

**A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine**

THE **STANDARD BEARER**

The Word of God is to be applied by the preacher to the mind and heart and life of those that hear him Doctrine and Truth are not simply to be set before us as subject material, but we are to hear in the preaching how they will be seen in your and my life. This is no easy matter for the preacher.

See "Applicatory Preaching" – page 205

Vol. 67, No. 9
February 1, 1991

Contents

February 1, 1991

Meditation – Rev. Jason L. Kortering RETAINING OUR FIRST LOVE	195
EDITORIALLY SPEAKING . . . – Prof. David J. Engelsma	197
Editorial – Prof. David J. Engelsma THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM	198
LETTERS	200
ALL AROUND US – Prof. Robert D. Decker	201
A Word Fitly Spoken – Rev. Dale H. Kuiper SALT	202
From Holy Writ – Rev. George C. Lubbers EXPOSITION OF THE SONG OF MOSES (EXODUS 15:1ff.) (2)	203
Special Article – Rev. Carl J. Haak APPLICATORY PREACHING	205
The Day of Shadows – Rev. John A. Heys THE ANTICHRIST FORESHADOWED	208
When Thou Sittest in Thine House – Mrs. Mary Beth Lubbers THE REFORMED FAMILY: GRANDPARENTS	210
Contribution – Rev. Bernard Woudenberg FROM TASMANIA HOME – A REPORT	212
REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST – Mr. Jon Huiskens	214
BOOK REVIEW	214
NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES – Mr. Benjamin Wigger	215

Inside This Issue...

A man who pastored a congregation of nearly 3,000 in Scotland once wrote that "preaching which is rooted in the text of Scripture alone can still be unbiblical, unreal, and irrelevant unless it is also rooted in the text of life Both texts require of the preacher reverent, rigorous exegesis."

The article on "Applicatory Preaching," in this issue, is the text of a presentation made by the writer at an officebearers' conference held in South Holland, IL last spring. In it Rev. Haak emphasized, not so much the "heart-rending work" involved in preparing sermons which are "applicatory," but rather the necessity of that kind of preaching, preaching which "tells us not only what we are to believe, but also what we are to be."

That emphasis is clearly in order; for never, perhaps, since the days of Luther has there been better reason for an urgent cry from the pew for biblical, real, relevant preaching. One cannot help but be impressed, nevertheless, with the amount of work which this does require of a preacher of the gospel — to come to the pulpit Sunday after Sunday, not simply with doctrinal truths which are learned in seminary, but with the lively preaching of the Word.

A veteran preacher was once asked by an eager licentiate, "How long does it take you, sir, to write a sermon?" The answer: "Sometimes two, sometimes four, sometimes six days; and sometimes almost as many weeks." "Why, sir," the astonished young preacher exclaimed, "I can write a sermon at any time in half a day!" "Yes," said the Doctor, "and make nothing of it."

May the Lord continue to give us men who know by regular experience the rigors involved in preparing the kind of sermons which, as Rev. Haak puts it, "hit hard on me, that is, show me my misery, my deliverance in Christ, how I shall show forth my thankfulness." Read "Applicatory Preaching." □

— D.D.

THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August. Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc. Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Standard Bearer, P.O. Box 6064, Grand Rapids, MI 49516.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Editor: Prof. David J. Engelsma
Secretary: Prof. Robert D. Decker
Managing Editor: Mr. Don Doezeema

DEPARTMENT EDITORS

Rev. Ronald Cammenga, Prof. Robert Decker, Rev. Arie den Hartog, Rev. Russell Dykstra, Rev. Barry Gritters, Rev. Carl Haak, Prof. Herman Hanko, Rev. John Heys, Rev. Marvin Kamps, Rev. Kenneth Koole, Rev. Jason Kortering, Rev. Dale Kuiper, Mr. James Lanting, Rev. George Lubbers, Mrs. Marybeth Lubbers, Rev. James Slopesma, Rev. Charles Terpstra, Rev. Gise VanBaren, Rev. Ronald VanOverloop, Mr. Benjamin Wigger, Rev. Bernard Woudenberg

EDITORIAL OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
4949 Ivanrest
Grandville, MI 49418

CHURCH NEWS EDITOR

Mr. Ben Wigger
6597 - 40th Ave.
Hudsonville, MI 49426

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

REPRINT POLICY

Permission is hereby granted for the reprinting of articles in our magazine by other publications, provided: a) that such reprinted articles are reproduced in full; b) that proper acknowledgement is made; c) that a copy of the periodical in which such reprint appears is sent to our editorial office.

BUSINESS OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
Don Doezeema
P.O. Box 6064
Grand Rapids, MI 49516
PH: (616) 243-3712
(616) 531-1490

NEW ZEALAND OFFICE

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

SUBSCRIPTION POLICY

Subscription price: \$12.00 per year in the U.S., \$15.00 elsewhere. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order, and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

ADVERTISING POLICY

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

BOUND VOLUMES

The Business Office will accept standing orders for bound copies of the current volume; such orders are filled as soon as possible after completion of a volume. 16mm microfilm, 35mm microfilm and 105mm microfiche, and article copies are available through University Microfilms International.

Meditation
Rev. Jason Kortering

Retaining Our First Love

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars; and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

— Revelation 2:1-7

Rev. Kortering is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Grandville, Michigan.

First love!
How precious it really is.
Love is significant, but first love is even more so.

Striking, is it not, that the first subject which Jesus addressed to His church on earth concerned love. The letter to Ephesus begins a series of seven such letters to specific churches in Asia Minor. Each church had certain strengths and weaknesses which the Lord had to address. The weaknesses encompass the loss of first love at Ephesus, to the lukewarmness of Laodicea. The road to apostasy always begins with the loss of first love.

The reason should be obvious. Love is vital to the covenant relationship which we enjoy with God. The highest good for man is to enjoy covenant friendship with the ever blessed God; or, as the Westminster Catechism expresses it, the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him fully forever. To accomplish this, we need love. It is the spiritual energy that brings us to God. "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13).

Such love is of God! God Himself is love (1 John 4:8). Love is the moving cause for our salvation: "in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children" (Eph. 1:5). "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). The work of the Holy Spirit within us produces a loving response, "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). Love is what salvation is all about.

Jesus acknowledged that the church of Ephesus possessed this love in a great measure. Their pres-

ence in the heathen city of Ephesus was a testimony of the power of that love of God. Jesus said, in verse 1, "I know thy works." That says it all. The work of the church was to preach the gospel and confirm it with a life of obedience. They had exercised discipline upon them who were evil, as we read in verse 2: "Canst not bear them which are evil" and, "hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not." Certain individuals circulated among them, claiming apostleship; but they were pretenders and had to be exposed as such. Furthermore, in verse 6 we read that they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, a segment within the church who synthesized the gospel with pagan culture and claimed you could be a Christian and at the same time enjoy heathen festivals. For maintaining their obedience to Christ members of the church of Ephesus suffered persecution. In verses 2 and 3, mention is made of their patience, a quality of strength which God gives to those who endure hardships.

All of this indicates that the church of Ephesus loved Jesus.

Can that be said of your church as well?

As a Reformed church, we have been heirs of a wonderful heritage. It was out of the desire to propagate the great truths of the Reformed faith without hindrance, that our Protestant Reformed Churches had their beginning. We saw common grace and the free offer of the gospel as a compromise of our calling to be faithful to the Lord Jesus. This love was also tested in our history as churches. During the 1950s, the error of a

conditional covenant arose within our churches from without, and our commitment to sovereign grace was put to the test. It too taught us patience, endurance through difficult times.

All of this is proof of love, God's wonderful love in us and through us, that draws us into a covenant of friendship with Him. The local congregation manifests this love both in her ministry, her life among the members, and her concern for others without.

What about *first* love? This is the issue here in verse 4: "thou hast left thy first love"; and also in verse 5: "repent and do the first works."

To help us understand, we may properly compare the love relationship between husband and wife to that between Christ and the church. This is biblical. Ephesians 6 instructs the husband to love his wife as Christ loves His church. In Revelation 21:2 the church is called the bride of Christ. Within the human relationship of love, we may distinguish three stages of love: first love, enduring love, and perfect love. First love is characterized by three qualities: fervor (a great intensity), joy (that verges on ecstasy), and loyalty (a deep sense that you will never be interested in anyone else). Such first love is described in Psalm 19:5, where the morning sun is compared to the bridegroom, "coming out of his chamber and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race." Enduring love is a more stable, enriched love which has the benefit of testing, the kind of love you can count on because it has been proven over and over. Perfect love is our future in glory when we shall love one another without sin.

The Christian who has come to like precious faith in the God of all glory expresses first love. It takes on the character of fervor: one's whole life and conversation is centered in growing in faith and knowing more about God. It is characterized by joy — a special exuberance and glow of life when we learn of forgiveness of sin and peace with God through Christ Jesus. And it takes on the character of loyalty. Such a one never misses church, is present always at the meetings,

prays faithfully, and diligently implements all he has learned about spiritual things.

These are the newly converted — i.e., either newly converted to the Christian faith, or, in the case of one who has been a Christian for some time, newly come to appreciate the Reformed faith. This is the experience of a newly organized congregation, whether that be through the work of missions or the constituting of a new congregation in an area where the church has already been established. This is the response of the church liberated from internal strife and enjoying the benefits of reformation.

Jesus looks upon such love, not as a passing fad, but a necessary expression that continues in the church.

Thou hast lost thy first love!

Even though love will mature as time goes on, Jesus does not want His church to lose the fervor, joy, and loyalty manifest in her origin.

Two things enter into consideration here. First, the evaluation of the intensity of our love must focus upon ourselves in the office of all believers. It will not do, simply to look at the church as a gathering of people. This is vital, to be sure; but the church is made up of the sum total of all members. Love is very personal. Jesus wants us to evaluate ourselves. What is the condition of our love for God, for Jesus, for ourselves and each other? Secondly, we must also take into consideration that the intensity of love will fluctuate. We must not despair if we lack enthusiasm because we are passing through a season of lukewarmness. We must rather examine ourselves and heed the warning here and turn things around.

How can we measure whether we have lost our first love?

I suggest five areas. What about your *devotional life*? That is probably the best measure of how much you love your Lord. Conversation is the heart-beat of friendship. The friends we love are the friends with whom we spend time and talk. Do you take time to be alone with God — not just in family devotions, or in church worship. That has its

place to be sure. You can do these things just to be seen of men; but you will never be on your knees in the inner closet, except with the pure motive of love.

What about your *home life*? We show our love of God by loving our neighbors. The closest neighbors we have are in the family: our husband/wife, our parents/children. Love of God is shown in a godly home life.

Then there are the *fellow members of the congregation*. Love of God is not shown in fault-finding, gossip, judging others. Rather it is shown in caring, building up God's church, helping where we can. Any local congregation can measure her degree of love by the treatment shown to other members.

Then we show love by the amount of involvement we have in *opportunities to grow spiritually*. This love of God needs nourishment. The way to do that is to turn off the noisemakers and distractors and spend time reading, in spiritual reflection, in singing and enjoying music. This includes discussing God's Word with others. It includes also attending societies, discussion groups, and such like. You can measure your first love by these.

Finally, what of our *zeal for missions*? Are we serious about our witnessing to others and about support of missions within the church?

If there is any lack in these areas, we must repent! If we do not pay attention to our lack of love, the result will be disastrous. The same is true in marriage: neglect love and you will grow apart, and your marriage could well end in divorce. The same is true of the church. The road to Laodicea is through Ephesus. It all starts with loss of first love. Jesus says, Repent or else I will remove the candlestick (verse 5). When that happens, a church stops being a church.

The key word Jesus uses is, "Remember from whence thou art fallen and repent." Remember, as the way to repent!

Many of you have experienced first love. Perhaps some of our readers have not. They do not even

know or cannot recall times when love was fervent, joyful, and filled with loyalty. I suggest it is for this reason that God has aged saints in His church, and why it is such a joy when He brings newly converted ones into the body of Christ. What a role they fill by helping the church to remember "first love."

One more thing: Do the first works. Many times married people

say they lost their first love and there is nothing else to do but divorce each other. Here we are reminded that the way to generate first love in a marriage is to do the first works. Treat each other the way you did when you dated and were first married, and you will find that first love will return. The same is true for the church. Practice energetically the first works,

obediently do what God requires of us, and that in itself will generate love. Just spend more time with God in quiet reflection and discover for yourself.

May God give us the ears to hear what the Spirit says.

This leads us to the perfect love of the paradise of God. □

Editorially Speaking...

■ Subscriptions

The results of our mini-campaign to extend the witness of the *Standard Bearer* with the help of our readers are in. We had asked that each of our present subscribers submit at least five names to whom we would send a complimentary copy of the *SB* and an order form. It is encouraging that 240 names were submitted. Of these, 17 have now subscribed to our magazine. What is disappointing is that these names were submitted by only 24 of our subscribers. Had all of our more than 2,000 subscribers sent in as many names as did the 24 and had a corresponding percentage of the names subscribed, we would now have more than 1,300 new subscribers and readers.

We continue our efforts to expand our readership. The board of the Reformed Free Publishing Association has advertised the *SB* in the *Christian Observer*. Presently, they are running an advertisement in the (Presbyterian) *Journey*.

O Lord, how happy should we be
If we could cast our care on Thee,
If we from self could rest;
And feel at heart that One above,
In perfect wisdom, perfect love,
Is working for the best.
SB, October 1, 1932

■ Outlines for Bible Study

Especially our societies and other Bible study groups should know that after Rev. Gise VanBaren completes his outlines on the book of Philippians, we will publish, in regular installments, outlines on Ruth by Rev. Carl Haak. The first installment should appear in the March 1, 1991 issue. We suggest that our societies decide to study Ruth. Of course, the outlines will serve well also for personal study.

■ New Publications

We call the attention of our readers to two recent publications of the book publishing committee of the R.F.P.A. One is *The Doctrine of Scripture* by Professor Homer C. Hoeksema, a 93-page paperback selling for \$6.95. The other is *Studies in Philippians* by Rev. Carl Haak, a 63-page study guide selling for \$3.95. Order from the R.F.P.A., P.O. Box 2006, Grand Rapids, MI 49501. Those living in Western Michigan can obtain both of these books, as well as all the publications of the R.F.P.A., at the Reformed Book Outlet in Hudsonville, MI.

■ Special Issue on Creation Planned

The May 1, 1991 issue of the *SB* will be devoted to the Reformed doctrine of creation, God willing. Treatment of this basic truth of the Christian faith will include such topics as the creedal statement on creation; the relation of creation and science; the importance of creation for Christian education; creation and ecology; an analysis of theistic evolution; and more. Our consistories, evangelism committees, and Christian schools may find this special issue useful in their teaching and witnessing. We will make extra copies of this issue available at attractive prices. Orders for extra copies of this issue must be placed well in advance of publication so that we can have a sufficient number of copies printed. Call or write our business office for information or to place your order. □ — DJE

No sinful word, nor deed of
wrong,
Nor thoughts that idly rove;
But simple truth be on our tongue,
And in our hearts be love.
SB, November 15, 1932

The Collapse of Communism

The past year witnessed a truly significant event: the collapse of Communism. That theological-economic-political colossus reared up in world history by Marx, Lenin, and Stalin and taking form especially in the Soviet Union since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 has fallen. Communism has proved an utter failure.

History's judgment of Communism was replete with ironies that made the fall of the house of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin even more devastating. Communism failed economically. While the capitalism of the West was bringing greater material prosperity to more people than ever before in history, Communism (funded in large part by borrowed capital from the West to begin with) reduced its millions to destitution. It was the economic failure of Communism that brought it down in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union. The people saw the wealth of the West and would not put up with their poverty any longer. This is ironic, for Communism's claim has always been that it is exactly its economic theory that makes it an irresistible power, whereas the downfall of the West was supposed to be assured by its capitalist economics. Communism was right when it insisted on the importance of bread — man must eat. (1800 years before Marx, Jesus made the request for bread the first of the petitions for man's own needs in the model prayer.) But it was wrong when it asserted that ownership of industry and farming by the State would produce this bread in abundance, whereas personal ownership of the means of production and private enterprise

would result in poverty. Communism collapsed because it could not supply the bread.

Communism failed politically. It extended and maintained itself by sheer force and stark terror. This was its deliberate policy. Its government was tyranny. Not only does Communism have the distinction of producing some of the cruelest, most brutal tyrants in all the bloody history of the fallen race, but also every Communist regime was tyrannical. But men and nations will not indefinitely endure tyranny. Even the animal will finally turn on his tormentor in desperation. And man has a natural desire for earthly freedom. The subject peoples in Communist countries rebelled against the dictatorship of the party. This is ironic. Communism has always preached and incited revolution. It was itself born of revolution in Russia. Revolution by their peoples against the governments of the capitalist nations of the West was to be the way in which the Communist utopia would be realized. In the end, it was Communism that went under in revolution or the threat of revolution.

It was a monstrous experiment. The terror, the torture, and the murder inflicted by the Marxist states over the past 70 years, usually upon their own citizens, defy human calculation and comprehension. Joseph Stalin alone was responsible for the deliberate murder of 60 million Russians, whether by starvation, or by the concentration camps, or by summary execution. For this, there is not a word of repentance on the part of the Communist leaders as they suddenly

show themselves amicable to the nations of the West, seeking loans. Nor do the governments and press of the West bring up the appalling crimes of the Communists. All is overlooked and forgotten. The suffering of untold millions is ignored. Overnight, as soon as the hard-pressed Communist leaders smile at the West, the rulers and people of the West embrace them as friends and allies. In an act that confirms the Christian's contempt for the plaudits and prizes of the world, the West gives the head of the Soviet Union a peace prize! And billions of dollars to bail out the bankrupt nation.

The West shares the guilt for the atrocities of Communism. At the end of World War II, in full knowledge of what this meant for those hapless peoples, the United States and Great Britain turned over the nations of Eastern Europe to the tender mercies of Stalin. The nations of the West accepted the Soviet Union, Red China, and the other murderous, Marxist states as members in good standing of the international community. The political liberals in the United States fawned over the Communist movement. "I have seen the future and it works," cried Lincoln Steffens, typical liberal, upon a visit to Stalinist Russia in the 30s. But it did not work. And even if it did "work," such was the nature of its working — the secret police, arrest in the night, the kangaroo court and show trial, the Gulag, and the policy of crushing the individual in the interests of the exalted State — that anyone with a love of truth and justice would abominate it.

Never was the spinelessness — the utter lack of principle — of the West more apparent than when President Ford of the United States and his Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, declined to receive at the White House the great, exiled Russian patriot and courageous foe of Communism, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Solzhenitsyn proved prophetic when he wrote, in 1975:

I put no hopes in the West — indeed, no Russian ever should. If we ever become free it will only be by our own efforts. If the twentieth century has any lesson for mankind, it is we who will teach the West, not the West us. Excessive ease and prosperity have weakened their will and their reason (The Oak and the Calf, p. 119).

The theological liberals in the West will carry into the Judgment complicity in Communism's evils. Never could the Marxist-leaning World Council of Churches find in itself to condemn the injustices and outrages of the Communist countries. On the contrary, it supported Communism's revolutionaries, revolutions, and tyrannies with money and praise — in the name of the God and Father of Jesus Christ. It accepted Communism's religious stooges as legitimate, honored members of a council whose constitution confesses (vainly) the Jesus detested by Communism as Lord. And it did its best to fill the member churches with the Communist propaganda.

The collapse of Communism is not merely an inexorable judgment of history. It is the judgment of the living God upon Communism in history. What Daniel told another tyrant as his kingdom was collapsing holds true for the collapse of Communism: The most high God, who rules in the kingdom of men, has numbered your kingdom and finished it (Dan. 5:17ff.).

God judged an economic system that defied His law of personal property and private enterprise with economic and political disaster.

God judged a cruel and bloody dictatorship with revolt and overthrow.

God judged an avowedly atheistic kingdom with ruin. Communism

is hostile to God and His Christ. This is the essence of Communism. The essence of Communism is not economic. It is not political. It is not social. But it is religious. It is Communism's hatred of God. Marx wrote that "(the Christian) religion is the opiate of the people." Lenin declared, "the only idol we permit and maintain is godlessness." Solzhenitsyn stated, "Atheism is the core of the whole Communist system." Wherever Communism prevailed, it persecuted the church. Billy Graham showed himself a false prophet or a dupe or both when he preached a few years ago in the Soviet Union, under the auspices of its servile church, and declared that he saw no evidence of persecution in Communist Russia. As he spoke, the true saints groaned in the dreadful camps in Siberia and the blood of Christian martyrs cried out to God from the Russian soil.

God judged the deified State with overthrow that exposed it as an impotent idol.

The kingdoms that rage against Him and His Christ, God breaks with a rod of iron already in history.

The collapse of Communism does not imply the justification of the democratic and capitalist West. The nations of the West also lie under the judgment of God. For in them earthly liberty unbounded by the law of God has become license and virtual chaos. Witness the promiscuity and abortion. And capitalism divorced from the sovereignty of God over things material has become greed that now

threatens to undo the West economically. Witness the looting of the banks by the capitalists themselves with the connivance of the highest officials of government. And an increasingly man-centered West idolizes the State, just as is done by Communism.

Nor does the collapse of Communism signal ease for the church. With the collapse of Communism has come a remarkable uniting of the nations. The cold war is over. The nations are seeking each other on behalf of "a new world order." When the nations are one, the church must expect the final form of the kingdom of the beast and the great tribulation.

But in the collapse of Communism with its resultant unifying of the nations, the Reformed believer hears the footfall of his coming Lord, Jesus the Christ. He is coming. He is coming quickly. He is coming for judgment. The judgments in history are imperfect. There must be the Final Judgment of nations and individuals. God will render to every man according to his deeds. His terror outstrips and avenges that of the Stalins of this world. The Stalins forget this to their eternal sorrow.

Let us not forget this, for judgment must begin at the house of God.

"Come, Lord Jesus, through the collapse of Communism and the unifying of the nations in their new world order that leaves Thee and Thy Kingship out of consideration!"

"Come, Lord Jesus, for judgment!" □ — DJE

Thy home is with the humble, Lord!

The simple are Thy rest;

Thy lodging is in childlike hearts;

Thou makest there Thy nest.

This deliverance of the soul from all useless and selfish and unquiet cares, brings to it an unspeakable peace and freedom; this is true simplicity. This state of entire resignation and perpetual acquiescence produces true liberty; and this liberty brings perfect simplicity. The soul which knows no self-seeking, no interested ends, is thoroughly candid; it goes straight forward without hindrance; its path opens daily more and more to "perfect day," in proportion as its self-renunciation and its self-forgetfulness increase; and its peace, amid whatever troubles beset it, will be as boundless as the depths of the sea.

— SB, November 15, 1932

Letters

■ Reformed Eschatology

What a blessing your magazine has been the past couple of months! I believe and practice the Reformed faith in our Orthodox Presbyterian congregation here, but I continue to be encouraged by the sharing of our Reformed brethren elsewhere....

I was, though, rather discouraged by the eschatological articles by Rev. Gritters.... I really felt like I was reading some excerpt from Hal Lindsey, or one of our local dispensational preachers.

First, the articles violated the plain statements of Reformed creeds. The Westminster Confession explicitly identifies the Antichrist with the papacy. I believe the Belgic Confession makes a similar remark.

Secondly, and more importantly, the author's interpretations violated other, plainer passages. Rev. Gritters forgot one of the fundamental principles of biblical hermeneutics, i.e., that the less clear passages of Scripture must be interpreted in the light of other passages where the concept is shown more clearly.

For example, that Matthew 24 refers to the period preparatory to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, is plainly explained by the paraphrase, "Jerusalem surrounded by armies," in Luke 21. In addition, Jesus Himself, within the passage under consideration, refers the time of its fulfillment to "this generation." The quibble that "generation" means "race" collapses under the scrutiny of any word study. In no other use of "generation" is "race" even a possible interpretation.

Lastly, we can see that the astronomical imagery is a parallel with Old Testament judgments on pagan nations. Examples include Babylon in Isaiah 13; Edom in Isaiah 34; Samaria in Amos 8; and Egypt in Ezekiel 32. Do these parallels not clearly indicate that Jesus is merely using Old Testament imagery, intimately familiar to His audience, to signify to them God's final excommunication of Israel?

Brethren, I believe that the Reformed faith is the only sufficient antidote to our nation's addiction to humanism. But that antidote is undermined by a dispensationalist presupposition that the errors of humanism are a biblical aspect of our culture. In other words, we can't stop humanism if we believe that it belongs here.

— Christopher S. Cole
Charlotte, NC

■ Response

Brother Cole's letter seems to indicate that he has never heard of an A-millennialist. To compare an A-millennial (Reformed) view of the end times with Hal Lindsey and dispensationalist preachers is a surprising mistake that should not be made by one who obviously has studied the Scripture.

There are similarities between the dispensational/Pre-millennial view and the A-millennial view (ours) of eschatology, in that both believe that the world will become worse before the return of Christ. (In this sense they differ radically from the Post-mill view, which seems to be brother Cole's.) But the similarity ends there. Pre-mills believe that Christ will return to reign on the earth for a thousand years; we believe that His return will be the end of the present earth.

The Post-millennial view holds the world will continue to improve before the end.

Regarding his other points: (1) I would not deny that the pope has been one of the many antichrists, nor that he may become the Antichrist at the end. (2) Matthew 24 is a chapter that finds partial fulfillment in A.D. 70 and partial fulfillment, clearly, at the very end and the return of Christ. (3) And the brother's last paragraph about humanism shows the fundamental difference in viewpoint between the Post-millennial and the A-millennial Reformed believer.

If Mr. Cole, or other readers, are interested in the comparison between the three millennial views, they may write to me at the editorial office, and we will make available in-depth studies from the A-millennial viewpoint. Or they may wait for further articles in my rubric, "The Strength of Youth," where I will be discussing the question, although not in detail.

— Rev. Barry Gritters

■ A Good Calvinist Magazine

Enclosed find (a generous gift — Ed.) to help with the cost of putting out your very good Calvinist magazine.

It is a special blessing especially to those of us who do not have good, scriptural, Calvinist churches near by

I thank God for guiding me in His Word.

— Mrs. R.E. Kelley
Sandusky, OH

■ Courageous Publication

Recently I read, in *Christian News*, a reprint of a very impressive article countering Popery that was originally published in *The Stan-*

dard Bearer ("God's Continuing Controversy with Unchanged Rome," *The SB*, October 15, 1990). I want to subscribe to a paper that takes such a bold stand!

I look forward eagerly to receiving your fine, courageous publica-

tion! Keep up the good work in these times of apostasy, theological drift, and of Neo-Evangelical compromise. God bless your print-ministry! □

— C.P. Gerald Parker
Quebec, Canada

Prof. Robert Decker

All Around Us

■ Kansas City Prophets

There is a church in Kansas City (Kansas City Fellowship by name) that is creating quite a stir in charismatic circles. Its pastor, Mike Bickle, and "prophets" such as Bob Jones, John Paul Jackson, and Paul Cain claim that the prophetic gift should be restored in the church; that prophecy is a natural, biblical means for God to speak to His people; and that this increased prophetic activity is a sign of the emergence of the last days' victorious church. Last May the Kansas City Fellowship became part of John Wimber's Vineyard network of some 300 churches. Last June over 7,000 people gathered in Kansas City for a leadership conference sponsored by Kansas City Fellowship. "Prophet" Paul Cain was one of the featured speakers at the conference.

Cain's life story is bizarre. Michael G. Maudlin (*Christianity Today*, January 14, 1991) tells us:

Like Jesus and the Buddha, Cain's legend begins with a miraculous birth. Pregnant in her mid-forties, suffering terminally from tuberculosis, a heart condition, and cancer, Cain's mother was purportedly visited by an angel who promised that she would be healed, that she would bear a son, and he would be called "Paul," because he

would have a ministry like unto the apostle Paul. ("My great predecessor," Cain smilingly calls him.) The angel gave her a sign that this prophecy about her son was true: that she would live an unusually long life. Last year she died at the age of 104.

Cain received his first visit from the Lord when he was 8. The Lord told him he would have a great ministry if he kept himself pure. As a teenager, he was already on the healing circuit, crisscrossing the country, his specialty, prophetically telling people their names, backgrounds, and their ailments, and that the Lord was healing them. Crowds would sometimes report seeing angels standing beside Cain as he spoke. He became known for his reclusive ways, fasting for days before his talks, being blindfolded in the back seat of the car on his way to assemblies so that nothing he saw would distract him from his revelations.

As a young man he was engaged to be married, but, he claims, one night while he was driving the Lord appeared in the passenger seat and said that he was "jealous" of Cain's company, and called him to a celibate, single life. With Cain's consent, the Lord also took away Cain's sexual desire ... In a recorded talk, Bickle summarized all the ways Cain receives revelations: by mental impressions; by physical symptoms (pains in his body corresponding to where someone is afflicted); by the angel of the Lord visiting Cain in dreams, trances, or standing by him invisibly and speaking to him; by seeing spiritual lights, differ-

ent hues meaning different things; by hearing voices either internally or audibly.

According to this same writer, ... the world Cain paints is attractive and exciting in itself: History is alive, and we are in the center of God's strategies. Signs and wonders, said Cain, will continue to increase to where the church will do greater works than Jesus did. The last-days church will be unequalled in power, purity, and unity ... Cain describes his vision of an army of children that will parade down the streets, healing whole hospital wards. He foresees news broadcasts where the anchors report no bad news because everyone is in sports arenas hearing the gospel. Over a billion will be saved. The dead will be raised; limbs will be restored; those with handicaps will jump from their wheelchairs and crutches will be cast aside; and those in the stadiums will go for days without food or water and never notice ...

All this, the Reformed believer has no difficulty recognizing as evil blasphemy. The Scriptures warn us in II Peter 2 of the false teachers who bring damnable heresies into the church and whose pernicious ways many follow. Men like Cain claim direct revelation. The special office of prophet in the New Testament Church ceased with the end of the apostolic age and the close of the Canon of Holy Scripture. The test we must apply to all preachers and supposed "prophets" is: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this

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

word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).

As bad as all this is, what is more disturbing is the response of Maudlin. His response is, let's wait and see. If these prophecies happen, then Cain is legitimate. And Maudlin writes in *Christianity Today*, the prestigious magazine and voice of the neo-evangelical movement in this country.

■ Woman To Head the NCC

Joan Brown Campbell in November became the second woman and the first female minister to be chosen to serve as general secretary of the National Council of Churches (NCC). Campbell, 59, was elected

unopposed by the NCC General Board. Ms. Campbell is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), she also has standing as an American Baptist minister. She is known for her activist stands against racism and sexism. Campbell replaces interim general secretary James A. Hamilton, who took over following the July 1989 resignation of Arie Brouwer. Brouwer is an ordained minister in the Reformed Church in America.

— *Christianity Today*

■ Grand Rapids Church Funds Abortions

Fountain Street Church, which advertises itself as a "liberal church

in the heart of the city," helps about 10 women each month to obtain abortions. The church spent more than \$13,000.00 for this cause in 1990. As far back as 1968 the church began helping poor women end their pregnancies by arranging trips to countries where abortion was legal. The church sponsors an abortion clinic in Grand Rapids. David Rankin, the church's pastor, says abortions are ordained by God because females are endowed with the capacity to abort naturally through miscarriage.

Now, in the city of churches, the "Jerusalem" of the Reformed tradition, we find a "church" that sponsors the murder of the unborn. Fountain Street is not worthy of the name church. □

— *National and International Religion Report.*

A WORD FITLY SPOKEN

Rev. Dale Kuiper

Salt

Salt. Sodium Chloride. A combination of two elements which separately are explosive and poisonous, but as a compound are taken harmlessly into the body every day. Salt is found in many parts of the world in massive deposits and in a pure state. In Palestine, however, it is often mixed with impurities such as alkali and gypsum; this salt has lost its saltiness or savour. For many centuries salt has been used both as a preservative and as a spice which renders food tasty and palatable.

The most important mention of salt in Scripture is found in Matthew 5:13, where Jesus tells His disciples and every believer, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Many interpreters of these words speak of the church as being the salt of the world, and they insist that Christians are the salt of the world in the preserving sense. The presence of Christians among the human race improves the world and restrains the world from revealing its awful corruption. Thus the world does not become thoroughly wicked, and God's anger is turned aside; indeed, God is pleased to some extent with that world. And members of the church are urged to become more and more the salt of the world, by participating in social actions, rubbing salt in the wounds of mankind, and making the whole world acceptable to God.

This interpretation fails for three reasons. 1) Nowhere in Scripture is salt referred to as a preservative, but always as a substance that makes food tasty and pleasing. 2) Jesus does not say, "Ye are the salt of the world" (a spiritual ethical concept), but "Ye are the salt of the earth" (that is, the planet, the earthly creation). 3) It ought to be obvious that salt cannot preserve that which is already stinking and corrupt, which the world of unbelief surely is.

Christian, you are the salt of the earth! Our understanding is opened when we read Leviticus 2:13 and Numbers 18:19, where we learn that every meat offering unto God is to be made with salt, and that this salted offering is called a "covenant of salt." In other words, salt has covenant significance in both the Old and New Testaments. God's covenant embraces the entire earthly creation which He made and loves, which came under the curse for man's sake, and which is redeemed in Christ and the salvation of the elect. We are to think of the earth, hanging in space, as an offering to God. This earth-offering is made tasty to God by the presence of redeemed saints scattered throughout the nations. They are salt on the offering. What an exalted position! Let men say of the church what they will; God says, "Ye are the salt of the earth!"

The ceremonies of the law ceased at the coming of Christ, so that the use of them is abolished among Christians. But here we have an example of the fact that the truth and substance of them remain with us in Jesus Christ in whom they have their completion (Belgic Confession, Art. 25). Of poor, lowly, persecuted, and reviled people, God forms a people unto Himself who give to the entire earthly creation a pleasing flavor unto the Most High. May the salt not lose its savour in us or in our generations. □

Rev. Kuiper is pastor of Immanuel Protestant Reformed Church in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada.

From Holy Writ

Rev. George Lubbers

Exposition of the Song of Moses (Exodus 15:1ff.) (2)

The historical perspective of this prophetic song should be carefully observed by us.

It will be 40 years before Joshua will lead Israel across the river Jordan into the promised land (Jos. 3:14ff.). And it will be 480 years before the temple of Solomon will have been built (I Kings 6:1). And it will not be till the time of Christ's death and resurrection that the new and everlasting house of God will have been built, in which all nations shall have a place, the elect Israel of God, the dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:13-22). And, lastly, it will not be till the final glorious renewal of all things that the Tabernacle of God shall be with men (Rev. 21:1ff.). Then shall there be a new heaven and new earth wherein righteousness shall dwell (II Pet. 3:10ff.).

The grandeur of the Song of Moses and of the children of Israel is that it casts its prophetic glance across these ages, as if all was fully accomplished in their deliverance from Egypt and in their being led into the land promised to Abraham and to his seed!

Israel will be brought into the land and "planted" in the inheritance of God. This inheritance, this holy habitation, is called the Sanctuary of God. This is a Sanctuary which God has "established." It is

not made with human hands. It was established by "thy hands" (Ex. 15:17). Here the LORD will reign forever!

In a sense, Israel is standing in the very sanctuary of Jehovah at the shores of the Red Sea. Have they not all been baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea? Were they not under the protection of the cloud of Jehovah's glory all through the night? Did not the spirit of glory and of God rest upon them (I Cor. 10:1, 2; I Pet. 4:14)? Yes, they were a most blessed people. The eternal God was their refuge, and underneath were the everlasting arms. God rode in this night to their help in His excellence on the sky (Deut. 33:27). And, in the very heavens where God established His bow in the cloud, Israel dwelt safely!

It was the great NAME of JEHOVAH of which they sing. That name of Jehovah is upon their lips. Thirteen times they confess this great and glorious name. Pharaoh in stubborn ignorance and total unbelief had dared to utter the blasphemous words "Who is Jehovah that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go!" (Ex. 5:2). But that morning the song of Israel was: some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the Name of our God (Ps. 20:7).

They stand here at the shore of the Red Sea. The sea is now calm. It is as if it were a sea of glass. It may well have reflected in a thousand ways the glory of the Shekinah-cloud, which was a pillar of

fire by night. Not an enemy is in sight! Here and yonder a dead body of a soldier lies on the shore — perhaps also the body of Pharaoh. And Israel sings as if they are already standing at the sea of glass singing the victory song of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion (Rev. 14:1ff.). And their refrain shall resound through the ages, as sung by those who "have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the world to come" (Heb. 6:4, 5).

For the children of Israel sing. No, not all that was called Israel sang in true spiritual joy. They saw the wonder of deliverance from Pharaoh, but did not see that this was water of separation from sin and death; that it called for a new obedience of faith and humble waiting upon God's bidding on their desert journey. And many, whose carcasses fell in the desert, would not, could not enter into the promised land because of their unbelief (Heb. 3:18). However, there were those who had their hearing mingled with faith. They were the spiritual Joshuas and Calebs — the remnant according to election of grace!

The Joyful Redemption Song

Yes, it is redemption's song. In a very real sense this was a sacrifice upon the altar, the golden. It was the sacrifice of thanksgiving; it was the fruit of the lips. Other sacrifice Israel could not, may not bring at this point. Their "sacrifice had been slain." In a typical sense God

Rev. Lubbers is a minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

says to them here: For Christ, your Passover, has been slain for you. Why? Because in the deepest sense this sacrifice is the blood of the Lamb of God, who had been slain from before the foundation of the earth (Rev. 13:8). Egypt's names were not written in that book. But the children of Israel — yes, they are written in that book. They have killed their lambs in the night of the death of Egypt's firstborn. And they, as God's firstborn sons, had gone forth when God called "my Son out of Egypt" (Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:15). Thus Israel was delivered from sin and guilt in the blood. "And when I shall see the blood I will pass over" (Ex. 12:13)!

The children of Israel, in their generations, stand here at the Red Sea. They stand here where God will bless those who love Him, in thousands of generations (Ex. 20:6). The holy seed, the children of Israel, confess here with their mouths and they believe with their hearts. They stand here with the word of prophecy in their ears, as this is spoken by Moses. The same Spirit that was in Moses was also in their hearts. It was not only in the hearts of the *men* in Israel, but also in the hearts of the mothers who were saved in childbearing, whilst they remained steadfast in faith, charity, and holiness with sobriety. For also these women and their believing children were members of the household of faith and of the Israel of God (Eph. 2:19; Gal. 6:10).

What a large singing church sang here at the seashore, at the

very doorstep of the Promised land — in hope. Perhaps they are more than a million strong. Seventy souls had gone down to Egypt, and now they come forth in their thousands. And they really sing a new song. They sing of Jehovah, by Jehovah, and unto Jehovah. And the great theme was: the horse and his rider hath Jehovah cast into the sea. Who is like unto our Jehovah amongst all the gods of the heathen? It is the song of the ages of time as well as the endless eternity before the throne of God and of the Lamb (Rev. 4, 5).

Let us remember at this point, too, that Israel had not yet "come to Mount Sinai" (Heb. 12:18-21). They are still within the time of the 420 years after Abraham, before the enactment of the law-giving, with the implied curse of the law (Gal. 3:17, 18). Hence, any attempt to judge of the propriety of Miriam's acting as a prophetess in terms of Old Testament law does not obtain. And Calvin's aside that Miriam's playing with the tabret was proper as a part of the Old Testament services but would be entirely improper in the New Testament church misses the point.

It is quite evident that the women in Israel played a very important part under the leadership of Miriam as a "prophetess." She simply interpreted the singing of Moses and all Israel at an occasion of inexpressible joy of a liberated church of Christ (Acts 7:38; Heb. 11:24, 25). The day of the removal of the reproach of Egypt upon Is-

rael had dawned (Jos. 5:9). And, think of it, perhaps not less than 500,000 women could participate in this singing and musical fest. Miriam was not out of her role here, as she was later when she was smitten with leprosy for seven days because she tried to usurp the place and office of Aaron (Num. 12:1ff.). No, she could very well have a part in the service of the congregation of the living God. She might have played the organ in the church *Anno Domini* 1991 with the sanction of Christ who has sanctified the entire creation into His service (1 Tim. 3:3-5). Yes, also the music accompanying the singing is sanctified by the word of God and prayer!

It seems to me that we have here a pattern, part and parcel of the worship service in the church, which will one day be exalted into the heavenly accompaniment. I think I hear this when I read: "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder. And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps" (Rev. 14:2).

And I ask: was Miriam's primitive tambourine translated into a golden harp far exceeding the sweet twanging of a David, under Christ, the Chief Singer in Israel, who leads the thundering organ of God with the singing as of a voice of many waters? Surely, it will be the year of the Eternal Jubilee. The sorrows and the reproach of all the Egypts in the world will be remembered nevermore! Amen! □

Life's Tempestuous Sea

What wrecks on life's tempestuous sea

May everywhere be found!
Some in rags and poverty,
And some with gold are crowned.

The billows rise, the billows fall,
Wild rolls the angry sea;
And down they go, no help is found,
Nowhere have they to flee.

Some full of dark foreboding cares,
And others full of glee,
The wild waves soon engulf them all,
No matter who they be.

The towering intellect, so wise,
The fool with silly smile,
Alike soon sink beneath the waves,
They've lived their little while.

Few ponder with a serious air,
And think, where shall I go
When sun shall set and I am stopped
From running to and fro?

Oh, pause and think, ye giddy throng,
Life soon comes to an end,
And where shall you eternally
Another life then spend?

Just as you sow, so shall you reap,
'Tis clear as noonday sun,
In heaven above or hell beneath,
Shall end life's race you run.

SB, June 15, 1932

Special Article

Rev. Carl Haak

Applicatory Preaching

In assigning me the topic of applicatory preaching, the committee did not, I am sure, intend for us to discuss the composition of sermons preached after the Lord's Supper, as if the application of the gospel is limited to those occasions. Rather, they had in mind that all true biblical preaching is to have an applicatory flavor and thrust to it.

Also, I did not take the subject to be synonymous with what is commonly called "practical preaching." Personally, I have not yet understood what is meant by practical preaching. I often get the impression that people feel practical preaching merely tells them what to do (what others ought to do?), thus relieving them from their calling to think and reason for themselves under the preaching. Believers are to engage in the earnest work of applying the Word preached themselves, and to themselves.

By applicatory preaching I understand simply this: *what is the Holy Spirit saying to me from the Word which has been expounded in my hearing?*

I would like to divide the subject under the following heads.

The Necessity of Applicatory Preaching.

The Word of God is to be applied by the preacher to the mind and heart and life of those that hear him. Exposition of the text is to in-

clude application of the text to our life. Preaching is incomplete without this. Our commission is not only "to disciple all nations," but to "teach them to *observe* all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:18-20). Doctrine and Truth are not simply to be set before us as subject material, but we are to hear in the preaching how they will be seen in your and my life. This is no easy matter for the preacher. It requires diligent and heart-rending work in the preparation of the sermon. Application makes the sermon distinctive, pointed, personal; something which sticks with the hearer. Preaching without application is preaching "which aims at nothing and hits nothing" (J.C. Ryle, *Simplicity in Preaching*).

Our Confessions reveal that this is the characteristic of Reformed and biblical preaching. Lord's Days 32 and 33 of the Catechism teach that the converted walk and must walk in all good works. This arises from the innermost work in the renewed, who are given a "sincere joy of heart in God, and with joy and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works." Implied is the truth that the preaching is the power for this conversion; that is, preaching which tells us not only what we are to *believe*, but also what we are to *be*. Lord's Day 44 emphasizes that the commandments are to be "strictly preached" for this reason: "that we constantly endeavor and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may become more and more conformable to the image of God, till we all arrive at the perfection proposed to us, in a life to

come." Through preaching, which applies the standard of the law of God to us as the rule for our lives, we are conformed to the image of God.

Article 11 of the third/fourth head of the Canons teaches that the Holy Spirit by the preaching not only "illuminates their minds ... that they may rightly understand and discern the Spirit of God," but also "pervades the inmost recesses of the man; he opens the closed, and softens the hardened heart ... that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions." (See also Art. 14 of the fifth Head of the Canons.)

What is Applicatory Preaching?

Application is "an act of putting to use, a practical inference to be derived from a discourse" (Webster's Dictionary).

I would offer the following statement on the nature of applicatory preaching: Applicatory preaching spells out how the renewed child of God will live in every department of his life as a necessary consequence of the truth of God made known to him. Applicatory preaching will make clear how we put off the old man of sin in his concrete forms and how we put on the new man in very deed and truth. More, applicatory preaching is not only admonitions and exhortations, but also consolation as well. We must beware of one-winged birds. To limit application just to admonition is to put asunder what God has joined together. Applicatory preaching both admonishes and comforts. It shows us how God would have us walk in obedience, but also how God would have us live in trust. Both

Rev. Haak is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Lynden, Washington.

these aspects are to be found in applicatory preaching. For we read in I Timothy 3:16 that Scripture is profitable "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"; and we read in Romans 15:4 "that through patience and comfort of the Scripture, we might have hope."

It is well to remember that really all true preaching is spiritually useful and beneficial (applicatory) because it is the declaration of the living Word. The Word will stick to the renewed heart and bring forth fruit; it can never return to God void but must accomplish the purpose for which He sends it. We must leave the impression that the importance of all the things we preach from the pulpit are beyond expression in worth, and is to be known, loved, obeyed, and trusted by the people of God. Not only must preaching touch directly upon our walk, but every second spent in the pulpit we are to make the Truth of God known. And that is eternally useful, beneficial, of inestimable worth.

More specifically, applicatory preaching touches upon our lives. And it does that, not by vague generalities, but by concretely and tangibly showing what God says to me in this passage, how it both instructs and comforts me.

Never can we forget that the basis of applicatory preaching is to be found in the truths of justification and sanctification. Only when it lives in our minds that God has redeemed His people in the obedience of Christ, and now by the renewing of the Holy Spirit calls them to walk in all good works to His praise and to their own assurance before Him, can we have the true and healthy spiritual framework in which applicatory preaching is to be done. We set those truths aside at our peril. All attempts at application which are not performed in their context will result in teaching men to go about to establish their own righteousness before God.

How is it to be Done?

1. Textually

"The application dare not, however, be anything alien imported

into the text, as though the preacher needed to add to the contents of the text something of his own. He must on the contrary take God's Word, whose meaning in the past he has ascertained, set it unaltered and unabridged, with all its winsomeness and all its severity, in the midst of the present, and let it say to the men of the present what it said to the men of the past" (Reu, *Homiletics*, p. 361).

The point to be stressed is that application is not only to be *Scriptural*, but above all *textual*. The main thought of the text must be the main thought of the application, and whatever is subordinate in the text must be subordinate in the application. Application is to be tied to exposition, in the sense that it is taken directly out of it. This is the compelling force of preaching. It is never what you and I deduce from certain religious principles, but what God Himself plainly says to us from the Scriptures. We are to hold fast to the text. "The preacher's business is simply to take what he finds in the Scriptures, and as he finds it, and press it down upon the understanding, hearts, and consciences of men. Nothing else is his business as a preacher. The die is just so sharp and hard, so large and perfect as God would have it. He judged it was the right die to produce the impression he intends" (Dabney, *Discussions*, Vol. 1, p. 596).

To be able to apply the text, the preacher must first clearly understand the text. "If you begin in a fog, you may depend on it that you will leave your people in the dark" (Ryle, *Simplicity in Preaching*). The application then will not shoot over their heads, to the right or to the left, but be as an arrow finding the mark, being shot out of the Lord's own arsenal.

This means that we will not drag out of the text meanings which the Holy Spirit never intended to put into them, or that we begin by looking for intricate and subtle meanings to show how clever we can be. Whatever we draw out of the text, our people ought to be able to put back in. If we see it in the text, when our listeners are

back at home, they ought now to be able to see it too. "Never venture to expound it to the people, unless you are sure that you have the meaning intended by the Holy Spirit, and offer then no other than that" (Dabney, *Lectures on Sacred Rhetoric*, p. 253).

This results in the lively preaching of the Word. First for the minister: he stands convicted that what he says has God's authority attending it. There is then a freshness to the application as well as the certainty that it arises not out of the preacher's frustrations with his congregation, or his own leanings, but from the King of the Church Himself, for whom the minister stands as a herald. Second, the blessing of strictly textual application extends to the congregation as well. They will gladly receive it, even though it may hurt and prick, because they see that the application, instead of being imposed on the text, is the outgrowth of it. They see the application coming, and it is sealed upon their hearts as a message from the Lord. They are led to examine themselves in the light of the Word.

Application divorced from the text, and not clearly grounded on the Scriptures, is powerless, or, worse, oppressive and thus damaging. Application tied to the text and resting on the Scriptures binds the conscience, compels the will, and sinks into the heart.

2. With a Knowledge of the Congregation

The Word is to be applied within the walls of a local congregation, taking into account the conditions existing, the character of the hearers, and the place and time where they live. The preacher must inquire as to how the text speaks to the need of his congregation, and how it can best be brought home to them.

This requires an intimate knowledge of the congregation, acquired by faithful pastoral care. We ask ourselves: How do they think? What is their life like? What objections and questions will be raised? What temptations do they face? The stimulus for applicatory preaching is when the Pastor lis-

tens to his people in their conversations, asks them questions about their lives and struggles, lives in the congregation with a discerning eye for the needs of his flock. Pastoral care and applicatory preaching are inseparable.

This would also imply that there is not just one sermon for one text. Though the truth of the text never changes, the exact shade of application which the Pastor brings can. The Pastor prepares his sermon according to the needs and struggles, joys and sorrows, temptations and sins which are present with the flock at any given time.

3. Personally

First for the preacher. Here we must be first partakers of the fruits. As Ezekiel was commanded to eat the book and found it sweet, so must we prayerfully ponder the text in our own heart, being not a stranger to it. When preaching on sin and misery, let us be conscious of the plague in our own hearts. When expounding on the deliverance that is ours in Christ, let us with the apostle make all our boast in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. When exhorting unto a life of gratitude, let us make diligent search of our thoughts, words, and deeds, that they have the approval of our Master.

"The sermon that we preach to our congregation is worthless unless we have first preached it to ourselves. If we cannot always point to the effect of renewed repentance and faith on the part of the congregation, we must be able to point to it at least on the part of the preacher. The preacher who, while preaching to others, himself becomes a castaway, who demands repentance and faith of others and himself refuses them, deals only in high sounding words" (Reu, *Homiletics*, p. 385).

Second, personally applied to the congregation. "So unnatural is the habit of personal application, that most will readily fit the doctrine to anyone but themselves" (Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*, p. 284). The applicatory sermon is not one which allows the hearer to go out saying: "The preacher hit hard on others, and hard on other

churches." But it is the sermon which hits hard on me, that is, shows me my misery, my deliverance in Christ, how I shall show forth my thankfulness. It brings me to know my only comfort in life and death. This in no way diminishes the duty of defending the faith against false doctrine in the preaching. Nor is this to be understood that the minister aims his sermons at individuals in the congregation. Rather, applicatory preaching must seek to cause the hearer to turn his eye upon himself, in order that he might come to grips with the sin that dwells in his own flesh, find the comfort he himself needs, and be encouraged in a walk of sanctification.

Some of the Pitfalls

1. Being all Application

"Then there are those who need to be warned against mere exhortation. So often men seem to think that preaching is just extended exhortation. They start exhorting their people at the beginning of their sermon; it is all application. They do not present the truth first and then make the inevitable application. They spend the whole time getting at their people, and slashing them and exhorting them, calling them to do this and that and forcing them" (Lloyd-Jones, *Preachers and Preaching*, p. 258).

We are concerned with the glorious gospel of the blessed God; that it be reflected in the lives of the saints. Our concern is not simplistic moralisms or presenting four or five easy do-it-yourself steps to a happy life. Our themes deal with sin and guilt, salvation by grace alone in Christ alone, repentance before God, the majesty and sovereignty of God, all leading to the one conclusion in the renewed heart: "Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations?" (Jer. 10:6, 7).

2. Speak Nothing Less and Nothing More

Nothing less. There is the carnal inclination to draw back from the sharpness of the Word. This is brought to bear upon us in overt as well as subtle ways. Always the

danger exists that we blunt the sword of the Spirit, that we faint in the day of battle. Only a conceited and reckless preacher would deny it. Well do we meditate day and night on our calling to give account to Him for all that we have spoken or failed to speak in the pulpit. Only when we stand in the consciousness of faith that we are not the servants of men but the servants of God are we made bold to speak.

Nothing more. This is equally pernicious. There is today a concerted effort from the far left, religious modernism, to compel us to preach for doctrine the commandments of men. The attempt is made to make the Reformed pulpit feel guilty if it does not champion social causes such as apartheid, revolution, redistribution of wealth, and what not more. To this the pulpit must respond; we receive for doctrine the commandments of God and will not bind our hearers with any man-made causes.

What is often forgotten is the threat from the far right, ultra conservatism. This is felt by the preacher especially in his applicatory preaching. Then there are those who have a good deal to say in criticism of the church and the worldliness of others in the church, insisting that the church ought to be conformed to their mold. To consent to this in the preaching is to bring upon the people of God burdens too heavy to bear, and subject the church to the scourge of legalism. Our response to this pressure must be as emphatic as to liberalism; we preach for truth God's Word, and not the commandments of men.

"They forget that it does not follow, because a man has drawn his weapon in the King's armory, that therefore he is fighting the King's battle; soldiers have sometimes used the sovereign's arms to fight duels with each other When the minister appears in the pulpit he appears not as a messenger of man but as God's herald" (Dabney, *Discussions*, Vol. 1, p. 597).

3. Not all to be Left for the End of the Sermon

Application should not wait for the end and give the appearance of being tacked on as something which does not belong to the core of the sermon. A third point which brings the sermon to a focal point leaving the congregation with one thought is proper. But the truth ought to be applied as we go. Once having opened the truth of the text, do not let it grow dark, but strike while the light yet burns. When we preach and feel the force of the truth coming out in the exposition, we must not wait for the end and try to pick it up again, but then and there bring out how it bears on our life.

Conclusions:

1. Preach the Gospel
All the application in the world can do no good unless we preach the gospel of God. Christ crucified and risen must ever have its central place. God's people must be taught what they should believe, and thus what they should be and do. The motivation for every point of application, whether it be exhortation or consolation, must be that of gratitude and praise to our God for so great a salvation.
2. Rely upon the Holy Spirit
This goes without saying. No preacher, be he the most eloquent and persuasive man ever to stand behind a pulpit, can bring so much as a gram of truth home to rest in

the heart of man. The Holy Spirit must do this. So we must preach looking for God to make His Word effective unto salvation and in lives abounding to His glory.

God will faithfully remind us of this. "What preacher, worth anything, but has often seen his best work fail of appreciation, and on the other hand his feeblest crowned with encomium, of which he must in solitude be deeply ashamed?" (VanOosterzee, *Practical Theology*, p. 343). For preachers it is written, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Ps. 127:1). □

The Day of Shadows Rev. John Heys

The Antichrist Foreshadowed

Although we do read of Lot's descendants, namely, the Moabites and the Ammonites, we read nothing about him after he and his daughters went up the mountain that was above the city of Zoar and committed fornication. We do read of the descendants of Lot, these Moabites and Ammonites, in both the Old Testament and New Testament. But there is presented nothing that Lot did after the sins of his daughters got him two sons in the sinful way of fornication. Rather, in Genesis our attention is called to Abraham, from whom Lot had departed.

As pointed out in a former article in this department of *The Standard Bearer*, Lot was an elect child of God. In II Peter 2:7, 8 we read

that God "... delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds)."

There is an awesome truth to take hold of in regard to the birth of his two sons. God gave him no son through his wife, who was an unbelieving Sodomite. But he did receive, besides his two daughters, two sons through the wickedness of these daughters, who also deserved to be changed into pillars of salt. Plainly these daughters were taught false doctrines and evil practices by their carnal, unbelieving mother. Even though Lot undoubtedly tried to teach them God's law and their calling to walk in love toward Him, these daughters went the way of their flesh and brought forth sons whom they brought up in unbelief and who

became enemies of Abraham and his covenant seed.

The fornication of these daughters of Lot revealed them to be Sodomites, and thus to be those who also deserved to be destroyed by hail and brimstone. In thought and word, as well as in name, they were Sodomites. And although it is true that Lot also sinned by his drunkenness, this evil was fed and encouraged by his daughters. They gave him more wine than he should have drunk, and no doubt encouraged him to keep on taking it until he was in a position to commit the sin which they had in mind for the sake of their flesh. They were not interested in having covenant seed brought forth. Of course, Lot should have refused that wine; for becoming drunk is not only losing strength and ability to serve God, and serving one's own flesh instead, but it means that one's flesh is one's god. And

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

the two daughters clearly broke the seventh commandment and revealed themselves as fornicators.

Those daughters were not interested in bringing forth covenant seed. Committing a sin, breaking one of God's commandments, reveals hatred against God, not love and desire to serve Him. They revealed themselves to be Sodomites. They knew very well how widespread and public was the breaking of the seventh commandment in Sodom and Gomorrah. By no means was this sin covered and performed in hidden places. And even though these daughters knew that God destroyed these cities because of that public and bold fornication, they were not interested in the growth of God's church. They did say that they would try to preserve the seed of their father. But they did not take at all into consideration what our God had done to their mother, and that He revealed very clearly that He was not going to give their father seed by means of a legal wife.

We have here a shadow of what is in the church-world today. In the Old Testament we have presented to us many types and shadows of Christ, and of the salvation that He brings us. But there are also from Genesis through Malachi shadows of the Antichrist who is coming. We should recognize these antichrists who prepare his way, so that we may be kept from them and be thankful that our God has kept us from their deceit and wickedness.

The birth and cross of Christ, His resurrection and ascension into heaven, did cast their shadow in the Old Testament dispensation. But the Antichrist cast his shadow many a time in the events presented to us in the Old Testament Scriptures. For our comfort as well as instruction we ought to consider what the Scriptures say about these shadows. When he comes in his final form, which in the Scriptures is called *the Antichrist*, we will not be far from the return of Christ.

The shadow of *the Antichrist* appeared very shortly after man's creation. Consider the fact that "anti" means "against," and that Satan

through that serpent did come up against God with his lie. And after the Son of God came in our flesh, Satan comes up against us as the enemy of Christ and tries to make us go against Christ in our walk of life. That wicked work of those two daughters of Lot present to us a picture of what was coming and will be here when the Antichrist arrives. He makes things look good to us and even, as necessary, uses people very close to us to set us against Christ.

Consider the fact that we read of the Antichrist literally in John's first two epistles. He is not named the Antichrist before this. But note that in I John 2:18 we read: "Little children it is the last hour (the Greek word literally is "hour," not "time"): and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour." Then in verse 22 we read: "Who is a liar but he that denieth Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son." Then finally in II John verse 7 we read: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

In these passages — the only ones wherein we find the name of God's enemies as antichrists — we find this awesome truth: The climax of all antichristian movements will in time bring forth *the Antichrist*. And it is well to note that, in the above passages, that article "the" appears every time before the name antichrist. He is *THE Antichrist*, Satan's tool in its final, most highly developed form! Go back to I John 2:18. There John speaks of many antichrists, and in the Greek, the original wording as placed by the apostle John by the Spirit of God, we read: "... as ye have heard that the antichrist shall come."

The Antichrist's coming is prepared by many antichrists that Satan uses. And, as stated a moment ago, the antichrist's predecessor — Satan inside of the serpent — came at the very dawn of history, and has been coming with more and more

antichrists to bring forth ultimately *the Antichrist*. Sin is developing so definitely and openly that the Antichrist will rule the whole world, and that which the ungodly tried to achieve in building the Tower of Babel will be reached. One godless universal kingdom will be established, as we read in Revelation 13; and the true church will not be allowed to buy or sell, so that many of its members will starve to death, because they refuse to take the mark of the beast upon their right hand or forehead.

Take note, therefore, of the fact that the present antichrists and the coming Antichrist will come out of the church. Lot, the believing child of God, and his daughters, and the sons they brought forth, were related to Abraham, Lot belonging to the Old Testament church as he came with Abraham into the land which God promised to the Old Testament church.

It is true that Revelation 13 presents a twofold picture of the coming Antichrist. First is presented to us that Antichrist from a political and physical point of view. Then in the last part of the chapter we see him presented from a spiritual, religious point of view. And the awesome fact is that Lot's leaving Abraham, the leader of the Old Testament church, led to his daughters' walking in the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, which in turn brought forth fierce enemies of Abraham's seed, which was the church of that day. And we do here have a shadow of what the church, as well as the ungodly world, brings forth in the days that lie just ahead of us.

In I John 2:19, after what is stated in the verse preceding about many antichrists being in the world, we read: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not of us." Even as Lot left Abraham and went out from him, his sons, who were begotten sinfully through the plot of his daughters, became antichristian, or, if you will, became antichrists then already. Lot took one

very sinful step, even though he was a believing child of God. His daughters took a bigger sinful step, and the way was prepared for the Moabites and Ammonites which were very really antichrists who fought against Abraham's seed who were Christians. Lot erred by leaving Abraham and living with Sodomites. His daughters went further into sin, further away from how the child of God must walk, and brought forth sons who tried to wipe from off the face of this earth God's elect children.

Here, by all means take note, is a shadow of what is happening today and is rapidly accelerating the appearance of the Antichrist. Yes, the church-world is producing that antichrist, preparing the way for him to be here with a most powerful and skillful attack upon the true church of Christ. Here already in Genesis 19 is a shadow of what we find in Revelation 13. Not only are more crafty and subtle false doctrines being produced in the church world; but more and more sinful deeds are not only approved but also recommended in church magazines!

Look at what the fleshly seed of Abraham did at the cross of Christ. There was that antichristian deviltry of nailing Christ to the cross, blaspheming Him, and calling Him a false prophet. Consider how today the bulk of Abraham's fleshly seed, called Israelites yet today, and claiming to believe and hold on to the Old Testament, condemn the whole New Testament, and thus are antichristian.

Think of the corruption in the church-world today. Think of the idolatry of Roman Catholicism, with its Mary-worship and its human additions to the Word of God. It pleased our God to raise up Luther, and others with him, to point out this antichristianity.

Consider the antichristian forces in churches that deny that Christ alone is our Savior, and teach that we have to open our hearts and let Him come in and save us. We, they teach, can prevent Him and our sovereign, almighty God from doing what They wish to do. All the false doctrines of today — and they are many and so crafty and subtle — cast the shadow of the Antichrist and his worldwide success of which the Scriptures speak. Read I

John 2:18 and hold on tightly to this truth that the shadow of the Antichrist is here and tells us that he will also be here very soon with his devilish power. Yes, we are in the last few minutes of that last hour.

Although that departing of Lot from Abraham, with whom God established His covenant, is a relatively light shadow, there are very dark shadows of the coming Antichrist today; and we ought to recognize them and do all we can to keep our covenant seed from being captivated by the present antichrists and this final climatic Antichrist.

In the church-world salvation is merely preached as deliverance from the punishment of sin, which all of Satan's children want. Freedom from the love of sin is not proclaimed, but instead sins are encouraged even in the church-world. Fleshly gain is hailed, but spiritual gain is not presented or recommended, because it takes away fun for the flesh.

Read the signs of the times. Look at the shadows of the coming Antichrist; and do all you can to keep your children from the crafty coming of the man of sin. □

When Thou Sittest in Thine House

Mrs. Mary Beth Lubbers

For I know [Abraham], that he will command his children and his household after him....
— Genesis 18:19

Mrs. Lubbers is a wife and mother in the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois.

The Reformed Family: Grandparents

I didn't ever really know my grandparents, my paternal grandfather not at all. Life was hard on the farm and Charles died at the age of 62. But I'm told this taciturn fellow was a charter member of Hope Church, Grand Rapids. I have peered closely at the old brown snapshot of him for some small clue to explain my own looks and personality and that of his

great grandchildren. But as with most of the old photos, faded and ragged, the barn looms too large, the actual people are minuscule. In the photo entrusted to my keeping, Charles faces the camera ill-at-ease, stern, hat in hand, chin dropped to his chest.

Who was this man? What did he believe? What were his hopes? His disappointments? His

strengths? His quirks? Was he happy? Did he ever laugh? When my own father dies, Charles will pretty much be forgotten in our family, even though he sired a great many children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren.

How different from a baptism witnessed about three years ago in South Holland. Both sets of grandparents as well as all four sets of great-grandparents were in active attendance. Already this little girl knows her grandparents and great-grandparents very well. This is a day when grandparents live a longer, fuller life than ever before. Studies conducted show that in 1776, when our country was born, life expectancy was at a low of only 35 years. One hundred years later, in the 1800s, life expectancy had risen to a mere 40 years. Today, more than 200 years since the inception of our nation, life expectancy is 75 years.

Giant strides in medicine insure better health and longevity for elderly people. Remarkable advances in communication and transportation put grandparents in easier and closer access to their children and grandchildren than ever before—whether this is appreciated or not. Today's grandparents are active, vigorous, involved, and alert. Many of them look and act much younger than they are; to quote the old proverb: they are healthy, wealthy, and wise. Most of them are more at home on a Nordic ski tracker than in a rocking chair on the porch. They are interested and interesting; they have much to teach their grandchildren.

This teaching which the grandparents are able to do is not some option which they have depending on whether or not the grandchildren are willing to heed it or they themselves are willing to give it. It is a direct, clear mandate from God; nor was Abraham the only patriarch ever to receive it. In Deuteronomy 4, Moses exhorts Israel to keep the statutes and judgments of Jehovah God so that all the heathen nations will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people"(verse

6). And the Israelite fathers were commanded to keep these statutes "in the family" when they were instructed to teach them to "thy sons, and thy sons' sons"(verse 9). In Deuteronomy 6, the commandment to teach thy son and thy son's sons is expanded to include the admonition and reward, "all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged" (verse 2).

Grandparents "command" their grandchildren by the good examples they set and by their lives of unceasing devotion and commitment. They are faithful to the vows they have made in their own marriages, and they are exemplary in their personal walk and conversation in the society in which they live. They can look the whole world in the face, for they owe not any man ("The Village Blacksmith"). It will not do for grandparents to lay aside their armor once their own children have established homes. Nor may the sword be sheathed during the first few years of their retirement. The battle of faith is lifelong; we will need our spiritual weapons of warfare (Ephesians 6) until the moment we gasp our last breath. Satan and his wily host haven't laid their weapons aside, eased up on the attack, or called a truce; in truth, the warfare is accelerated. And our grandchildren must profit from our around-the-clock vigilance, our spiritual battle exercises, if they, and we, are to endure to the end.

In commanding our children and grandchildren and our household after us to future generations, we grandparents must not just talk about honesty, decency, ethical behavior, and our love for the church and school; our grandchildren have to see this example in our lives. When we say to them, "Keep the Sabbath Day holy and frequent the House of God; this is really important," but our many vacations, extended absences from the church of our membership, and week-end getaways contradict our pious utterances, then our grandchildren have reason to doubt our integrity. When our grandchildren hear their elders say, "I have put my children through the Christian school; I'm

done supporting it, now it's your turn," then we erode the statutes of God and the children's faith in God-glorifying values. In an age of insatiable greed, our grandchildren must see us do the right thing rather than make the right investment. This is the legacy we leave them. And, of course, there is great blessing in teaching our children's children. There is the closeness and rapport with those of our own flesh and blood. There is the reward of laughter and lightheartedness with vibrant young people, in a way in which only the young can celebrate life. For the first time, one is comforted by the clasp of chubby toddler arms without the added responsibility of midnight medicine doses or monthly tuition payments. I am reminded of the grandmother who said, "If I had known that grandchildren were this much fun, I would have had them first." Psalm 128 tenderly refers to this phase of a man or woman's life as seeing thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.

Many today are decrying the lack of values and morals in America's youth. Allan Bloom, in his best-selling book *The Closing of the American Mind*, discusses this very topic as a malaise which has infected America's family life.

But they [American homes] have nothing to give their children in the way of a vision of the world, of high models of action or profound sense of connection with others.... The family requires a certain authority and wisdom about the ways of the heavens and of men. The parents must have knowledge of what happened in the past, and prescriptions for what ought to be, in order to resist the philistinism or the wickedness of the present (p. 57).

In the November 15, 1990 issue of the *Chicago Tribune*, William Raspberry writes:

Talk to your friends about the declining ethical standards of America's young people, and you're likely to hear dozens of explanations: the pressure of television advertising; the greed-is-okay legacy of the Reagan years; the growing contrast between the haves and the have-nots; the capitulation of politicians to the "special interests"; the societal emphasis on the individual

(as opposed to group) interest and the disintegration of the family. All true. But there is another, simpler reason why so many youngsters haven't learned the values espoused by their elders: They haven't been taught.... And they haven't been taught by the example of their elders.

I have only one faded photograph to link me to my grandfather. My children have warm loving memories of four God-fearing grandparents who have regaled them with the old family "skeletons," have spanked and rebuked them for unacceptable behavior, have played Scrabble and Chess with them (and beat them, too), have discussed the church situation and the political scene with common sense and a wisdom born out

of experience and adversity. These grandparents have attended numerous Sunday School Christmas programs and grade school graduations (often three or four different ones in a week), and now are actively interested in their grandchildren's life partners and job decisions. Grandparents, in concert with the parents, of course, are greatly responsible for developing grandchildren of sound character who possess a sharp sense of right and wrong, an "internal compass" as columnist Raspberry puts it. They contribute in a powerful way to a "wise and understanding" generation.

In a world of too many villains and unspeakable wickedness, you, grandparents, are our spiritual

heroes. Your maturity, your experience, your commitment, and your optimism for the future of God's kingdom is contagious for your grandchildren. The adversity through which you have come, and endured, is the bright hope for your children and children's children for the generations yet to come.

Someone has said: heroism is endurance for one moment more. In the lives of God-fearing grandparents we see endurance for one generation more. Endurance until Christ returns, bringing His reward with Him.

For He knows that like Abraham you will command your children and your household after you. □

Contribution

Rev. Bernard Woudenberg

From Tasmania Home – A Report

On the way to Tasmania one crosses both the international date line and the equator, and everything changes. Suddenly tomorrow becomes today; and what was supposed to be today is yesterday. The sun rises early, rides through the north and sets late, while the south sides of buildings and trees stay in the shade. The nights are short but dark; and the stars shine unusually bright. Drivers get into the passenger's side of cars; and passengers sit where drivers ought. The right side of the road is the wrong one on which to drive, and the left side is right: right turns are wide, and left turns sharp. Temperatures must be multiplied by

1.8 and 32 degrees added if one wants to know how warm, or how cold, it really is. Kilograms have to be translated into pounds, centimeters into inches, kilometers into miles, and liters into quarts. One dollar is a coin, and larger than a two-dollar piece, which is about the size of a two-cent piece and nearly the same color, all of which are smaller than the twenty-cent piece and much smaller than the half dollar, which is the largest of all and easiest to tell because it has jagged edges.

One has to be careful and alert; he can never relax and take anything for granted. The sun is bright; but rain can come without a moment's notice, even while the sun is still shining. There is always a little chill in the air, and the nights are cold; but everything can quickly change. "Four seasons can be in one day," the natives are

quick to explain; and one soon begins to believe it. But gorgeous flowers are everywhere. Some we know, but they come in sizes and hues never imagined; and others one has never seen, with a unique beauty all their own. The northwest coast of Tasmania, VanDieman's Land, as Abel Tasman, the original Dutch explorer, first named it, is where Gulliver in his travels was said to have been cast ashore; and it still retains a land of fascination as great as Lilliput of ancient lore.

But, if the air is chilly, the people certainly are not.

We were met at the airport by nearly the whole of the Evangelical Presbyterian congregation of Burnie; and together they brought us to our home, all gaily decorated in welcome. The children must have worked hours making paper chains; and hand-painted welcome

Rev. Woudenberg is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

signs displayed our name. Then we went for Tea, their evening meal, and an opportunity to visit and get acquainted. Already then, if one thing came through, it was their deep interest in the Reformed faith and the doctrines it contains. And, if there was another, it was their love and appreciation for the Hoeksemas, who labored among them so recently, their appreciation for having sat under the Professor's teaching, and their sorrow that that visit was so abruptly cut short, and so sadly so. But their time together remains a memory which will never be forgotten.

The home where we are living is high on the bluff, overlooking downtown Burnie and the sea; not quite as close as the Hoeksemas' was, just a few blocks farther back from the edge, but still close enough to hold that sense of height which living on a bluff provides. A walk to town, down the twisting path or along the winding road, is a test of stamina, especially coming back; but the view (between houses clinging to the hillside for sake of the sight, with flowers everywhere covering walls, filling trimmed gardens, and climbing every fence) makes it all worthwhile, even as sea breezes refreshingly waft one's face.

But the real joy is in the church.

The building, just a short block's walk from the house, is small, as plain and unimpressive as can be. The fact is that few churches here are large (Australia, in the pattern of modern Europe, is not inclined

to religion); and the plainness fits the historic Calvinistic form which old Presbyterianism seeks consciously to retain.

And the congregation isn't large either, about five or six families in all, but with a sizable percentage of young people and children. And compensating for its size is an intensity of interest seldom any more met.

One who has preached for years, and in many different places, knows that size is not everything. There is, to be sure, a certain fascination about preaching to a large audience, especially if one does not do it all the time; but there is also a certain frustration. It can be hard to get close and feel the interest of those who listen. But not here. The congregation is small and close, and their involvement in the Word is there, one knows.

I came to Burnie, as I suspect Prof. Hoeksema did, with the anticipation of many quiet hours and days free to read and write, only rather swiftly and pleasantly to discover it is not to be. These people have an agenda, they want to learn, and they have a long list of things they want to learn about. After months and years without a minister, young and old alike are going to seize the opportunity to be instructed, while it is available. It is the kind of a beguilement no true teacher can resist. Plans and intentions fall quickly by the way.

And then there are the services.

Many coming for the first time into our traditional church services,

I have often thought, must find it strange, with the quiet solemnity, long sermons, and music from the past. In fact, I was struck last summer while visiting the Reformed churches in the mountains of Romania (a country generally reputed to be living a hundred years in the past) how similar their services are to ours. But, if so, here much more; except that, if in Romania it is by accident, here it is with purpose. Presbyterianism of this kind has made a conscious choice to stay the way it has always been, to retain a continuity with those who have gone before; and they do it without excuse. They want it that way.

I believe, if God is leading us as Protestant Reformed Churches to work with churches of this kind, and every indication would seem to be that so He is, it behooves us to try to understand what this is all about. It is not as though we are to judge whether they ought or ought not so to be; or to try to change them to be like us, or we like them. It is doubtful that either could ever be. Historical patterns lie deep, and are not easily changed; and unless sinful, should not be either. They are to be respected, both among our own and among others. These are the ways in which the Holy Spirit has variously led His people in different places. But sharing through it all one faith, we should try to understand and appreciate each other's ways just the same. God's workings with His people are always cause for rejoicing. □

Their Names

Sweet thought, my God! that
on the palms
Of Thy most holy hands
Are graven all Thy people's
names,
Though countless as the
sands.

No one too mean to have his
place
Amid that record blest,
And if but there our names are
found,
We'll share the heavenly
rest.

How can we then yield to dis-
trust,
Or think we are forgot,
While ever thus the care of One
Who loves and changes not?

SB, December 1, 1932

Report of Classis East

January 9, 1991

Byron Center
Protestant Reformed Church

Classis East met in regular session on Wednesday, January 9, 1991 at the Byron Center PRC. Each church was represented by two delegates. This session was chaired by Rev. Richard Flikkema.

Two major items, other than the routine material for a January session of classis, were on the agenda for this meeting. The first dealt with an appeal to classis about a consistory decision and, because of its nature, was treated in closed session. This precludes any reporting on this issue. The second dealt with a protest and letter of explanation from Norristown regarding the decision of the September 12th classis requiring them to use *The Psalter* (the protest) and their handling of the issue of not using musical accompaniment for singing (the letter of explanation). The protest contended that the decisions taken in May and September re the use of *The Psalter* violated Articles 30 and 31 of the Church Order. Classis rejected the protest. With regard to the letter of explanation concerning musical accompa-

niment, classis decided that, on the basis of their letter, the classis considered this to be a matter of principle and therefore instructed Norristown to present an overture to Synod 1992 which is to be presented to Classis East preferably by September, 1991 but no later than January, 1992. Classis also dealt with the language of Norristown's protest and instructed them either to prove the charges made in the protest or retract them.

Classical appointments were requested by Hudsonville and Kalamazoo for Larne, Northern Ireland; Venice, Florida; and for Kalamazoo in Rev. Woudenberg's absence. The following schedule was adopted: LARNE: February 10, 17, 24 — Kortering; March 10, 17, 24 — Koole; April 28, May 5, 12 — VanBaren; VENICE: February 10, 17 — Bekkering; March 3, 10 — Flikkema; March 24, 31 — VanOverloop; April 7, 14 — Joostens; April 28, May 5 — Kamps; May 19, 26 — K. Hanko; KALAMAZOO: February 3 — Slopsema; February 17 — Bruinsma; March 3 — Gritters; March 17 — Slopsema; March 31 — Key.

In matters of voting, the follow-

ing: Delegates *ad examina* — Rev. W. Bruinsma to a three-year *primus* term and Rev. J. Kortering to a three-year *secundus* term. Classical Committee — Rev. K. Koole to a three-year term. Church visitors — Revs. J. Kortering and G. VanBaren with Revs. Heys and Slopsema as alternates. Synodical delegates — MINISTERS: *Primi*: M. Kamps, J. Kortering, J. Slopsema, G. VanBaren; *Secundi*: W. Bruinsma, R. Flikkema, B. Gritters, S. Key; ELDER: *Primi*: D. Engelsma, P. Hoekstra, J. Huisken, K. Schipper; *Secundi*: D. Harbach, P. Koole, C. Kregel, R. Pastoor.

Classis also heard the final report of the church visitors. All the visits have been made, and the visitors report that, "for the most part, peace and unity exists within the congregations."

Subsidy requests for 1992 from Kalamazoo (\$6,500) and from Covenant (\$27,500) were approved and will be forwarded to synod. Expenses for this session amounted to \$2,117.85. Classis will meet next on May 8, 1991 at Holland. □

Respectfully submitted,
Jon J. Huisken
Stated Clerk

Book Review

REPENT OR PERISH, by John H. Gerstner. Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1990. 218 pages. Paperback. \$7.95. [Reviewed by the Editor.]

One of the latest heresies among "evangelicals" in the United States and England is the denial of eternal punishment. Only believers in

Jesus Christ have an eternal destiny. Unbelievers will be annihilated. What formerly was held only by the liberals and the cults is now held by "evangelicals": There is no hell. Prominent men are among those who espouse and promote "conditional immortality." John R. Stott, known as the "pope of the

evangelicals," and Philip E. Hughes, who recently retired from teaching at Westminster Theological Seminary, openly advocate the denial of hell. Clark Pinnock and F.F. Bruce have cautiously indicated their approval.

Repent or Perish is Presbyterian theologian, John H. Gerstner's, polemic against this error and those who teach it. He refutes the arguments of those who deny hell and proves conclusively, yet once again, that Scripture teaches the eternal punishment of the wicked as everlasting suffering of the just wrath of God.

His (Christ's) Word surely abides forever and, if it does, sinners abide in hell forever. If they are ever annihilated, He and His Word are annihilated with them. This is the reason I wrote this book. Not because I love hell and hate its annihilation, but because I hate attempts to annihilate God and His Son, Jesus Christ (p. 185).

A vigorous controversialist, Gerstner reminds of the defender of the faith about whom it was said that he not only demolished his opponents but also dusted off the spot where they were standing. Writing of the then Lutheran, Richard John Neuhaus (who has since defected to the Roman Catholic Church), Gerstner remarks, "Richard John Neuhaus says there is a hell, but no one is in it – a good way to gain entrance" (p. 206). One wonders, incidentally, whether Neuhaus's conversion to Rome did not include a conversion to the doctrine that hell will be populated, since Rome certainly does hold for dogma that there will be people in hell, especially Martin Luther.

A benefit of the book for those of us who believe the eternal punishment of the wicked is its powerful reminder that hell is a reality. If it is

unbiblical to deny hell, it is also unbiblical that hell has little or no place in Reformed preaching or in the Reformed consciousness. The effect of the reminder is to underscore the importance of God's work in us of repentance – the way to escape hell. In true evangelistic fashion, Gerstner presses upon the reader the necessity of repenting. In this connection, Gerstner proposes his (and Jonathan Edwards') peculiar notion that also the unregenerate sinner can pray to God, although he hates Him, for the gift of regeneration and true repentance.

Soli Deo Gloria – publishers of the book – is another new publishing company specializing in Reformed works and the reprinting of old Puritan books. Their catalogue is available from Soli Deo Gloria, 213 W. Vincent St., Ligonier, PA 15658. □

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

Evangelism News

Pastor denHartog, along with Elder E. VanVoorthuysen, from our Redlands, CA PRC, traveled to Santa Cruz in mid-December to meet with the brethren there. It was difficult to bring them the news that our churches will not be able to continue sending ministers to preach for them. This was disappointing news for them since they

have really appreciated the preaching. Redlands plans to keep in contact with them and to send them tapes and literature. We hope also that our churches will still be able to help them in the future, as the Lord provides a missionary to our denomination.

Mission News

As has been reported here several issues back, Rev. Joostens and Dan Pastoor, from First PRC in Grand Rapids, spent a very busy week last October in Jamaica. They met with the people, attended a special classis meeting, and secured a somewhat isolated but ideally outfitted conference center at the Orchard View Great House, a little north of Savanna La Mar.

Here Rev. Joostens and Elder Gritters will teach Reformed doctrine to about 20 of the leaders of the churches in Jamaica for four weeks in January, D.V. On three days of each of these weeks the men will stay at the Orchard House. Rev. Joostens will teach the six loci of systematic doctrine in the morning, and Elder Gritters will apply in a practical way these teachings to the life of the churches in the afternoon sessions.

Rev. Joostens and Elder Gritters were scheduled to leave January 10 for Montego Bay with their wives joining them for about two weeks midway through the sessions. The wives too will be busy. They will travel to the churches, in order to

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

instruct the women in how to play the keyboard, and to get input on the *Psalter* selections that should go into new booklets that must replace the worn-out ones they now have. They will return home before their husbands.

On non-conference days, visits will be made to the people of the congregations to deal with various spiritual and administrative needs. On Sundays, the men will separate and preach in the churches. Elder Gritters will use reading sermons.

Rev. Joostens and Elder Gritters plan to return Saturday, February 9. They hope to give an oral report to the Council and Mission Committee on Monday, the 11th, before the Gritters fly home to California.

All of this impresses upon us again the great need there is in our churches for preachers of the Word. The harvest indeed is plenteous and the laborers are few. Pray to the Lord of the harvest.

Denominational Activities

Prof. Hanko and Rev. Russ Dykstra left in mid-December for Singapore. The purpose of their visit was to investigate possible future cooperation with the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore in the work of theological training and mission work, as well as to deal with other matters that concern our sister-church relationships. They planned to return home January 14.

Congregational Highlights

On December 14 the congregation of our Grandville, MI PRC held a short program commemorating their pastor's (Rev. Jason Kortering) 30th year in the gospel ministry.

The congregation of our Byron Center, MI PRC approved a proposal to sell their present parsonage and build another on property next to their church building.

Ministerial Calls

The congregation in Hudsonville, MI extended a call to Rev. T. Miersma to serve as missionary to Larne, Northern Ireland.

And the Hope PRC in Isabel, SD extended a call to Rev. Carl Haak to serve as minister to their congregation. □

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On January 25, 1991, our parents, HERMAN and LOUISE OPHOFF, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. We thank the Lord for them and are also grateful to God that He has remembered His covenant among us. It is our prayer that they may experience the blessings of the Lord for many years to come.

"The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea thou shalt see thy children's children and peace upon Israel" (Psalm 128:5, 6).

Steven and Karen Ophoff

Steven Charles

Bruce and Rosanne VanSolkema

Tedd Herman

Andrew Steven

John and Patricia Ophoff

Jessica Marie

Southeast PRC, Grand Rapids, Michigan

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

We, the children and grandchildren of MR. and MRS. JOE BRUMMEL are thankful, as they celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on February 12, 1991, that it has pleased God to give them these many years together. We are grateful for the godly example they have set before us. We pray that God may be near them as He prepares them for their heavenly home.

"The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel" (Psalm 128:5, 6).

Rich and Sylvia VanBaren

Andrew and Judy Brummel

Adrian and Trude Lenting

Allen and Sharon Brummel

Dale and Delma Post

Glen and Twyla Griess

Joe and Mary Brummel

Ken and Glenyce Feenstra

35 grandchildren

5 great-grandchildren

3 grandchildren in glory

Edgerton, Minnesota

NOTICE!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Randolph, Wisconsin, on Wednesday, March 6, 1991, at 8:30 AM, the Lord willing. All material for the Agenda is to be in the hands of the Stated Clerk, 30 days before Classis convenes. All delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the Clerk of Randolph's Consistory, using the forms provided for that purpose.

— Rev. R. Hanko, Stated Clerk

NOTICE!!

Hope Christian School of Redlands is in need of a teacher for the combined first and second grades for the 1991-1992 school year. Interested parties, please contact Mr. Ed Karsemeyer at the school (714) 793-4584 or Mr. Bill Feenstra (714) 793-3597.