

# THE STANDARD BEARER

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*A Reformed  
Semi-Monthly  
Magazine*

... One of the modern-day tactics of the devil is to make us as Christians so busy with the things of this world that we do not have time for our calling in our Christian homes . . . . Soon our children are out of the home and living on their own. They are now as busy as we are, establishing themselves in their careers, and there is no time for Christian family fellowship. We taught them this ourselves.

See "Redeeming the Time" – page 488

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## IN THIS ISSUE...

"Hours have wings and fly up to the author of time and carry news of our usage. All our prayers cannot entreat one of them either to return or slacken its pace. The misspents of every minute are a new record against us in heaven. Sure if we thought thus we would dismiss them with better reports, and not suffer them to fly away empty, or laden with dangerous intelligence. How happy is it when they carry up not only the message but the fruits of good, and stay with the Ancient of Days to speak for us before his glorious throne." — John Milton

Picking up the thrust of that quote from Milton, and feeling something of the sense of urgency with which the quotation on the cover breathes — these are easy. The hard part comes in actually doing something about it. Time is indeed a "very precious gift" from God. How we use it, its hours and minutes, has eternal consequences. May Rev. den Hartog's thought-provoking article on "Redeeming the Time," in this issue, inspire us to more than mere pondering.

— D.D.

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**Meditation**  
Rev. Jason Kortering

# Acknowledging Our Sins

*When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD: and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. —Psalm 32:3-5*

Silence!

There are times when it can be devastating.

So it was in the life of David.

He had committed terrible sins and had not repented before God. No, these sins were not of a general category. It was not so in David's life that he had no idea of what sin was involved. It was nothing less than the sins of adultery and murder into which he had fallen. Even God's evaluation of the life of David focuses upon these sins: "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite" (1 Kings 15:4, 5).

It was a dark moment in the life of Israel's king.

If we reflect upon the true character of these sins in the life of David, we shudder with disbelief. The "man after God's heart" had

actually taken another man's wife, adulterated his own marriage with her, and forced her to break her marriage vows as well. When she reported later that this tryst had resulted in her pregnancy with David, he immediately sought to cover it up by having Uriah return home and spend a night with his wife. And when that failed he coldly plotted Uriah's death by having him exposed to imminent danger in the front line of battle. Yes, David committed sins against the sixth and seventh commandments of God.

These sins were more than private affairs. David had done this with the knowledge of those around him as well as those around Bathsheba. He had inquired of her identity, sent for her, had her return home. He had to deal with servants and messengers who were privy to his evil deeds. Still more, he held the trusted position of king of Israel. In that office he was the type of the King of kings, Jesus Christ Himself. He had even used his office to advance his evil deeds. He took advantage of his position as king to order Bathsheba to come and return, as well as to arrange the death of her husband. He broke a sacred trust.

And all the time, he was silent before God!

He persisted in this sin. David was overcome with lustful passion. He did not exercise self-control, but he rather gave in to his own feelings; and when things went from bad to worse, he allowed evil to have its way in his life.

That silence went on for nine months to a year.

Have you ever done such a

thing? In the extreme, there are the drug addicts and the drunkards who use every excuse imaginable in order to persist in their sinful lives. Are there not others who persist in a life of partying, illicit sex, stealing, swearing, or any dominant sin?

Give some thought to this. Maybe you are doing this right now!

David, by the Holy Spirit, tells us that during that time of guilty silence, he was miserable. He describes this in verses 3 and 4. He tells us that he roared all the day long. Literally the Hebrew figure is that he howled like a beast. Inside himself, his conscience was so troubled that he became afraid of God. The deepest cause of this howling was, "thy hand was heavy upon me." He could not enjoy sleep, his conscience terrorized him through the night. During the day he could not work, he could not concentrate, for the fear of God surrounded him at every turn. This "soul trouble" produced physical problems, for he adds, "my bones waxed old, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." The skeleton supports the body, and if our bones are old, we feel worn out. The figure he uses concerning moisture refers to the trees of Palestine whose sap runs thin during the dry spell of summer. He likewise felt dried up. He existed, but he did not have any drive or incentive to succeed at anything. He suffered spiritual depression and its consequences.

He lived, yet he wanted to die.

Such are the consequences of "guilty silence."

The scene is repeated over and over. I cannot imagine a Christian

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who has not gone through this to some degree in his or her life. Martin Luther called this a Pauline Psalm. He means of course that what Luther experienced and Paul experienced, David also experienced. There can be no peace with God by the deeds of the law. Take courage, dear reader, you are not alone when your bones wax old through your roaring.

God did not leave David alone in his silence.

After the "Selah" of verse 5, the pause that forces us to reflect a moment, come these beautiful words: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah."

A changed David is speaking in these verses.

The three words that he uses in reference to his sin are most enlightening. They indicate that David has come to terms with his sinful behavior. They are all used in verse five. He speaks of his "iniquity." That word emphasizes the filth and depravity that is involved when we sin. In this case, it was the terrible filth of actually lusting after another man's wife and planning the death and carrying out the execution of a human being. The point is that this filth is not only in the eyes of men, but emphatically it is filth in God's holy eyes. Another word he uses is "transgression." With this word David comes to terms with the fact that these deeds were violations of God's law. God has set a boundary within which He expresses His love and favor, outside of which He is a God of wrath and judgment. David stepped out of bounds with God and thereby became liable for the punishment of his sins: temporal and eternal death. The third word is translated "sin," which is the most familiar word and has as its root the missing of the mark. The importance of this word emphasizes that such acts of disobedience are deliberately committed. David was not a victim of circumstances, he planned it and deliberately broke God's law.

Do you speak this language as well?

It is the language of a convicted sinner. Only one who has before God come to terms with his sin speaks this way and is willing to use these words which so accurately describe the true nature of sin.

Hence David adds, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD."

We have here the record of the fact that David did this. If we want to know the content of his acknowledgment and confession we have to turn to Psalm 51 which records that confession. Psalm 51 was written upon the same occasion and gives to us the details of what David said to God as he made this confession. Verses 3 and 4 express the heart of it, "For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest." By our coming to God and making acknowledgment, we admit that He is the unseen witness of all our deeds and the Judge of all our inmost thoughts and secret deeds. We have failed our God. We have broken our part of the covenant. We make ourselves worthy of being abandoned, "Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy holy spirit from me" (Ps. 51:11). We are sorry to God for this evil we have done. We ask God to forgive us and not let it stand in the way of His fellowship with us. We desire to be at peace with God as He is at peace with us.

Such a cry always focuses upon Jesus.

David was well aware that his confession of sin required that he come into the presence of God with the blood of the lamb. God never overlooks sin. Forgiveness means that another has paid the debt and the benefit is given to us. This is the gospel of our Lord Jesus. Forgiveness for sin is based upon His bearing the penalty of our death upon the cross and keeping the law

of God perfectly for us that we might have his imputed righteousness for ourselves.

What brought the change in David's life?

Nothing other than God's messenger.

Nathan the prophet was sent to David by God with his anecdote of the rich man who stole the only lamb from his poor neighbor in order that he might feed it to his guests. David was incensed by the injustice, and when told, "Thou art the man," he humbled himself before the face of Jehovah and saw his sin in dealing with Bathsheba and Uriah her husband.

How merciful of God to point the finger at us.

We may squirm in our seats, we may try to deflect its personal application, we may look across the aisle at the sins of others to try to console our own sinful conduct, but when God touches our hearts, we can do nothing but cry and come to terms with our sins before God.

It does not mean that our confession of sin will free us from any consequence of sin. The child conceived by adultery died. The sword never departed from David as long as he was king. Nathan told David that his concubines would be ravished openly in the light of day (a thing done when Absalom came to Jerusalem). Yes, our sins carry a certain price, but that becomes bearable when we know God has forgiven.

"Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

God does not let past sins stand in the way of His love and friendship.

David wrote in Psalm 51:13, "I will teach transgressors thy ways." In this Psalm he fulfilled that pledge to teach others what he had learned.

May God put this teaching into our hearts.

We exalt then, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (vss. 1, 2). □



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## Editorially Speaking

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The editorial in this issue on the place of the children of believers in the covenant of God concludes the much-interrupted series of six articles that began in the March 15, 1990 issue of *The Standard Bearer*.

The evangelism committees of the Protestant Reformed Churches of South Holland, IL and of Lynden, WA have cooperated in publishing these articles in pamphlet form. Lynden initiated the project. Their purpose was to use the book-

let in order to witness to the distinctive Protestant Reformed covenant-doctrine and covenant-practice, not only throughout the Reformed and Presbyterian communities, but also among the Baptists.

The pamphlet is now available. Copies for personal use or for distribution can be obtained from either of the two churches: The Evangelism Committee, South Holland PRC, 16511 South Park Ave.,

South Holland, IL 60473; or, The Evangelism Society, Lynden PRC, 108 Beernink Lane, Lynden, WA 98264.

These editorials have drawn response. There is still interest in the doctrine of the covenant. In the next issue of *The SB*, we will publish the response from leading men in the Netherlands Reformed Congregations. □

- DJE

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## Editorial

# The Covenant of God and the Children of Believers (6)

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### The Call to Believers' Children to be Converted

We face, finally, the question, what place does conversion have in the life of the covenant child? Does conversion have a place, or is it now unnecessary for him? If conversion has a place in the life of the child of the covenant, is this place an important place, even a necessary place, or is the place of conversion somewhat minimized?

These are important questions for the believing parent and for the Reformed church. What is their attitude towards the conversion of their children? After all, if conversion is necessary, they must be the

instruments in the hand of God for such conversion. Should they earnestly pray for their children's conversion? Should they urgently call the children to conversion?

The question about conversion is vital for the covenant child herself. Ought she to look for this reality and experience in her own life? If so, how must she expect to experience it? May she consider herself a proper candidate for public confession of faith and a worthy partaker of the Lord's Supper without conversion? May she have the certainty of salvation apart from conversion, simply because she is the child of believing parents and has been baptized?

Let us admit that there is a danger that the important place of con-

version in the life of the covenant child is neglected both by Reformed parents and by the Reformed church, and therefore also by the child. It is possible that this neglect is due to a misunderstanding, as though mention of the conversion of the covenant child threatens either the truth that the salvation of the child is the fruit of the covenant or the truth that in the covenant it is God alone Who saves the child. In part, the hesitation of Reformed Christians to speak of, much less to emphasize, the conversion of the children of the covenant is due to their reaction against the sin against God's covenant that becomes more and more popular today in Reformed circles, namely, that covenant, bap-



tized, Reformed young people are made the objects of an "evangelism" that treats them as unsaved sinners who must be saved by accepting Christ. If this is what is meant by the conversion of the child, Reformed parents and the Reformed church reject it in the name of the covenant of God sealed to their children in infancy.

But these misunderstandings and errors may not be decisive for the answer to the question about the conversion of the children of the covenant. Scripture alone is decisive.

First, conversion is always the work of the Holy Spirit in free, sovereign grace. This is true on the mission field, but this is also true in the covenant. Conversion is never a work of the sinner, earning or obtaining the grace of God. Our converting ourselves is not a prerequisite to entering the kingdom of heaven. Although we are active in conversion — we believe, we repent, and we turn to God — our activity is caused by the Holy Spirit.

Second, conversion has a place in the life of the covenant children; and this place is that conversion is necessary. Christ's word in Matthew 18:3 applies to the children of believers, "Except ye be converted..., ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Covenant children must receive the gift of repentance. They must have faith conferred, breathed, and infused into them. They must be turned to God as to their heavenly Father in Whose will they delight.

Third, conversion is itself the fruit of the covenant: It is the effect and benefit of the covenant promise. God's promise to the elect children, signified and sealed at baptism, works conversion in them. The friendship of God, experienced by them in the Holy Spirit, causes them to turn away from sin and to God. Because God includes them in the covenant, by gracious promise, their conversion is certain.

Fourth, parents and church not only may but are also solemnly required by God to call their children to conversion. They must do this with regard to specific sins, as well as with regard to the entire life of

the children. They do this, not only by saying, "Believe!" "Repent!" but also by thorough, careful instruction in the entire gospel of Scripture; by discipline; and by godly example. God works conversion by His Word. Therefore, church and parents teach the children the Bible. God works it also in answer to prayers. Therefore, church and parents are to pray for the conversion of the children.

Fifth, the children are to be taught to experience conversion, to find conversion in their lives. This is true particularly, although not exclusively, at the time of public confession of faith and celebration of the Lord's Supper. No unconverted person may come to the table of the Lord. No one who is doubtful of his conversion is able to come. However, this experience of conversion is not some mysterious, undecipherable, inexplicable feeling. Rather, it is heartfelt sorrow over sin, true faith in Jesus Christ, and a sincere determination to love God and the neighbor.

Neither is the conversion of the children of the covenant as a rule a sudden, dramatic change in teenage years, or even in later life. The history of the conversion of the penitent thief and of Saul is not the norm for elect children born and reared in the covenant. Usually, they are converted from earliest childhood. This is the implication of the fifth commandment of the law. From earliest years, the children are converted to God so that they are able to honor their parents from the motive of the fear of Jehovah God Who has redeemed them from sin and death through the blood of Jesus Christ. This is also expressed in Psalm 71. God is the trust of the covenant child, as the rule, from his or her youth (v. 5), for God has taught him or her from youth (v. 17). The covenant relationship goes back, in fact, to conception and birth (v. 6). Although there are times of struggle, doubt, and turning away from God, there is gradual development in daily, ongoing conversion — deeper sorrow; firmer faith; more ardent love.

The refusal to be converted is the manifestation of the bastard — the

physical child of believers who is not a genuine, spiritual son or daughter (Heb. 10:29). He too is called to convert himself. Conversion is his duty. Refusal exposes him to severest punishment. It will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom than for him. When he manifests himself as unspiritual and unbelieving by refusing to make confession of faith, by neglecting the means of grace, by fornication, by drunkenness and drug use, and by impenitence regarding this wicked course of life, he must be excommunicated from the church by discipline. As Deuteronomy 21:18ff. requires, the parents themselves must cooperate in this work of the church, putting the honor of Christ's Name and the welfare of the congregation above their natural love for their child.

One of the strongest objections of the Baptists against infant baptism is that it fills the church with young people, and finally with adults, who are manifestly unspiritual, worldly, and immoral. Nor can it be denied that some Reformed churches expose the truth of the covenant to this charge by their tolerance of the ungodliness of the young people and by their refusal to discipline even the most blatant transgressors among them. All are presumed to be regenerate and saved. The result of this presumption is the death of the church as the carnal, profane seed come to dominate the church, finally driving the spiritual children out. These churches do not take election seriously. Not all the children are included in the covenant and church of God, but the elect only. The elect manifest themselves by holiness of life. Those who are unholy must be disciplined both by sharp preaching and by church censure.

This is a great grief both to parents and church. It is the full responsibility of the ingrate who crucifies to himself the Son of God afresh and puts Him to an open shame. But it is not evidence of the failure of the Word of God. For the great truth in the sphere of the covenant is this: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy..."



(Rom. 9:15). As in Israel under the old covenant, so in the church under the new covenant, "the election has obtained it, and the rest were blinded" (Rom. 11:7).

This is a doctrine of the covenant that is thoroughly biblical. It is in full accord with the Reformed confessions. It has an honorable place in the Reformed tradition. It upholds and extols the sovereign grace of God in salvation. It gives comfort to parents and children alike. To mention only one aspect of its rich comfort, only this doctrine of the covenant enables believing parents to bring the body of their infant child to the grave without doubting of the election and salvation of the child (cf. the Canons of Dordt, I/17).

And it is practical. To refer only to the calling of believing parents, this doctrine provides the basis for having children; indicates the positive approach to take in their rearing; lays down the content of the rearing; and gives encouragement in times of struggle and disappointment.

Therefore, I witness to this doctrine of God's covenant boldly. I do so all the more fervently because I myself have experienced the truth of it: child of believing parents; baptized in infancy; converted on my mother's lap; guided in the good way of the Lord by the Spirit of Christ from earliest childhood; knowing God as my Friend, without terror before Him, under the gospel of unconditional grace; and, however imperfectly, loving Him

from childhood Who, having looked upon me in my infancy in grace, incorporated me as a baby by His Spirit into His Son, Jesus, burying me into Jesus' death and raising me with Him in newness of life.

I and the multitudes of covenant children like me cannot but testify to the covenant of God. Our testimony is the witness of irrepressible joy:

When the Lord shall count  
the nations,  
Sons and daughters He shall see,  
Born to endless life in Zion,  
And their joyful song shall be,  
"Blessed Zion,  
All our fountains are in thee,  
Blessed Zion,  
All our fountains are in thee." □

—DJE

## Letters

### The Searching Spirit

The July 1, 1990 issue of *The Standard Bearer* is a gem. I have enjoyed the series of articles on the Covenant, too.

In the article, "The Holy Spirit — His Work in the Economy of Salvation," by Rev. Charles Terpstra, there appeared a word which for me was incorrect and misleading. Under the heading, "The Holy Spirit as the revealer of Truth," paragraph 3, there was this statement by the author: "The Spirit is the one who *searches* the deep things of God; He has perfect knowledge and understanding of the spiritual things of God." It would be more correct to say that "the Spirit is the one who *uncovers* the deep things of God...." Since the Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity, He does not have to do any searching. He is *all-knowing*, as the author also states.

When someone *searches* for something, he may not find what

he sets out to look for. The *search* may be futile.... Not so with the Holy Spirit, who never needs to "search for the things of God." All that the Holy Spirit needs to do is *uncover* what He already knows about God, since He is the third person of the Trinity.... Would not Rev. Terpstra therefore agree that his use of "search" was incorrect, since the Holy Spirit is *all-knowing*?

Thank you for an excellent paper.

Peter J. Sluys  
Kalamazoo, MI

P.S. In addition to the above, I would like to send a check to be used exclusively for the good work of the Protestant Reformed Churches among the Christian brethren in Northern Ireland. Please advise me to whom I should send the check.

### Response

Send your check to the Mission Committee of the PRC, Mr. Don

Doezema, Secretary, 1904 Plymouth Terrace S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506. Designate the contribution for the mission to Northern Ireland. You will be interested to know that at the time of this writing Rev. Kortering is considering a call to serve as missionary to the Larne area in Northern Ireland.

Rev. Terpstra's answer to your question about the Holy Spirit follows. —Ed.

In the first place, this expression is taken directly from the Scripture in I Corinthians 2:10: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit *searcheth* all things, yea, the deep things of God." The KJV is an accurate translation of the Greek verb used here. The verb is not "to uncover," for which there is a word in the Greek but which the Spirit did not see fit to use. It is a verb that means "to search, examine into, investigate." The Holy Spirit Himself, therefore, chose the word



"search." He knows what His own work is, and He tells us that it is to search the deep things of God.

In the second place, it is certainly true that a human search for something may end in futility; but this cannot be and is not true of the searching of the Spirit. I Corinthians 2:10 does not teach that the Spirit searches for the deep things of God, as though He does not know them and cannot find them. Rather, it teaches that He searches what is always before His eternal mind and what He already knows concerning the Godhead. And that is because, as Mr. Sluys points out, the Spirit is fully God, being one of the three Persons of the Holy Trin-

ity. Far from contradicting the Deity and omniscience of the Spirit, therefore, this expression actually proves it. The Spirit knows everything there is to know about the Triune God, because He makes a continual search of the depths of His being, attributes, and life.

Finally, in the third place, this expression cannot be divorced from the Spirit's work of revealing the spiritual wisdom of God to us, especially the mystery of our salvation. This is the context in I Corinthians 2. And this is the connection between the Spirit's searching and what Mr. Sluys refers to as "uncovering." The glorious things which God has prepared for them

that love Him (cf. v. 9), those things the Spirit uncovers for us (i.e., reveals to us), precisely because He is the One Who searches all things, even the deep things of God. This serves for the comfort of the saints, therefore, as Calvin states in his comments on this passage: "This is added for the consolation of the pious, that they may rest more securely in the revelation which they have from the Spirit of God, as though he had said: 'Let it suffice us to have the Spirit of God as a witness, for there is nothing in God that is too profound for him to reach.'" □ —Rev. C. Terpstra

## *In His Fear* Rev. Arie denHartog

# Redeeming the Time

The inspired apostle of our Lord exhorts us in Ephesians 5:17 to "redeem the time." He adds fearful urgency to this exhortation by warning us that the days are evil. God has ordained the times of our life. He has ordained all the time of the history of the world. He declares the end of time from the beginning. He is the alpha and omega of all time. He sovereignly accomplishes His counsel and good pleasure in the history of the world. God has also ordained the time of our lives individually. He has appointed the time of our birth and the time of our death. Contrary to what we often imagine, our time on earth is very short, only seventy or eighty years, for most of us, and for some even far less than that. After that, we pass on to the eternal place that God has prepared for us.

Our short days on earth will de-

termine how and where we will spend eternity. What a fearful reality that is! What an utterly amazing fact! God has a calling for each of us to perform. He has a purpose for our life on earth. We must fulfill that purpose in the days the Lord gives to us. And after our days on earth are accomplished the Lord will reward every man for the things he has done. The ungodly man will spend eternity paying for the evil deeds that he performed during the days of his life on earth. The saints of God, chosen by grace unto eternal life, will spend eternity experiencing and enjoying the reward of God's grace. The Lord will reward their faith in Him, their steadfastness, their good works, and the persecution and suffering they endured for the Lord's sake.

There will be a difference in the reward. Those who have been faithful in much shall receive a great reward. Those who have suffered and died for the Lord's sake will join the great company of martyrs who have not counted even

their lives dear for the Lord's sake. Exceedingly great shall be the reward which they will enjoy for all eternity.

Time is a very precious gift that God gives us for carrying out our calling in this life. We are carried along with it. Time passes and we cannot ever get it back. God gives us opportunities to serve Him and to live our lives unto Him. These opportunities pass and they can never be recovered. It is good for us to think of that often. Look at some old photos of yourself. Recall some of the events of your past life and consider that the opportunities that you had at that time will never again be yours. Take note how much older you are now than you were a few years ago. It is foolish to wish that you could be young again because that is impossible. With the passing of every day our time on earth is getting shorter. How often we must grieve over wasted time and pray to the Lord for His forgiveness for the great sin of foolishly squandering the time of our life.

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We are to redeem the time. The word "redeem" implies that something is lost. Most often the word redeem is used in connection with the fact that we are by nature guilty and lost sinners. Christ came to redeem us through His sacrifice on the cross. We are now no longer eternally lost. We now belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ. We have been redeemed unto eternal life. We have been redeemed in order that we might live our whole life unto Him and for His glory.

It is possible for time to be lost. Time is lost when it is wasted, when it is spent in idleness and in vain pursuits, in ungodliness and the pleasures of sin. The ungodly man does that when he lives his life in unbelief and rebellion against God. He spends his time in evil deeds and without any regard for His calling before God. Daily he increases his sin and guilt and worthiness of judgment. He spends his time to gain the fame and wealth of this world. Often he makes himself very busy. There is no idle moment in his life. He must get more and more for himself through his work and through his achievements. Nothing can satisfy his cravings, his covetousness and materialism. In the midst of his busyness he has no time for the things of God and His kingdom. He is too busy to observe the Lord's day. He is too busy to bother himself with the commandments of God for his life. He is too busy pursuing his own selfish benefit to be concerned about the need of his neighbor. And then suddenly his life comes to an end. He did not expect that. Foolishly he imagined that it would go on forever. And he suddenly realizes that he has nothing of lasting value. All of his time has been spent in utterly futile labors. The great and holy judge of all men condemns him to eternal destruction. How unspeakably terrible that will be for him.

How we use our time is becoming an increasingly urgent matter in our age. The world is getting more and more busy. Everything has to be done as quickly as possible. Not one moment is to be wasted. Recently as I was walking

to my car from the airport terminal I saw a man also walking to his car who was carrying a portable wireless telephone. He was engaged in what at least appeared to be an important business conversation. I shook my head in amazement. The poor man is so busy that he cannot even walk to his car from the terminal in peace. Just imagine! And, especially if such a one is an ungodly man, what good will it all do ultimately?

It is ironic that in our age life is going at an ever-increasing pace. One would have expected that with all our modern conveniences we could perform the necessary work of our life in a much shorter time than a few years ago and we would not need to be so busy. We should have lots of extra time for the most important things in life. But the exact opposite happens in the world. Many companies today make ever-increasing demands on their employees. And there are always those who are ready to give their heart and soul to the company and who are willing to give more and more of their time to the company. The competition is fierce. As a result there is less and less time for other things, even for things that may be more important in life. Very few are the evenings available for quiet reflection and study. To use an old cliché, "life is a rat race." Day and night man must work, labor, and toil. And all of this is utter vanity if man's life is not lived unto the Lord.

Our lives and our Christian homes are affected by all of this. We are all so busy. It is so easy to be too busy with the wrong kinds of things. And time is rushing by. One of the modern-day tactics of the devil is to make us as Christians so busy with the things of this world that we do not have time for our calling in our Christian homes. We do not have time for private study and meditation and prayer to God. We do not have time for sitting in our homes with our children to instruct them out of the Word of God. We do not have time for proper Sabbath observance. We do not have time for getting involved in church activities and for show-

ing Christian concern for those who are lonely and in need.

We justify this in our own minds by saying to ourselves that we need to spend so many hours at work to make enough money to pay for everything we "need" today. Mother must work outside the home too, and often she does not have enough time for her work and calling in the home. All sorts of compromises are made. We justify all of this by saying "that's just the age we live in." We have to have a nice home. We must have costly recreational equipment. We must be able to pay for expensive vacations. Our children have to be involved in this activity and that activity.

Meanwhile, the time of our life rushes on. Soon our children are grown up and it is too late to instruct them in the truth of God's Word. Years of busyness have not permitted time to foster strong Christian family bonds. We have missed the joy of seeing our children growing up and of spending time with them. We just didn't have the time. Soon our children are out of the home and living on their own. They are now as busy as we are, establishing themselves in their careers, and there is no time for Christian family fellowship. We taught them this ourselves.

Elderly people languish and die. Few have the time to visit them and care for them. Just put them away in nursing homes. Someone else can care for them. We do not have the time. Many Christians grow up seldom taking the time to read good solid Christian books, doctrinal books, and Christian journals. There is no time. And then we wonder why the church is so weak and perishing because of lack of knowledge. It is easy for false prophets to propagate false doctrine in the church because few members of the church know enough to oppose it on the solid teaching of the Word of God.

Then we grow old and the time of our departure draws near. When our life is over we look back and consider what we have done with our lives. Where has the time gone and what have we gained? Maybe we are sitting in a big and beautiful



house and feel secure because we have a large retirement account in the bank. But what lasting value does it all have? How easily the devil can deceive us into wasting all our time for things that are ultimately without value and profit so that we neglect the things of the kingdom of God that have eternal value and significance.

As children of God we are called to redeem the time. Christ has redeemed us that we might live unto Him and consecrate our whole lives unto Him. We redeem the time when we lay hold of each moment of our lives as a gift of God's grace to serve Him. We redeem the time when in the fear of God we consider the great issues of time and eternity. We redeem the time

when we often stop and evaluate our own life and how we are spending our days. We redeem the time when we learn to say no to certain demands on our time because of more important considerations that must be taken care of. We redeem the time when we refuse to get caught up in the crazy rat race of the world that is fueled by covetousness and materialism and greed and ungodliness. We redeem the time when we spend it laying up treasures in heaven and not on earth. We redeem the time when we use it to equip ourselves in the knowledge of God and of His Word and for walking in His commandments and enjoying fellowship with the Lord. We redeem the time when we spend it in our

covenant homes with our families to talk of God's Word and His kingdom with our children. We redeem the time when we use our days for the good works which the Lord has ordained for us. We redeem the time when we spend it in testifying of the truth and grace of God in our lives and doing works of genuine concern and love for our neighbor. We redeem the time when we spend it busy with the great work of the church and the preaching of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we do these things by His grace and Holy Spirit we shall gain an eternal reward that even the supreme sacrifice of our life will not be able to compare with. □

## *The Day of Shadows* Rev. John Heys

# That Wonderful Covenant (2)

With everything in a statement which presents the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament we cannot and may not agree. That statement, speaking about the Old Testament and the New Testament, says: "The Old is in the New explained; the New is in the Old contained; the Old is in the New revealed; the New is in the Old concealed."

Yes, the Old Testament does contain types and shadows which are explained in the New Testament. It is true therefore that the Old is in the New explained. Christ and His work are revealed in the New Testament as that to which these types and shadows pointed. Christ is there in the Old Testament, and the

New Testament gives a rich and comforting explanation of what He realized for us.

It is also true that the New Testament reveals and explains that there is only one covenant that God has established with His people. As pointed out last time, we do in Hebrews 8:6 have the covenant of God presented in the New Testament as a better covenant established with better promises. But that means a better presentation of the same covenant with the same promises. The Old is in the New explained, and the New is in the Old contained. Our God, the only true God, is Jehovah, the I AM. And that means that He never changes His mind and will, and cannot have His mind and will changed by any creature.

Did not John the Baptist in John 1:29, 36 — and thus in the New Testament — present Christ as the

Lamb of God? And do we not here have a better, that is, a richer presentation of how the covenant promises are fulfilled by our God? In the Old Testament there were lambs presented in the temple as necessary for the blotting out of sin. But it is the human Lamb of God presented in the New Testament Who did this; and the New Testament does explain what the Old Testament presented as the way of our salvation.

Similarly we find John explaining in Revelation 21:1-4 that God's house, in which we will have sweet communion with Him, is so very different from His houses, presented to us in the Old Testament, which were built as a tabernacle in Moses' day and as a temple by Solomon. Yes, there is something better in the New Testament; there is something explained in the New Testament that is contained in the

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Old Testament by means of types and shadows.

However, the last statement in that brief poem about the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament is not true. Yes, the Old is in the New revealed, but the New is not in the Old concealed. For to conceal is to cover and in that way hide from view. Our bones, and many very important organs, are there in our bodies, and are concealed by our flesh and skin. But there is nothing in the New Testament that is concealed in the Old Testament. The form may be different. In the Old Testament we have types and shadows, sheep, blood, altars, and temples; but in the New Testament we have The Lamb of God, His blood, His cross, and the new Jerusalem wherein God's house of many mansions will be established. The Old is in the New revealed more richly. But there is not one basic truth of God's covenant in the New Testament that cannot be found in the Old Testament. A better covenant, yes, but a different covenant, no! The New is not in the Old concealed. A better promise is in the New Testament because it presents the thing promised rather than the thing that pictures it. Take away, hide, conceal any truth about God in the Old Testament, and you can burn up the New Testament or throw it away! Concealed? No! There are in the New Testament only two names of God — in the Greek the words *kurios* and *theos*. In the Old Testament we have many more names of God — not only *Elohim* and *Jehovah*, but also names such as *Adonai* which means Lord, and *El-shaddai* which means almighty one. The New Testament names Lord and God are by no means concealed in the Old Testament but revealed as to their meaning.

The Old Testament saints had all that which is needed for faith in God and for the assurance that His covenant promises would be fulfilled. We in the New Testament days have all that which we need for faith in God and for the assurance that His covenant promises have been fulfilled, and that what the New Testament promises will

most assuredly be fulfilled when Christ returns. We can no more say correctly that what the New Testament presents is concealed in the Old Testament than we can today say that what the New Testament presents, as coming when Christ returns, and is so beautifully presented in Revelation 21 and 22, is concealed in the New Testament.

There is another awesome truth which we should hold on to and confess. That awesome truth is that today we should maintain that the New Testament depends upon the Old Testament. How can the coming of Christ into our flesh, His cross, resurrection, and ascension into heaven mean anything apart from that which is presented to us in Genesis 3? The Old Testament surely does not conceal our awful guilt and worthiness of everlasting hell fire! Nor does it in Genesis 3:15, that protevangel, or if you will, that mother-promise, conceal our need of Christ and His coming. What is more, if that name of God, namely, *Jehovah*, which means I AM, was not presented to us in the Old Testament, could we believe that His promises will most assuredly be fulfilled? If any change can come in Him, and He has to say I Was, or I Will Be, upon what promise from Him can we depend? If the devilry and hatred of God that is in Satan was concealed in the Old Testament, how could we, or how would we need to have presented to us in the New Testament our victory over him through Christ?

The unbelieving Jew who today rejects the New Testament as the Word of God also rejects the whole Old Testament as His Word. Deny Christ, cry out as some of the Jews did, "We have no king but Caesar," and you deny the whole Old Testament as the Word of God. You may agree with some of the historical events, but you will deny the spiritual significance of these events. Did not Jesus Himself in John 5:39 state, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are that which testify of Me"? He said that to the Jews who hated Him and later on crucified Him. And the Scriptures to which

He referred were the Old Testament. Surely He Who was in the New Testament revealed was not in the Old Testament concealed. Still more, in Matthew 5:17 Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am come not to destroy, but to fulfill." Not only do we have here a reference to the Old Testament, wherein that law and the writing of the prophets are presented to us; but Jesus states that He is come to fulfill the law and the prophets. He did not come to reveal what was in the Old Testament concealed. He came to fulfill what is plainly written in the Old Testament. What was in the Old Testament is not what He alone could see, but also that which the unbelieving Jews could and did plainly see.

Thus when in Hebrews 8:6 we do read of a better covenant established upon better promises, the Old Testament is not being degraded. When you call your house a comfortable dwelling place wherein you enjoy life, you are not stating that the foundation is decrepit and worthless. That house, as to its walls, the rooms, the protection from the burning sun and winter blasts, is certainly enjoyable to dwell in and use. But even though you see the walls and ceiling, that does not mean that the foundation is of inferior value. You cannot have that house without a foundation. Likewise, the better covenant with better promises does not declare that the foundation is bad and ought to be cast aside. We need both; and sermons from the Old Testament today, in light of what we find in the New Testament, are rich and tremendously comforting and instructive.

Let us put it this way: the Old Testament presented to the elect children of God a very detailed and clear picture of what they needed to see, in order to believe and have the comfort and blessedness of salvation. That picture, however, although a very detailed and clear picture, and so very necessary for the enjoyment of that which is promised us, is a black and white picture. The New Testament, we may appreciate, is one having all



the details of the Old Testament picture, but in full color. Christ, His cross — as in Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 53 — is there. So is His resurrection, as Job speaks of it in Job 19:25. In Isaiah 65 we also have a clear, distinct, and beautiful picture of that to which He ascended, and which will be ours when He returns upon the clouds of heaven at the end of time. Then we will not need pictures but will enjoy the full reality of God's covenant with its promises presented to us in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Here is the good, better, and best. The Old Testament is a very, very good presentation of the truth we

need for faith in God and for our salvation. The New Testament is a better presentation because it brings us to the fulfillment of the Old Testament promise of a Savior, and to full pardon through His blood. But the best is when all this weary night of sin and death is over, Christ returns on the clouds of heaven, and the everlasting day of very intimate covenant fellowship with God begins and is enjoyed in body as well as soul.

And today the Old Testament sermon can be very rich, for it presents — and must present — both the truth in it and the better, that is, richer elements the New Testament brings to us.

The Lord willing, we will present more of this in the next installment of The Day of Shadows. Be thankful now however that the better presentation which we have of God's covenant is a picture in full color. But use the Old Testament in order to understand that picture, and be assured that when you see a sermon announced that is based on an Old Testament text, the truth is not going to be concealed but revealed by that richer presentation that our covenant God has made possible by fulfilling so many of the Old Testament promises. What we are promised and still need will be fulfilled because of what the New Testament teaches us. □

## Cloud of Witnesses

Prof. Herman Hanko

# John Chrysostom: Golden-Mouthed Preacher

"Almighty God, who hast given to us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto Thee; and dost promise, that when two or three are gathered together in Thy name Thou wilt grant their requests: fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of Thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting, Amen."

This beautiful prayer, so appropriate for worship, is taken from the liturgy of Chrysostom. It was used in the worship services which he, as the most famous of all the preachers of the early church, used

in leading God's people to the worship of their Lord.

Preaching has always been the life blood of the church. From the preaching of the apostles in the early church to the pulpits of God's church today, preaching has always occupied a central and important place. Only when Rome introduced into the church meaningless and godless practices did preaching decline and all but disappear from the worship of the saints. The Reformation was, above all, brought about by preaching — simple, biblical, expository preaching. And so it has been in the 400 years since the Reformation. When the church was strong, the pulpit was strong. When the church was infiltrated with false doctrine and worldliness, it was because the pulpit had failed. When reformation came



John Chrysostom — c. 347-407

into the church, it came on the wings of preaching.

It is not amiss, therefore, to consider the greatest preacher of the

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ancient church, John Chrysostom. Not only has his name become synonymous with preaching, but the last part of his name, "Chrysostom," was given him because the name means "Golden-mouthed," and was indicative of the high respect granted him as a minister of the gospel.

John was born in Syrian Antioch in 347 from Secundus, a pagan military officer, and Anthusa, a godly woman of great moral force and character. She married young and was widowed at the age of 20. When Secundus died, John was an infant, and his spiritual nurture came from his mother. So careful was she in John's religious instruction that a prominent heathen of the day said in astonishment at her devotion, "Bless me! What women these Christians have."

Antioch, where the believers were first called Christians, had become a worldly and godless city. One writer put it this way — and it gives us some idea of the environment in which John was reared:

*The warmth of the climate disposed the natives to the most intemperate enjoyment of tranquility and opulence, and the lively licentiousness of the Greeks was blended with the hereditary softness of the Syrians. Fashion was the only law, pleasure the only pursuit, and the splendor of dress and furniture was the only distinction of the citizens of Antioch. The arts of luxury were honored, the serious and manly virtues were the subject of ridicule, and the contempt for female modesty and reverent age announced the universal corruption of the capital of the East.*<sup>1</sup>

He was given an excellent education in the best schools in Antioch, studying especially philosophy and rhetoric in preparation for a career in law. He was not immediately baptized by his mother, chiefly because of some erroneous views of baptism which prevailed in the church at that time.<sup>2</sup> At 23 years of age he was baptized by Miletus, the bishop of the church in John's city. Later John himself would protest this practice of delaying baptism, but he does mark his own conversion as happening in his 20th year.

After his conversion he aban-

doned his studies in law and a secular career and devoted himself exclusively to the work of the church. In preparation for this work, he studied under Diodore, who had founded a monastic school, but who was influential in the establishment of a Seminary in that city. This is worthy of more than passing note, for the Seminary in Antioch was devoted to the principle of biblical interpretation which insisted that the literal meaning of Scripture was the correct one. Antioch took a position contrary to the Seminary in Alexandria, Egypt, which promoted an allegorical method of interpretation. The tradition of the Seminary at Antioch, however, was the tradition in the church during those periods when preaching was strong, and it is still the method held today in all orthodox Seminaries. God used this education to prepare John for his work as preacher. A fellow student was Theodore, later bishop of the church in Mopsuesta, and himself a leading church father.

John had strong leanings towards the monastic life, but refrained from entering a monastery because of his mother's wishes. Only after she died did he retire for 10 years to live the life of a hermit in the hills outside Antioch. As a hermit he brought irreparable damage to his health and bore bodily afflictions to his deathbed.

But God had more important work for John. He was summoned to return to Antioch where he first became a lector (reader of Scripture in the worship service), then a deacon in 381, then a minister in the church. It was during this period that he wrote a book on the nurture of children and another on the ministry entitled, "The Priesthood." Both gained for him a reputation of excellence, for they were filled with profound wisdom.

Nevertheless, he was above all a preacher. Already while he was studying for law, his oratorical gifts were noticed; but God put them to use in the service of the ministry of the Word.

For 12 years he occupied the pulpit in the church of Antioch. It was his custom, as it has been in our

own Reformed tradition, to preach series. Many of his sermons are still extant. He preached 67 sermons on Genesis, 90 on Matthew, 88 on John, 32 on Romans, 74 on I & II Corinthians, as well as series on other books. He preached not only on the Lord's day, but also during the week, sometimes five days in succession. His auditorium was always packed with people, and sometimes the congregation, appreciative of his preaching, would break out in spontaneous applause — for which he severely reprimanded them.

One noteworthy incident demonstrates the power of his preaching. During the Lenten season of 387 the people of Antioch rioted over new taxes imposed upon them by the emperor Theodosius and burned a number of statues of the emperor and his family. Theodosius threatened to destroy the city in his anger and sent troops into the city to quell the rioting and judges to try the instigators of the riot. John took the occasion to preach 20 sermons on the subject, "On The Statutes," in which he reminded the people of their responsibilities to those whom God had put over them and reminded the emperor of the evils of undue cruelty. These sermons served to bring about a quietness in the city and an amnesty from the emperor. One writer of the time said of these sermons: "Though such a crowd had come together, the silence was as deep as though not a single person had been present."<sup>3</sup> One is reminded of Luther's sermons which quelled the disorders in Wittenburg, brought on by the unruly Zwickau prophets.

Because of his great preaching powers, he was appointed by the agent of the emperor to be minister in Constantinople. He had to be escorted out of the city by troops because of the great devotion of his people in whose midst he had labored for 12 years.

The pulpit in Constantinople was perhaps the most prestigious in the entire Eastern Church, and perhaps in the entire church. It was, after Constantine the Great, the capital of the empire. On the shores



of the Bosphorus in Greece, it was the most influential church of the time.

But it was not long before he was in trouble. John, great preacher that he was, feared no one and preached the Scriptures, believing that only God's Word was the food of the soul. Because Constantinople was the imperial city, it was filled with luxury and corruption, intrigue and depravity. Against all these sins he preached with vehemence and force; and his preaching earned him the undying hatred of the Empress, Eudoxia. Conniving with the bishops of Alexandria, she secured his exile across the Bosphorus, but it was to last only a short time. He returned in triumph to his pulpit and continued to condemn the evils in the city. He probably, from an earthly point of view, made his fatal mistake when he called Eudoxia another Herodias who would not rest till she had obtained the head of John.

This time he had gone too far. The emperor deposed him; John refused to obey the command and abdicate his pulpit. The emperor sent troops into the cathedral during a baptism ceremony and mixed the blood of the worshipers with the water used for baptism. He was exiled to Cucesus in the Taurus mountains of Armenia. He described his feelings upon being exiled in a letter.

*When I was driven from the city, I felt no anxiety, but said to myself: If the empress wishes to banish me, let her do so; "the earth is the Lord's." If she wants to have me sawn asunder, I*

*have Isaiah for an example. If she wants me to be drowned in the ocean, I think of Jonah. If I am to be thrown into the fire, the three men in the furnace suffered the same. If cast before wild beasts, I remember Daniel in the lions' den. If she wants me to be stoned, I have before me Stephen, the first martyr. If she demands my head, let her do so; John the Baptist shines before me. Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked shall I leave this world. Paul reminds me, "If I still pleased men, I would not be the servant of Christ." <sup>4</sup>*

Even here his influence continued, for people from Antioch and other parts of the empire came to visit him, and he carried on correspondence with all parts of the empire — a total of 242 letters.

And so the empress had him banished to an area so far removed from the churches that he could have no influence at all: the remote NE corner of the Black Sea called, Pity. On the way, he was cruelly treated by the soldiers and died during the journey in 407. He was buried in an obscure grave.

But the church honored him, and several years later exhumed his body and moved it to a grave in Constantinople. He died a martyr for the faith in a time when there was supposed to be no persecution.

"The personal appearance of the golden-mouthed orator was not imposing, but dignified and winning. He was of small stature (like David, Paul, Athanasius, Melancton and others). He had an emaciated frame, a large, bald head, a lofty, wrinkled forehead, deep-set,

bright, piercing eyes, pallid, hollow cheeks, and a short, gray beard." <sup>5</sup>

He was a preacher who emphasized the moral aspects of the Christian faith. He himself described his work in this way: "My work is like that of a man who is trying to clean a piece of ground into which a muddy stream is constantly flowing." <sup>6</sup>

In keeping with his times, he held some views which were later considered erroneous by the church. Orthodox in all matters to which the church had addressed itself, he took a weak position on the depravity of man and the power of sin in man's nature. But these issues were not to be defined until the work of the great church father, Augustine.

He has gone down in history as one of the church's great preachers. Fearless, catering to no man, willing to suffer the consequences of his firm commitment to Scripture, he is an abiding testimony of the importance of the preaching in the church. May God give such preachers to the church today. □

1. Quoted from Gibbons' *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IX, p. 10.

2. These views, held by some in the church, consisted mainly in the notion that baptism washed away all previous sins. It was considered wise, therefore, to postpone baptism so as to be free of as many sins as possible.

3. Quoted from *Great Leaders of the Christian Church*, ed. by John D. Woodbridge; Moody Press, 1988.

4. Schaff, op. cit., p. 14.

5. Quoted from *Post-Nicene Fathers*, p. 16.

6. Ibid.

## Book Reviews

**CALVINISM IN HISTORY**, by N.S. McPetridge. Published by and available from Still Waters Revival Books, 12810 126th St., Edmonton, AB, Canada T5Y 0Y1. 120 pages, \$7.95 US/\$9.50 Can. Paperback.

(Reviewed by the Editor.)

Still Waters Revival Books is a publisher of Calvinistic books in Canada, newly sprung up. An earlier publication was the reprint of Christopher Ness' *An Antidote*

*Against Arminianism* (reviewed in the July 1, 1989 issue of *The Standard Bearer*).

*Calvinism in History* is likewise a reprint. It was first published in 1882. The 120-page paperback is



the first volume in a projected series of "Calvin Classics" that will focus on the sovereignty of God and the five points of Calvinism.

Volume 1 is concerned to show the powerful influence of Calvinist theology in the history of nations (Scotland, England, The Netherlands, the United States), on the moral fiber of its adherents, and upon missions. The four chapters are "Calvinism as a Political Force"; "Calvinism as a Political Force in the History of the United States"; "Calvinism as a Moral Force"; and "Calvinism as an Evangelizing Force." Calvinism, contends McFetridge, topples tyrants; promotes political liberty; produces men and women of conviction and courage; and stimulates evangelism. This last will surprise many who regard Calvinism as cool to evangelism at best, and hostile at worst. "In fact, there is no other system which has displayed so powerful an evangelizing force as Calvinism" (p. 107).

The author never questions whether the revolutions in which some Calvinists were involved can be justified in light of the condemnation of rebellion by the Word of God in Romans 13:1-7. He simply ignores the flat prohibition of resistance to the state by the Reformer whose name some of the revolutionaries were proud to bear.

The assertion that the American Revolution was a Calvinistic enterprise strains credulity. "The independent and democratic spirit of Calvinism...rose up in rebellion against all despotic measures, whether of Church or State, and girded itself again for the great conflict on this Western continent" (p. 49). Ben Franklin moved by the spirit of Calvinism? Thomas Paine? Thomas Jefferson?

Worse follows. As though beside himself to enlist for Calvinism everyone who was someone at the time of the American Revolution, McFetridge discovers the spirit of Calvinism in David Hume, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and 18th century, revolutionary France! (pp. 66, 67). Wonderful to relate, Immanuel Kant was imbued with "the Calvinistic philosophy" (p. 66).

If these godless rascals are in the camp of Calvinism, even remotely, I want out.

In any reprinting of the book, one glaring error of fact should be corrected: John Calvin was born in 1509, not in 1519 (p. 4). □

**THE JOY OF PREACHING**, by Phillips Brooks (Introduction by Warren W. Wiersbe). Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1989. 237 pp. \$8.95. (paper) [Reviewed by Prof. Robert D. Decker.]

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) was born in Boston and educated at Harvard and the Protestant Episcopal Seminary in Virginia. He served three churches: Church of the Advent (1859-1861) and Trinity Church (1861-1869), both in Philadelphia, and Trinity Church in Boston (1869-1891). From 1891 until his death in 1893 Brooks was Bishop of Massachusetts.

In 1877, at the height of his career as a preacher, Phillips Brooks delivered the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching at Yale Divinity School. This book is a reprint of those lectures first published in 1895 under the title *Lectures on Preaching*.

Brooks does not approach the subject from the formal and technical point of view of Homiletics, but speaks of preaching from his own experience as a preacher. For this reason the book lacks system. Probably for the same reason there is a bit more repetition of thoughts and ideas than one would like to find in a book of this nature. For example, Brooks repeatedly stresses in various contexts the necessity of the preacher sympathizing with his congregation. The point that the preacher must be a child of God and an exemplary Christian is repeated several times throughout the book. Brooks emphasizes as well that the preacher must have a broad background in the liberal arts and in the sciences. He must be widely read and continue to read throughout his ministry. So strongly did Brooks feel about this latter point that he admonished the students to whom he was speaking, "Oh, my fellow students, the special study of theology

and all that appertains to it, that is what the preacher must be doing always; but he never can do it afterwards as he can in the blessed days of quiet in Arabia, after Christ has called him, and before the apostles lay their hands upon him. In many respects an ignorant clergy, however pious he may be, is worse than none at all. The more the empty head glows and burns, the more hollow and thin and dry it grows" (p. 51). In this connection Brooks warns against the danger of studying the truth for its own sake. The minister must "...receive the truth as one who is to teach it...the result of such a habit will be...a deeper and more solemn sense of responsibility in the search of truth; a desire to find the human side of every truth, the point at which every speculation touches humanity..." (p. 52).

Brooks' definition of preaching as "the communication of the truth by man to men" may seem inadequate. As he develops the idea throughout the course of his lectures one comes to appreciate what he means by "communicating the truth by man to men." Lectures two and three, which deal with the preacher himself and his work, and lecture eight, which deals with the "value of the human soul," are worth the price of the book.

Whether Brooks chose the title of the book or not we do not know. What we do know is that he regarded preaching not as a burdensome task, but as a joy. Said he in his opening lecture to the students, "I cannot help but bear witness to the joy of the life which you anticipate.... Let us rejoice with one another that in a world where there are a great many good and happy things for men to do, God has given us the best and happiest, and made us preachers of His Truth."

The book is enhanced by a brief, delightful biographical introduction by Warren W. Wiersbe.

Kregel Publications is to be commended for making this book, one of the classics on preaching, available. It ought to be read by seminary students and preachers. It can be read with profit by lay persons as well. □



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# News From Our Churches

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Mr. Benjamin Wigger

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## CALLS

From the trio of Revs. R. Cammenga, T. Miersma, and R. Moore, the congregation of the Randolph PRC in Randolph, WI has extended a call to Rev. T. Miersma, presently serving in the First PRC in Edmonton, AB, Canada.

## MISSION ACTIVITIES

The Consistory of the Kalamazoo PRC in Kalamazoo, MI has formed a trio from which their congregation will call a missionary to serve on the mission field in Venice, FL. This trio consists of the Revs. C. Haak, S. Key, and R. Dykstra.

## CONGREGATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Evangelism Society of the Byron Center PRC in Byron Center, MI asked Rev. Bruinsma, pastor in the First PRC in Holland, MI to lead an "Evangelism Workshop" on "Personal Witnessing." This workshop was scheduled to be held on two consecutive Thursdays: August 23 and 30 at Byron Center Church.

On Saturday, July 7, the Evangelism Committee of the South Holland PRC in South Holland, IL invited members of their congregation to help them hand out flyers in the Ft. Wayne area to advertise their preaching services and Bible Study. You also might be interested to know that this Bible Study meets on Tuesday nights, and that, begin-

ning in late July, the group began a study on the doctrine of the covenant following Prof. H. Hanko's book, *The Everlasting Covenant of Grace*.

All the young people and young adults of South Holland were invited to a volleyball/swim outing. Volleyball was scheduled to be played at the PR Christian School, followed by swimming at a nearby swim club.

The Consistory of the Bethel PRC in Elk Grove Village, IL informed their congregation that they had received a letter of thanks from radio station WJCH-FM for allowing their pastor, Rev. R. VanOverloop, to record five "Meditations at Midday" which were aired the first week of July.

## DENOMINATIONAL ACTIVITIES

For many of us who have grown up in the PR denomination, the month of August meant Young People's Convention. It was the

highlight of the summer and a major event in our lives. Hopefully these fond memories we share of conventions past will be shared by our children as well. This year's convention was held in Redlands, CA, August 6-10. Their theme was "Love, the Bond of Perfection."

For the young people from all of our churches who attended, we hope that it was an important milestone in their young lives. It is certainly not easy for them to be spiritual and godly in the world today. By God's grace this event helped them take a step in that direction.

Parting thought from the bulletin of the Hope PRC in Grand Rapids, MI: "It is a trick of Satan to cause us to paint the sins of others in the darkest colours and to dismiss our own sins as little faults, failings, and weaknesses. But our sins have crucified Christ and merit hell also. It is of our sins that we must repent, not the sins of others." □

*Daily Readings from J.C. Ryle*

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## God's Grace Sufficient

Thy grace, O God! is sufficient  
To carry us through the dark day.  
Thy face, O Lord! looking on us  
Will drive all the storm clouds  
away.  
Thy grace, with our trust in Thy  
promise,  
Will make our load easy to bear.  
Then smile on us, Lord! in Thy  
mercy  
That we these great blessings may  
share.

Thy grace, O God! is sufficient  
Bravely to weather the storm.  
And though the dark clouds gather  
round us;  
We'll see the bright rays of the  
morn.  
Though death casts its shadows  
about us,  
And threats our frail bark to  
destroy,  
Our eyes will look steadily upward  
And beam with thy heavenly joy.

— SB, September 1, 1931

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



## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On October 1, 1990, the Lord willing, our parents, MR. and MRS. ALVIN RAU, will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary. We, their children and grandchildren, are thankful to our Heavenly Father for the years they have had together, and for their showing us by instruction and example how to honor God's ways. It is our prayer that they may continue to experience God's blessing and guidance in the 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" (Ps. 128:5, 6).

Jim and Lois Rau

Carol, Cheryl, Kimberly, Rodney  
Rev. and Pat Kooles

Justin, Bruce, Catherine, Audra  
Dave and Mary Kregel

Lisa, Brent, Jason, Ryan, Emily  
Dave and Norma Rau

Dawn, Kevin, Lydia

Mike and Elaine Rau

Nathan, Benjamin

Hope Church, Walker, Michigan

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory and congregation of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland express their Christian sympathy to Mrs. Hilda Zandstra and family in the death of their husband, father, grandfather, and brother, MR. HENRY ZANDSTRA, SR, on July 21, 1990.

May they continue to experience the Lord's sustaining grace and the comfort of His Word in Psalm 23:1, 4: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Rev. C. Terpstra, President  
Gil F. VanBaren, Clerk

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of the Doon Protestant Reformed Church wishes to extend sincere sympathy to brother Joawn VanOort and family in the loss of his mother, MRS. MARRIETTA VAN OORT, on August 11, 1990.

"The Lord will give strength unto his people, the Lord will bless his people with peace" (Ps. 29:11).

David Wiersma, Secretary

## ADVANCE NOTICE

The Reformed Free Publishing Association announces the publication of *Studies in Philippians* by Rev. Carl Haak. This attractive workbook-type study guide will be available the last week in September, in time for the society season. The cost is \$3.95 plus \$1.00 postage. To order or for quantity discount information for study groups, contact Eunice Kuiper at:

RFP

P.O. Box 2006

Grand Rapids, MI 49501

Watch for another new RFP publication, *The Doctrine of Scripture* by Homer C. Hoeksema, in October. Book Club members will receive these publications automatically at 30% off.

## NOTICE!!!

The annual meeting of the Eastern League of Men's and Ladies' Societies will be held, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, September 18, 1990, at 8:00 PM, in Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. Steven R. Key will treat the subject of "The Place of the Deaconesses in the Church." All members and others interested in this topic are urged to attend.

Dorothy Decker, Vice-secretary

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 18, 1990, the Lord willing, our dear parents and grandparents, MR. and MRS. BERT MARING, will celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary. We are grateful to them for their covenantal instruction and above all to our faithful Heavenly Father for His gift of God-fearing parents.

Grace and truth shall mark the way

Where the Lord His own will lead,

If His word they still obey  
And His testimonies heed.

They that fear and love the Lord  
Shall Jehovah's friendship know;  
He will grace to them accord,  
And His faithful covenant show.

Psalter 68:1, 4

Gene and Ruth Ann DeBoer

Monica, Michael, Michelle, Marc,  
Marie, and Matthew

Two children in glory — Sheryl & Bob  
Grandville Protestant Reformed Church

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of the Doon Protestant Reformed Church extends heartfelt sympathy to our President and fellow member, Chester Hunter, Jr. in the loss of his father-in-law on July 28, 1990.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Ps. 23:6).

David Wiersma, Secretary

Nought, nought I count as pleasure,  
Compared, O Christ, with Thee;  
Thy sorrow without measure  
Earned peace and joy for me.  
I love to own, Lord Jesus,  
Thy claims o'er me and mine;  
Bought with Thy blood most precious,  
Whose can I be but Thine?

— SB, March 15, 1931