift of speaking in tongues, which the apostle describes as being the least of all the special gifts bestowed on the early church (verses 5, 6, 28).

Various interpretations have been given of the speaking in tongues as it appeared in Corinth and in other of the early churches. Some have understood it to be a language of heaven, since in I Corinthians 13:1 Paul says, "though I speak with the tongues of angels . . ." Others regard it as "whisperings and mutterings, rudiments of various languages." Still others hold that those who spoke in tongues passed over into a sort of ecstasy, "making incomprehensible sounds, partly sighings, partly cries, disjointed words, all uttered in a highly excited state."

There is no basis for these wild interpretations anywhere in Scripture. But there is every reason to maintain that the speaking in tongues referred to in I Corinthians and elsewhere in the epistles is the same as that which took place on the day of Pentecost. Although this gift was sadly misused in the congregation of Corinth, the purpose of it was to address a visitor who spoke another language in his own tongue, telling him of the wonderful work of salvation.

Paul says that he spoke in tongues "more than ye all." This can readily be understood, because as the apostle to the Gentiles he came in contact with many different nationalities and languages. Therefore the Holy Spirit made it possible for him to converse with various nationalities in their own language.

It is also readily conceivable that a stranger would enter into the worship services at Corinth, and that the Holy Spirit would give one of the members the gift of tongues, declaring to him "the wonderful works of God," or, as Paul expresses it, "speaking . . . by knowledge . . . or by doctrine" (verse 6). But for the sake of the congregation it was important that this message, proclaimed in a foreign tongue, should be inter-

preted, so that all could be edified.

Speaking in tongues did serve a useful purpose in the early church, so that Paul does not condemn it, but would rather that they all had that gift, if it were used properly (verse 5). But prophesying was far more beneficial for the entire congregation, for thereby they all were built up in the most holy faith (verses 3-5). He urges them to "covet earnestly the best gifts" (I Cor. 12:31). □

## Only By Blood Could Atonement Be Made

Only by blood could atonement  
be made

To wash foul sins from the  
soul.

No other offering could cover our  
guilt,

Purify, cleanse and make  
whole.

Blood of bulls, goats and rams  
would not suffice,

Though some were offered  
each day.

God's only Son's precious life-  
blood was spilt,

Our many sins on Him lay.

How can we thank Thee, Lord,  
for that great gift,

Christ's precious blood freely  
given;

We'll praise Thee now and  
eternally raise

To Thee, our glad hymns in  
heaven.

—S.B., 1929



## The Strength of Youth

Rev. Barrett Gritters

### The End Times (4):

# The Great Persecution

The biblical teaching about Antichrist, who will come in place of Christ and against Christ, is that he will be both a political and an ecclesiastical power. His reign of terror for the people of God will be a reign over both the "church" and the "world."

One horrible result of the reign of the Antichrist will be a persecution of God's people. Even though some do not believe that there will be a great persecution (some post-millennialists) and others believe that, although there will be a great persecution, the saints will be raptured out of it (most pre-millennialists), the child of God may *not* expect to be spared tribulation. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," Christ says (see also Matthew 24:9, 10, 21, 22 along with 24:29a).

The church always suffered persecution. From the persecution of righteous Abel to the killing of Zechariah the son of Berechiah, Christ said, persecution of the church always existed. There is nothing surprising or different there (see Hebrews 11:35-38, and I Thessalonians 3:2-4). Paul told the saints in Acts 14 that "through much tribulation" we must enter into the kingdom of God. Shortly after Paul died, when the saints would not forsake their faith, they were fed to lions, boiled in great pots

of oil, used as torches, slaughtered by the thousands. This was the story for the Reformation saints who were stretched out on racks, burned at the stake, and slaughtered by the hundreds while they worshiped, as in the 1572 St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in France.

But this is not what "the great persecution" refers to. Christ spoke to His disciples in Matthew 24 of this terrible persecution, describing it as "great tribulation" (vs. 21).

In Matthew 24, *one* of Jesus' purposes was to foretell that Jerusalem would be destroyed. It was. In AD 70, the Romans under the leadership of Titus besieged and finally entered Jerusalem, wasted the city, desecrated the temple, and murdered the people in some of the most gruesome butcherings in history. In reference to this persecution also, the Lord told them to pray that their flight would be not in winter or on the Sabbath, and that they would be not pregnant when they would have to run for their lives (vss. 18, 19). But *this* persecution was only a *foreshadowing* of the final, incomparable persecution at the end of this dispensation. Still to come is *the* great persecution, the like of which the church has never seen (see Matthew 24:21).

Many refuse to believe that there will be such a great persecution. Believing that there will be some persecution for the church throughout the ages, even

severe persecution, they deny that there will be a final, "Great Tribulation." But there are problems with that thinking that cannot be solved. Obviously, Matthew 24:29, 30 does not refer only to the destruction of Jerusalem. It says that the tribulation comes *immediately before* the sign of the Son of man in heaven. And the Son of man did not appear in heaven immediately after that event. Second, verse 36 says that no man knows the time that this great event will take place. Is Jesus merely referring to the fact that no man knows when Jerusalem will be destroyed? Third, verse 37 compares this great event with the destruction of the world by the flood. Does Jesus say that the flood is a picture of the destruction of Jerusalem? II Peter 3:5-7 and Luke 17:20-37 give the clear answer. Finally, something that we sometimes forget is that after Matthew 24 comes Matthew 25, and that the two are related. The parables of the ten virgins, the talents, and the last judgment (very clearly applications of what Jesus said in chapter 24) are applications of the teaching of the final coming of Christ, not the destruction of Jerusalem.

There is yet to come a great persecution of the church.

The church will be "chased" (II Thess. 2:15, marginal reading) out of the world, "pressed" and "squeezed" out of existence ("tribulation" means just this). This will be done by refusal to

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allow God's people to buy groceries or gas, to use the telephone or electricity, to work and make a living (Rev. 13:17). While the world swims in a pool of wealth, the church will lack basic necessities. How bad this will be cannot even be described because, although one can hardly imagine how bad some persecutions have been in the past, *this* persecution will be "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time . . ." (Matt. 24:21).

The Antichrist will orchestrate this cacophony (Revelation 13). The nominal church will play his tune (Revelation 17, especially verse 6). The true church of Jesus Christ will be blasted (Rev. 12:13).

It's worthwhile to think about this in the context of the world we live in today. Our sophisticated, humanitarian, "rights"-oriented, peaceful, "do-your-own-thing-as-long-as-you-don't-hurt-anyone-else" society will be the one that shows its true colors and attempts the destruction of Christ's church.

It's also worthwhile to remember that the "church" will be lighting the matches, opening the cages, boiling the oil . . . Prostituting herself anew (see Ezekiel 16:33, 34), this "church" will hate those who love her former "lover." Then these who call themselves followers of Christ will drink themselves to drunken glee with the blood of the saints (Rev. 17:6). They will hate the true children of God. For this, God will judge her (I Thess. 2:16; II Thess. 1:6-10).

During those days the church of Christ will be trimmed of its fat. Hypocrites in the true churches will be few, if any. Today, many remain members of the church because family and friends are there, or because their support — emotional or material — is there, or because

they think that outward membership in the church will be of benefit for them in the judgment day, perhaps at least guarantee them a cooler spot in the fires of hell. But in the days of the great tribulation there will be no social benefits in the true churches. In those days there will be little financial or emotional support. In those days there will be mass defections from true churches, exposing hypocrites for what they were.

The false church engages in this severe persecution of the true church because of envy. The false church wants to silence the witness of the truth because the false church wants these converts for herself. More than once in the book of Acts you read that "the unbelieving Jews were moved with envy" because of the work of the apostles (see chapter 17, for example). Paul says in I Thessalonians 2:16 that the unbelieving Jews were forbidding Paul and the others to speak to the Gentiles because the Jews didn't want the Gentiles to be saved. They were jealous even then, because they wanted the Gentiles to be converted to Judaism (Matthew 23:15).

This will be true in the last days as well. The Antichristian kingdom will not allow the true church to speak because it will be green with envy of any converts the Lord gives the church in those days, and it will be lusting after every follower for its Antichristian kingdom. This is true today as well. False teachers in colleges and high schools are envious that some students are still espousing the traditional doctrines. Then, because they want these students for themselves, all stops are pulled to silence the truth.

Behind it all is hatred of Jesus Christ. Jesus said in Matthew 24:9, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall

kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." In John 15:21 the Lord taught, "If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you . . . But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." And Revelation 12 makes very plain that the anger of the beast for the church is because the church brought forth Jesus Christ.

Think of that when you suffer. For the sake of Christ we live as we do. For the sake of Christ we speak the truth of God and His Son. For the sake of Christ we attend and support the schools we do. For the sake of Christ we support the church and kingdom here on earth. For the sake of Christ we will not bow down to the beast and his image, nor receive his mark on our body. So, for the sake of Christ we are *persecuted!* For no other reason would we allow our children to starve, but for the sake of Christ. For no other reason would we lose home and family and possessions and life, but for our Christ. For no other reason do we sing with Luther in "A Mighty Fortress," "Let goods and kindred go, This mortal life also; The body they may kill, God's truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever." For Christ.

Remember, then, the goal of their persecution — it's not to hurt you, but to stop you from speaking about Jesus Christ. Let's not forget that He is at the center of this as well.

We ought to recognize every form of persecution today for what it is. Every pressure to move us from our confession of the truth, whether that's the truth of the sovereignty of God in creation or the sovereignty of God in salvation or the infallibility of the Bible, is an attempt to destroy our salvation and an attack against Jesus Christ.



Do you fear persecution? Who would deny that they have fear when they think of persecution, whether that's the tribulation of the very end or the persecution of the present? We ought to have a healthy "fear" of persecution as Paul expressed in I Thessalonians 3:5ff, making us beware of it and take measures against it.

But we must not be terrified. The Lord Jesus gives good consolation regarding these terrifying days. First, we were ordained by God Himself to go through whatever tribulation we experience (I Thess. 3:3). Remember that. Second, this persecution is nothing new. Peter warned the saints in his days to "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings . . ." Christ suffered. His saints always suffered (Matt. 5:12, I Thess. 2:15). You are in good company! Third, the days will be shortened for your sakes (Matt. 24:22). This doesn't mean that the days will

be less than 24 hours, but that time will be cut off. The Lord is in control. He will hasten His coming to take his elect to glory, destroy the wicked world, and make all things new, because He will not have one of His elect deceived or fall. With respect to us, we certainly would fall; but the Lord will not allow it (Cannons V-8). He will "cut short" those days for our sakes. Finally, the comfort in persecution is this: we have a glory coming that cannot even be compared with the suffering we experience now (II Cor. 4:17, Romans 8:18), a glory of living eternally with our great God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Bear up, saints. Lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees . . . No one will pluck you out of His hand. There is laid up for you a crown of life. In the world you have tribulation; but do not fear, Christ has overcome the world! Stand strong in Him.

"Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing; Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God's

own choosing. Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He; Lord Sabaoth His name, From age to age the same, And He must win the battle." He has. In Him, you will.

#### Questions for discussion:

1. Should the church member who is not persecuted feel guilty? Should the church member seek out persecution? Should he pray to be spared persecution? In this connection, what does I Timothy 2:1, 2 mean?
2. Look up the Formula of Subscription in the back of the (old) *Psalter*. What does the promise that the officebearers take mean for their place in the persecution?
3. Are all those today who are involved in persecuting God's people aware of what they are doing? Does this matter? For them? For our reaction to them?
4. How can we strengthen ourselves to face these coming days, or to face any persecution? ☐

## Why a Teacher Shortage? Baptist Seminary in Trouble over Inerrancy Mega Churches Westminster Seminary

*All Around Us*  
Prof. Robert Decker

*Prof. Decker is professor of Practical Theology in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.*

### ■ Why a Teacher Shortage?

Because of a teacher-shortage problem the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies in Ontario commissioned a study "to examine those factors which in-

fluence men and women to enter into and to remain in, the teaching profession in our schools."

The results of this study are interesting indeed! The study found that the teachers have a "deep commitment to teaching in a



Christian manner and setting, but that there are some major obstacles to having a true sense of satisfaction while performing this demanding task." The major obstacles as perceived by the teachers are 1) Lack of adequate salaries and 2) Lack of appreciation for the work of teachers. In this connection the study found that "teachers often receive negative comments only, and parents tend to interfere with their work." Responses from Board members indicate that these have a "deep sense of appreciation for the dedication and commitment teachers bring to their tasks." (*Clarion*)

Our Protestant Reformed Christian Schools are also beginning to experience a shortage of teachers. Some of our schools, especially in the Western U.S., annually struggle to find qualified people to teach in their schools. A number of teachers, many of them men and many of them quite capable, have in the last few years left the teaching profession. If the Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies were to conduct a study similar to the one done by the Canadian Reformed League, one wonders what the results might be. We are certain that there would be no lack of commitment to Protestant Reformed Education on the part of the teachers. We are also certain that there would be no problem in relationships between Boards and teachers. But we do think that inadequate salaries, especially for the men teachers who are heads of households, might very well be a problem. What does the reader think about all this?

### ■ Baptist Seminary in Trouble over Inerrancy

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake

Forest, North Carolina has made biblical inerrancy a criterion for hiring faculty. The Seminary may be placed on probation by an accrediting agency on account of this. The seminary was issued a warning last December by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The seminary must show improvement within the next two years in areas of planning and evaluation, faculty selection, the role of faculty on committees, and the role of trustees, says SACS, or it may lose its accreditation. It is the position of the SACS that maintaining biblical inerrancy as a criterion for hiring faculty is to have no "... regard for due process, institutional traditions, and principles of academic freedom." (*The Banner*)

We hope the seminary will not change its stand on this critical issue. Compromise on the truth of the inerrancy of Holy Scripture is far too great a price to pay for accreditation. If maintaining biblical inerrancy is to violate the principles of academic freedom, so be it!

### ■ Mega Churches

It is estimated that there are well over one thousand mega churches in the U.S. and the number is growing. To qualify as a mega church a church must have a worship attendance of at least 3,000 per Sunday. Among the ten largest churches in this country, the largest is First Baptist Church, Hammond, Indiana, with as many as 30,000 worshippers on the Lord's Day and the "smallest" is Chapel Hill Harvester Church, Decatur, Georgia, with 7,500 in attendance at worship services.

Part, a large part, of the appeal of these churches, according to Lyle E. Schaller who did a study of this phenomenon, is that they provide ministries to a wide

variety of needs. There are ministries to singles, to divorced persons, to alcoholics, etc. Another reason why these churches are growing is that many people, especially those born after 1930, have lost their loyalty to their denomination. (*Christianity Today*)

If the Word of God is being faithfully preached and taught, if the sacraments are being exercised according to the institution of Jesus Christ, and if church discipline is being exercised according to the teaching of Holy Scripture in a church, will not that church be meeting the "needs" of its members? Will not that church grow spiritually into its head, our Lord Jesus Christ? Will not the fruit of faithful preaching and teaching, the use of the sacraments and church discipline, be a membership that "bears one another's burdens, and so fulfills Christ's law?" (Galatians 6:2). Will not God in Christ use those means to gather, defend, and preserve His elect to the glory of His Name? (Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. 21).

### ■ Westminster Seminary

Westminster Theological Seminary in Escondido, California has appointed the Rev. Joseph A. Pipa to its faculty. Pipa will be the seminary's Director of Advanced Studies. Dr. Jay Adams, the former Director of Advanced Studies, will continue to teach in the Doctor of Ministries program. Pipa is currently the pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Houston, Texas. Pipa received his Ph.D. from Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia in 1985. (*Christian Observer*)

Dr. Pipa is known to some of our ministers and people. We congratulate him on his appointment to Westminster West and wish him well in his work. □



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## The Day of Shadows

Rev. John Heys

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# A Shadow of What Lies Ahead

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Although it is true that “to err is human,” this statement is a truth with which the unbelieving sinner agrees. However, it makes a world of difference whether by the words “to err” you mean sinning against God, or simply doing something of which your fellow men do not approve. To err can simply mean to make a mistake in your writing or typing, for which you need an eraser then in order to put down the correct spelling. Besides, although it is true that to err is human, we must say much more than that. We must say that sin — in no matter what form it comes, or in what way it is displeasing to men — is an act of hatred against God and deserves everlasting punishment.

Bear in mind the fact that Adam and Eve’s sin of eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden was far more than an error. It was such a terrible sin that it made the whole human race guilty of hating God; and it brought the punishment in hell upon the whole human race that they would bring forth in time. Adam and Eve brought SIN into the world, and not merely error, in the sense of mistake. It was not due merely to what man calls wrong thinking and willing, but was something against God’s will and thinking, an act of hatred

toward Him. In our courts men are tried, not for what the world calls sin, but what mankind considers to be a crime against man, as misdemeanor, a violation of a law of mankind. We must, however, call every sin of man rebellion against our God. Sins are not mistakes, or human errors, but acts of hatred against God, Who made us to do His will, and to do it in love toward Him.

Now, when Abraham lied about Sarah being only his sister, he made it possible for Pharaoh to commit the sin of taking her for his wife. That was no mere error on Abraham’s part. The awful plague that God brought upon Egypt reveals clearly that He considered it to be a sin; and that Abraham had also sinned, and had not merely made an error which could be erased by man.

And now we find Lot, his nephew, committing, not an error, but a sin against God. It was a sin that, in a sense, was of a different form than Abraham’s was, but was very definitely an act of hatred against God. And God made him suffer severely because of that sin, as we shall see, and as is presented to us in Scripture.

Lot was not Abraham’s son, but he was a nephew brought up by Abraham after his, that is Lot’s father died. Abraham taught him much about God and our calling to serve him. Of that we may be sure. When God called

Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, Lot went along. Likewise when Abraham went northward to Haran and then southward to Canaan, Lot went with him. When Abraham went even further south into Egypt, because of the famine God sent into Canaan, Lot went with him. This was a sinful act of Abraham; and now in Genesis 13 we read of a sin, an act of hatred against God, that Lot committed, one of actually walking in the same sin that Abraham had committed, and for which he set an example.

Abraham had set his affections on earthly things and ceased walking by faith in God, Who had brought him not only to Canaan, but had very clearly and emphatically told him that THIS was the land which He promised him (Genesis 12:7). In fact there He stated, “Unto thy seed will I give this land.” Plainly Abraham should have stayed there. But the desire for material gain, worldly things, moved him to go down into Egypt, where there was no famine. God did not tell him to go away for material gain. There is no question about it that Abraham knew that God promised him this land. And it is also so very true, as Abraham’s return to Canaan shows, that the Canaanites, who stayed in the land Abraham left, did not starve to death. They came safely through that grievous famine. And it was God Who brought them through it. They did not

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*Rev. Heys is a minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.*



even have the promise that God gave Abraham. And let us not overlook the fact that Abraham had he not committed this sin of ceasing to trust in God and His promise, would not have been tempted to commit that next sin of lying about Sarah, not being his wife but being only his sister. Here was a true statement that nevertheless was a lie. We might say that it was no error on Abraham's part to say she was his sister; but it definitely was a sin to deceive Pharaoh. In fact, even after Pharaoh took Sarah to his palace, Abraham did not yet come with the truth that she was his wife as well as his sister. This also reveals that it was a sin on Abraham's part to go down to Egypt, after he had been promised that land of Canaan. It reveals the materialism in his mind, his love for worldly things, seeking the things here below, and not trusting in God Who had very definitely, word for word, assured him that Canaan was the land he would receive for his seed as well as for himself.

Still more, in Genesis 12:8 we even read that the city where God gave Abraham this promise, and where Abraham after that promise had even built an altar to God, was called Bethel, which means House of God! He left *that* behind. It is no wonder then that, when he told Lot to choose where he wanted to be (if Lot went eastward, then Abraham would go westward; if Lot went to the left, he would go to the right; and if Lot went to the right, he would go to the left), Lot chose to go where he would gain materially. Material things were more important to him than spiritual things. Abraham had set the example by going down to Egypt, away from the land God promised him. Lot followed in his footsteps and chose to go into the region of some desperately wicked cities, because "it was

well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt" (Genesis 13:10). Get that! God Himself shows us where Abraham went; and that Lot follows Abraham's example!

What a lesson for us! It is so appealing to our flesh, and easy as far as the flesh is concerned, to move away from a city where there is a church that preaches the truth, and unto a city where the lie is preached; or even to go where sin abounds much more than where we live, because we can get more material wealth. Spiritual wealth is of minor concern for us. O, yes, we still say with the mouth that we want it; but with our deeds (as was the case with Abraham and Lot) we say that we need to get away from this "famine." And then we get away from the Bread of Life preached in the region where God brought us.

What is an undeniable fact is that, when one is walking in the wrong spiritual direction, he must turn *completely away*, and go back to the way of truth and righteousness. We cannot stand still spiritually. We go either in the right direction, in the fear of God's name; or we go in the wrong direction, the way of hatred toward Him. One turns around and away from sin, or one continues in acts of hatred toward God. There just is no neutral ground. We turn from sin, or we go further into sin! Stay in the shadow, and you will be outside of the sunlight. Grow in the pleasure of worldliness, and you grow in hatred toward God. There just is no spiritual neutrality. There is no spiritual standing still. We go forward either in works of love toward God, or in deeds of hatred against Him. He tells us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. And either we add to our good works, which

He in His grace enables us to do, or our debt before Him becomes bigger and bigger.

Now Lot reveals his lack of interest in God's covenant promise. Not rejoicing in what God promised Abraham, he went away from him with whom God had made such a rich promise, and went unto a people that hated all works of love to God, and hated God Himself. In Genesis 14:12 we read that Lot actually lived in Sodom; and in Genesis 19:1 that He "sat in the gate of Sodom." This means that he was, to say the least, a friend of those wicked people of Sodom. People often gathered in the gates of the city for judgments, for settling of their problems — and it is not impossible that Lot was a magistrate, a ruler of a section of the city. He married an ungodly woman of the city, and let his daughters marry some of these wicked people. No, we do not read literally that his wife was an unbeliever. But her dropping behind Lot and their daughters, and looking back at the cities, after being forbidden to look back, reveals her unbelief, as does also the punishment that God meted out to her.

Lot's hesitation and delay in leaving the city before the brimstone came reveals the weakness of his faith, and his longing to live in that godless city with the wicked Sodomites. Why, he even offered to these Sodomites his daughters! Yes, he did try to protect these "strangers" who came to inform him of the destruction of the cities. But we may never sin to try to keep others from sinning. We do read in Genesis 19:18-20 that Lot pleaded with the angels to be allowed to go not so far away as they had told him to go. Truly, Lot, even though he was an elect, believing child of God, whose life was spared from that judgment of God upon the



wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah, was at times very weak in his faith. And the truth is plainly before us in this incident that the children of God can and do have only a small beginning of this new obedience. We can at times become very weak in our faith. And if God does not deal with us in His mercy, and if He does not see us — which He surely unceasingly does — as those for whom His Son died, we would cease to be believers and would suffer the same wrath of God as that which fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and upon Lot's wife.

And we can be sure that here is a shadow of what lies ahead for the church, and is even being practiced greatly today. Not only are we already tempted to leave the sphere where we can be vibrant, living members of the church of God, who hunger and thirst for the truth, and want to gather with the saints to sing God's praises; but when we are

soon going to be called to have the mark of the beast in order to buy and to sell, the temptation will be great for us. And it is only because here we have a shadow of God's grace revealed in saving Lot, that we can have the confidence that God will keep His elect in the faith, and bring them to the new Jerusalem, where no sin will ever be present.

Why are incidents such as the one of Lot's sins presented to us in Scripture? The answer is: To teach us and to warn us. We as parents must set a good example before our children. Our children must be taught so that, when they become parents, they do not set a bad example for their children. Our God, in His tender mercy and grace, presents these sins so that we may, in His loving kindness, be warned.

The lengthening shadows that come when the sun reaches the low western horizon warn us that

night is coming. These sin-shadows, cast on this earth by members in the Old Testament church, warn us of what lies ahead.

Today we see the church world mingling more and more with the ungodly world, instead of living sharply antithetical lives. This warns us that we must, to our coming generation, present the warning that what calls itself the church loves the world rather than the kingdom of heaven, and is tempting the true church into today's Sodom and Gomorrah, that is, into what God is going to punish with an awful torment!

God Himself tells us to remember Lot's wife. Let us also remember Abraham's sins which Lot followed. These sins of Lot we will consider more fully, the Lord willing, next time. But read in the Scriptures what Lot's descendants did, and what happened also to them. □

## Book Reviews

**THE NATIONS, ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY**, by John F. Walvoord; Zondervan Publishing, 1988; 497 pp. (no price available) (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

The author of this book is the chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary, the leading Seminary in pre-millennial thought. The book was originally published as three books: "The Nations In Prophecy," "Israel in Prophecy," and "The Church in Prophecy." These three books are now published in one volume by Zondervan.

The first book, "The Nations in Prophecy," gives a brief summary of the whole history of the world from the viewpoint of the prophetic writings in Scripture; the second book, "Israel in Prophecy," deals with the prophecies which, in the author's opinion, treat the history of the Jews; the third book, "The Church in Prophecy," discusses those prophetic utterances which deal specifically with the church.

There are many differences among premillennialists over many questions of prophecy: differences with respect to various

dispensations; differences concerning the interpretation of individual texts as they relate both to Israel and to the church; differences between pre-tribulationists and post-tribulationists on the question of the rapture; and differences concerning the role of the nations in relation to Israel. The author occupies something of an intermediate position — if that expression can be used. While opposed to covenant theology, he does not hold to rigid dispensationalism as propounded, e.g., by the well-known Scofield Bible. He does not hold



to an absolute literal interpretation of Scripture, but allows for symbolic interpretation where the context requires this. He does not even make a clear-cut distinction between the church and the "kingdom people," although the distinction is surely present in his thinking. Nevertheless, his position is squarely in the tradition of pre-millennialism.

In general, he holds to the fact that, with the crucifixion of Christ, the Jews went into exile. The ages of the new dispensation up to this point are the times of the Gentiles when the church is gathered. This time of the Gentiles will be brought to an end by the rapture which can occur at any point. Those who have been faithful from the church, both living and dead, will be caught up into the air. Immediately following this, the nation of Israel will establish a covenant with the nations and live in peace for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years during which a kingdom in Israel will be firmly established (something which is already taking place with the establishment of that nation in Palestine). After  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years, Russia, the revived Roman Empire of Europe (developing now in the common market), and the nations of the East, will march against Israel, and a time of great persecution and suffering will begin for the Jews and for those Gentiles who, during this period, turn to God. This also will last  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years, after which Christ will come again with those who have been taken in the rapture. This coming of Christ will usher in the millennium. Christ will reign on Mt. Zion. The temple and the sacrifices will be restored. The faithful Jews throughout history will be raised, including David, to live in the millennial period. The nation of Israel will enjoy a millennium of unparalleled prosperity. All the Gentiles will also live with the Jews in that

kingdom. This millennium will be brought to an end by the gathering of the nations against Israel and the great battle of Armageddon will be fought. All the enemies of Israel will be defeated by Christ and the eternal joy of heaven will be ushered in.

We cannot, in a book review, evaluate the position of pre-millennialism. We call attention to three areas which, in our judgment, are basic to a criticism of this position.

The first area is that of Hermeneutics. This is, to us, most crucial. It involves the whole question of the "literal" interpretation of Scripture. While Walvoord is ready to grant that Scripture must be interpreted symbolically in some places, he calls the amillennial interpretation of prophecy a "spiritualizing" of prophecy. Especially when amillennialists refer prophecies of the Old Testament to the church when Israel is mentioned, he demurs and castigates amillennialists for refusing to take Scripture literally. He refuses to recognize that the New Testament itself refers such passages to the church. I have in mind, e.g., such passages as Amos 9:11-15 and Acts 15:15-18, Hosea 2:28 and Romans 9:25, 26, and others. In fact, although the passage in Amos 9 is briefly treated, he does not even mention these other passages.

In connection with this, he, along with all premillennialists, does not understand the *typical* character of the Old Testament. This is a serious error and leads to many wrong interpretations.

The second area is the whole area of the forced division between the nation of Israel and the church. He admits that the Scriptures speak of the elect Gentiles as the seed of Abraham as well as the Jews, but the very nature of premillennial thought makes an identification of the two im-

possible. He does not reckon with the fact that Stephen, in his speech before the Sanhedrin, literally refers to the nation of Israel in the wilderness as the "church." He claims, wrongly, that the word "Israel" never means "church" in Scripture. And so he denies that the church in all ages is one, that Christ is both the Head of this one church and the King of the kingdom in which all the people of God are citizens, that this one universal church, gathered from the beginning to the end of time from both Jews and Gentiles has its great unity in Christ Jesus the Head and Lord of all. This too is a fundamental error.

The third area is his obviously wrong exegesis of texts which are twisted to fit his premillennial conceptions. I can give only a few examples. Both John 14:1-4 and I Corinthians 15:51-57 are said to be descriptions of the rapture, an obvious impossibility. Psalm 2:6, 7 is said to refer to the resurrection of David and his reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom, an obvious contradiction of Acts 13:33 where Paul explains that Psalm 2 was fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The whole premillennial conception also brings to the fore various serious doctrinal questions which the premillennialists seem incapable of answering. I refer to such questions as: Why, if the one sacrifice of Christ is complete and perfect, will the sacrifices have to be restored in the millennial kingdom? Walvoord answers that they will be merely symbols of the perfect sacrifice of Christ. But this stands in conflict with Hebrews which tells us that the symbolic and typical sacrifices of the Old Testament, which could not take away sin, are forever removed by the perfect sacrifice of Christ. Another problem is the question



*From the Permanent Committee for the Publication of Protestant Reformed Literature:*

The Permanent Book Committee, an arm of the RFPA, has been in existence since the early 1960s and has been instrumental in providing the finances for many of the old and new publications that find a place on your bookshelves. Our original purpose was to publish books written by Protestant Reformed writers; but more recently we have turned our attention also to re-printing other Reformed books which have for years been out of print. To date we have reprinted only **Calvin's Calvinism**.

We would like to do more. But the publishing of books is expensive, and the necessary finances are often lacking. We have, recently, received some substantial gifts, for which we are very grateful. But, because we have just completed the reprinting of two volumes of **The Triple Knowledge**, and are working on a new book, **The Doctrine of Scripture**, by the late Prof. Homer Hoeksema, we are still very much in need of additional funds.

A remedy for that is to sell more of the books in our current inventory. It's with a view to reducing that inventory, in order to increase our working capital, that we announce another sale. Beginning the first of April, and continuing till the end of May, you may order two books and get a third book free. The free book will have to be the lowest priced of the three books ordered. And we must exclude sets from this sale. We provide, on this page, an order form for your possible convenience. If you prefer not to cut up your **Standard Bearer**, just jot down the titles of your selections on a piece of paper and submit that instead.

We would like also to encourage you to become a member of our growing book club. Book club members are sent every new publication, which they purchase at a 30% discount. And they may order other of our books, at any time, for that same 30% discount. (Please note that the discount is applied only to regular prices, not to sale prices.)

Our books, by the way, are being read not only in our country but also across the sea. And they are generally well received by those who are interested in Reformed materials. To tap this market we recently sent out letters, with a list of our materials, to some 325 religious book stores across the country. That brought some good response, including a large order from a book dealer on the west coast.

We might mention too that Mr. Charles Kregel, one of our retired committee members, has volunteered to promote our publications, serving as representative of the RFPA especially at Book Sellers' Conventions. We have yet to see what comes of this effort.

Our concern, of course, is not to make a profit. For, all of the proceeds from the sale of our books are used to publish new titles or to reprint out-of-print books. We desire only to be used of the Lord to disseminate the kind of literature which promotes the glorious gospel of His sovereign grace. For that, we covet your prayers and your financial support.

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of how it is possible that the glorified bodies of the people of God taken up into the air at the time of the rapture can live with the earthly bodies of the people who live in the millennial kingdom of Israel. Walvoord brushes this question aside as being unimportant. Still another question is how the sounding trumpet of I Corinthians 15:52 can be called the "last" trumpet when it only ushers in the millennium, and when another trumpet will have to be sounded at the end of the age.

The clearly written book of Walvoord not only describes in a very understandable way the position of premillennialism, but sharply defines its many weaknesses. □

**THE CONCISE DICTIONARY OF THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION: DOCTRINE — LITURGY — HISTORY**, by J.D. Douglas, Walter A. Elwell, and Peter Toon. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989. 422 pp. Cloth. \$19.95. (Reviewed by the Editor)

*The Concise Dictionary* is a very good, single-volume dictionary of the names, terms, and doctrines found in the theology, liturgy, and history of the church. Three noted evangelical scholars give brief, but pointed, definitions or descriptions of some 3,500 names (e.g., Marcion, John Hus, Karl Barth) and terms (e.g., antinomianism, common grace, theotokos).

The Reformed student will take issue with the *Dictionary* at certain points. Is it indeed the case that "the Bible condemns homosexual practice (Rom. 1:26-27), but the *condition* of homosexuality as such is not sinful"? On this reasoning, must we not also say that the act of adultery

is sin, but an adulterous nature is not sinful? Is not the underlying assumption this, that sin is only in the deed and will, and that sin is not in the very nature itself of fallen man? Rome will be delighted to learn of this (fatal) concession by Protestants.

Nevertheless, the volume will be very helpful (and interesting) to all who have an interest in the church's words and names, especially those who have occasion to look up the meaning of words and names that are unfamiliar. □

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#### **MEDITATION** (con't. from page 292)

God continues to answer this prayer of Jesus.

How precious it is to be included.

Did Jesus pray for you? The common bond of faith unites believers everywhere, in all places and at all times.

The ultimate answer is in the church triumphant. □

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## News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

April 1, 1990

### **CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

I thank Bethel P.R.C. in Elk Grove, IL for supplying the following information.

On March 29, 1990 Bethel P.R.C. will have completed its first year of existence. It is with great joy and humble gratitude to

God that she can report a year of rich blessing.

First, they are thankful that it was God's will that their missionary pastor might become their pastor. It has meant much to all, but especially to the new elders and deacons, that Pastor Ronald Van Overloop continued to labor among and with them.

Secondly, whereas the "sanctuary" remains a gymnasium in the morning and a double portable classroom in the evening, the attendance at both services is

not only excellent, but has increased. The congregation has grown from the twelve families and two individuals of one year ago to fifteen families and three individuals as of this anniversary. In this first year of existence they have witnessed three public confessions of faith and four baptisms (and another two very soon).

Truly, God is building His church, even as Prof. Engelsma preached at the service of the institution of Bethel. They pray

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*Mr. Wigger is a member of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.*



that they may continue to know God's most indispensable blessing in the future, doing "good unto Zion."

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The Evangelism Society of the Southeast P.R.C. in Grand Rapids, MI has recently decided to subscribe to three periodicals with the intent of making these available to the congregation. Copies of *The Christian Observer*, *Christian Renewal*, and *The Banner of Truth* are now finding their way into the homes of Southeast's congregation.

It might also interest you to know that *The Christian Observer* will soon feature an article on Southeast P.R.C., along with an interview of Ken Rietema Sr. and daughter-in-law Kathy, concerning their work in taping audio copies of *The Standard Bearer*.

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## Compared with Christ

Compared with Christ, in all beside  
No comeliness I see;

The one thing needful, dearest  
Lord,

Is to be one with Thee.  
The sense of Thy expiring love  
Into my soul convey;  
Thyself bestow; for Thee alone  
I absolutely pray.

Whatever else Thy will withholds,  
Here grant me to succeed:  
O let Thyself my portion be,  
And I am blest indeed!

Less than Thyself will not suffice  
My comfort to restore:  
More than Thyself I cannot have;  
And Thou canst give no more.

Loved of my God, for Him again  
With love intense I burn;  
Chosen of Thee e'er time began,  
I choose Thee in return.

Whate'er consists not with Thy  
love,

Oh, teach me to resign;  
I'm rich to all the intents of bliss,  
If Thou, O God! art mine.

—Augustus Montague Toplady

On Sunday evening, March 4, both the Choral Society of the Hope P.R.C. in Walker, MI and the Choral Society of the Doon P.R.C. in Doon, IA presented a program. Hope's concert was their annual spring program, and Doon's program consisted of hymns and Psalms divided along the lines of the Heidelberg Catechism.

We are also happy to inform you that at this present time six sister congregations have responded to a call for financial help from our Pella P.R.C. in Pella, IA. You may remember that they needed work done on the exterior of their church building, and, being unable completely to underwrite this expense themselves, they asked other PR congregations for help. From my latest Pella bulletin approximately \$1,400 has been raised.

The Young People's Society of the Hull P.R.C. in Hull, IA recently sponsored their annual soup supper on February 20 at the City Hall. Money raised was to go towards the expenses of this summer's convention in Redlands, CA.

The young people of the Loveland P.R.C. in Loveland, CO, also busy raising funds for this year's convention, recently sponsored their second annual Sweetheart Banquet. A delicious meal and worthwhile program were planned. All couples, regardless of age, were invited.

The congregation of the Southwest P.R.C. in Grandville, MI held their annual potluck supper on February 23 in the church.

## DENOMINATIONAL ACTIVITIES

An Officebearers Conference was held on Tuesday, March 6, in our South Holland P.R.C. in South Holland, IL. The subject of the conference was "Preaching." The conference began with a

keynote address by Prof. R. Decker, "The Reformed View of Preaching," and was followed by a number of sectionals dealing with various aspects of the main theme.

## MINISTERIAL CALLS

Rev. Steve Key has declined the call he had been considering from the congregation of the Randolph P.R.C. in Randolph, WI.

## SCHOOL NEWS

On Friday, February 23, Rev. M. De Vries spoke on the theme, "Submission to Government," for a chapel service at the Free Christian School in Edgerton, MN.

The Ladies' Guild of the Loveland P.R. Christian School, Loveland, CO, sponsored a Father-Son Banquet for all men and boys school age and older.

On February 22 the students of Heritage Christian School in Hudsonville, MI presented their annual All School Program entitled, "Our Only Comfort." The program, as you might have guessed, was based on the divisions of the Heidelberg Catechism. □

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## NOTICE

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, May 9, 1990 at the Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church. Material to be treated in this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least three weeks prior to the convening of this session.

Jon J. Huisken  
Stated Clerk

## NOTICE

Hull Protestant Reformed Christian School is in need of a teacher for the third/fourth grade room. If you are interested, please call Pete Brummel, (712) 439-1308, the school, (712) 439-2490, or Alvin Bylsma, (712) 439-2569.



### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On March 18, 1990, the Lord willing, our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents MR. AND MRS. E.J. MAATMAN celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to our heavenly Father for giving us God-fearing parents, and for the love and Christian instruction we have received from them in these many years.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness onto children's children." (Psalm 103:17)

3 children  
11 grandchildren  
7 great-grandchildren

(South Holland, Illinois)

### ATTENTION STUDENTS!

The Protestant Reformed Scholarship Committee is taking applications for scholarships to be awarded to future Protestant Reformed ministers and teachers for the 1990-91 school year. Each applicant must also submit an essay of at least three hundred words, answering this question: "What's the responsibility of the teacher/minister in relationship to the parents in covenant instruction?" For an application, contact:

Mr. Jim Holstege  
1637 Sylvan Ave. S.E.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

The application, accompanied by the essay, must be returned by June 1, 1990.

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The consistory and congregation of the Loveland Protestant Reformed Church express their Christian sympathy to our fellow church members, Mr. and Mrs. Lorenz Bertsch, in the death of his sister, MRS. ERNA SCHOON.

May the bereaved be comforted in the assurance that "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." (Psalm 73:24)

Rev. Ron Cammenga, Pres.  
Glen Griess, Clerk

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On April 10, 1990, the Lord willing, our parents and grandparents MR. AND MRS. GERRIT LUBBERS will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary. We rejoice with them at this evidence of God's faithfulness and ask that God will continue to bless them in the years remaining.

"For the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth to all generations." (Psalm 100:3)

6 children  
26 grandchildren  
41 great-grandchildren (Hudsonville, MI)

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Board of the R.F.P.A. extends its sincere sympathy to fellow board-member, Neal Pastoor, in the passing of his sister, CAROL PASTOOR on March 14, 1990.

May the comfort of the family be in this, that the death of His saints is, in the sight of the Lord, precious (Psalm 116:15).

Mr. John Dykstra, president  
Mr. Peter Koole, secretary

## FAMILY FORUM

Biblical Teaching on Sex, Single Life, Marriage, and Divorce

First Protestant Reformed Church  
2800 Michigan, N.E.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506  
(1/2 mile west of East Beltline)

Tuesday, April 10, at 8:00 PM:

"Sex for Christians Outside and Within Marriage"

Tuesday, April 24, at 8:00 PM:

"Honorable Single Life and Married Life"

Tuesday, May 1, at 8:00 PM:

"Desertion, Divorce, and Remarriage"

Speaker: Prof. David Engelsma  
Professor of Theology at the Protestant Reformed Seminary  
General public invited to attend. — Refreshments provided.  
Question and answer period after each session.

Tapes available upon request.  
Call 616-364-0953 for information or send request to:

Church Extension Committee  
First Protestant Reformed Church  
2800 Michigan, N.E.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506