

THE *December 1, 2004* STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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"What God Says, That Will I Speak"

"And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak."

I Kings 22: 14

Israel and Syria were about to go to war with each other again. And it was at that time that Jehoshaphat king of Judah visited with Ahab king of Israel. Ahab therefore asked Jehoshaphat to go with him to battle against Syria over a territory that had formerly been Israel's.

Foolishly, Jehoshaphat quickly identified himself and Judah with Ahab and Israel. Wisely, Jehoshaphat immediately asked Ahab to inquire of the Lord, that very day, about going to battle. Ahab had four hundred prophets readily

available to give their advice. Without hesitation, they advise that the two kings go up against Syria, adding the lying promise that Jehovah will deliver Syria into their hand.

Jehoshaphat may have been foolish in visiting Ahab, as well as in quickly agreeing to join Ahab, but he was no man's fool. He saw through these four hundred prophets of Ahab. He boldly asked Ahab, "Is there not here a prophet of Jehovah besides, that we might enquire of him?" Ahab admits that there is one in Samaria. (Perhaps Micaiah was already in prison at the hand of Ahab. Elijah and Elisha were very likely not in Samaria at the time.) Ahab bluntly adds concerning Micaiah, "but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." The king of Judah admonishes Ahab for speaking wrongly of one who should be respected, "Let not the king say so."

An officer of Ahab is then sent to bring Micaiah to the two kings. As they approach the palace, the officer informs Micaiah that four hundred prophets had spoken good to Ahab, and he begs Micaiah to do the same. It is then that

Micaiah speaks to the messenger the words of our text.

First, Micaiah swears by the living Jehovah ("as Jehovah liveth") for the confirmation of what he will say to Ahab. This is no little thing. Micaiah consciously calls the omniscient God to be present in order to witness and judge what he is about to answer. By swearing before Jehovah, Micaiah is letting the messenger know how important his answer is.

His answer to the messenger is that he may not say what the messenger tells him to say. And he may not say what the four hundred prophets say. He may not even say what he himself wants to say. He must say only what Jehovah says to him. It is only what Jehovah says to him that he may speak. He will keep nothing back, nor will he add anything, good or evil, pleasing or displeasing. "What Jehovah saith, that will I speak."



Not unlike the calling of the prophet Micaiah is the calling of every faithful minister of the gospel, namely, to preach and to teach nothing but the Word of the Lord!

Rev. VanOverloop is pastor of Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church in Byron Center, Michigan.

This Meditation is the substance of the sermon preached on the occasion of the installation of Rev. Carl Haak into the office of minister of the Word and sacraments at Georgetown Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan on October 1, 2004.

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Let us not overlook the fact that Micaiah had to “speak.” It is God’s wisdom, that He wills His Word and truth to be spoken. Faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17). Jesus concludes the Parable of the Sower with the words, “Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 13:9) and “Take heed therefore how ye hear” (Luke 8:18). God’s Word is written, but it is also spoken. It is in the preaching of the gospel that God’s Word is heard.

Our text teaches us that, in addition to the authority inherent in the truth, there is an authority in the position of one who speaks what God says — who speaks in God’s name and by God’s authority. The truth does indeed have power in itself. It possesses the authority to correct the understanding, the conscience, and a life. But there is more. While every Christian has the calling to speak of the truth whenever and wherever he can, not every Christian is authorized to utter the truths of the gospel in God’s name as one of His commissioned ambassadors. Politicians, judges, and lecturers may have very important messages, but they do not teach in the name or by the authority of the living God. The minister of the gospel is the appointed ambassador of the Head and King of the church. Christ sends him on a great and responsible errand. The faithful preacher of God’s Word possesses authority to publish Christ’s gospel in His name. This responsibility is very great! For this responsibility the preacher must give an account of his work.

One who occupies a pulpit is appointed by God Himself — invested with the high office of representing the prophetic office of Jesus Christ. God gives this commission through Ezekiel as a faithful watchman, “Thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me” (Ezek. 33:7). Jonah was commissioned to go to

Nineveh in order to “preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee” (Jonah 3:2). The apostle Paul was also conscious of this divine commission: “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ’s stead...” (II Cor. 5:20). The minister of the gospel is divinely commissioned. He is a sinning and fallible man. Yet he must utter God’s truth, not in his own name, but in God’s name; not for himself, but for God; not as a man merely, but as an accredited minister of the divine Lord who sent him. He speaks in God’s name, and he speaks what God Himself would utter were He in his place. His words therefore have authority, not simply because of the authority inherent in the *truth*, but because of the authority inherent in his *office*, for he speaks as one whom God raised up and qualified and sent and specifically authorized to utter the things commanded.

It is the Word of God (what God says) that must be heard in the pulpit, in the catechism room, in the counseling room, and from house to house. The faithful minister opens and expounds God’s Word. He does not want the people to believe him, but to believe the Lord. He desires that the people hear, not him, but the Lord.

To that Word the minister must not add. It is easy for a minister,

especially after some years of experience, to give presentations on what he knows and has learned, and in doing so not to make plain that it is from the Scriptures. It is easy to add a little for effect — to exaggerate to make a point. This he must not do.

Nor may he take anything away from the Word. Again, it is easy to weaken Scripture’s admonitions and to soften its threatenings, to take the sharp edges off God’s Word so that it does not sting or so that the preacher is liked. This, too, the faithful minister must not do.

But what God says, that must the faithful ambassador speak. To it nothing may be added! From it nothing may be taken away! The wisdom of God in making this arrangement must be honored.

This fact must be honored by ministers. The truth that what God says, the minister must speak should influence the preacher to be a power for good and not for evil. It ought to humble him to the dust as he thinks that he stands before men as the mouthpiece of God. The faithful minister who realizes this high calling will say repeatedly with Paul, “Who is sufficient for these things?” (II Cor. 2:16). Let every minister be awed into reverence, moved to faithfulness and earnestness. Let this calling destroy any thirst for fame. May the faithful preacher never stop praying for the gracious gift of faithfulness — faithfulness to proclaim all and only what God says. Let the faithful minister seek only the approbation of the Master who sent him, whose testimony alone can satisfy him as a man of God.


And this arrangement must be honored by the hearers. When the ambassador of God speaks, then the hearers must listen, as to things uttered by an authority higher than any human authority. They must give the words spoken proper weight and emphasis. It was proper that Cornelius the centurion introduce himself and his household to Peter with the words, “We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded

When we honor or dishonor the Word preached, we are not honoring or dishonoring the minister, but we are honoring or dishonoring Him who sent the preacher.

The minister of the gospel is the appointed ambassador of the Head and King of the church.

thee of God" (Acts 10:33). What a beautiful and proper spirit! Faithful hearers realize that the promise of Christ's continued presence is appended to this commission. Jesus Himself is with us always, even unto the end of the world. He is present with us whenever we hear the faithful minister speak what God says. When we honor

or dishonor the Word preached, we are not honoring or dishonoring the minister, but we are honoring or dishonoring Him who sent the preacher. God said about the prophets, "I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto

my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deut. 18: 18,19). What a warning! Let us be mindful of the great privilege given to those who listen to a faithful minister of God's Word, for Jesus said, "he that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me" (Luke 10:16). 

Editorial

Prof. Russell Dykstra

The Standard Bearer: Future

The reader is well aware that the *Standard Bearer* has undergone a change in the position of editor in chief. In a sense it is a major change from one editor, as has been the case for the last sixty years, to a shared editorship. In another sense it is no change at all, in that the new editors are—to a man—committed to the same historic Reformed truth maintained and defended by the *SB* for eighty years now.

The names and faces of the new editors are fairly well known within the small denomination of the Protestant Reformed Churches. However, for a goodly number of readers, Rev. Koole and Profs. Gritters and Dykstra are little more than names that have appeared in the *SB* from time to time. As for the faces, we produce here a picture of the three. For the rest, we take this opportunity to give a smattering of biographical information.

The three men have much in common. All have been born (within six years of each other) and raised in the PRC. In fact, in their childhood all three were members in *Hope* Protestant Reformed Church! (One, Prof. Gritters, in the *Hope* PRC in

Redlands; the other two in the *Hope* PRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan.) The editors are ordained ministers who have received their training in the Protestant Reformed Seminary. They all are happily married and have a number of children among them (nineteen). Each of the men has entered the stage of life where

children are marrying and leaving the home.

The most experienced of the group is Rev. Kenneth Koole. Rev. Koole was ordained a minister of the word and sacraments in 1977 and has served in four congregations — in Wisconsin, California, and Michigan. Currently he is the pastor in the Grandville PRC.



New editors:
Prof. Gritters, Prof. Dykstra, Rev. Koole

Prof. Barrett Gritters was ordained as a minister in 1984, and served two congregations in the Grand Rapids area before accepting the appointment to the Protestant Reformed Seminary last year. The main focus of his teaching is Practical Theology, though his courses also include Old and New Testament Studies.

Prof. Russell Dykstra has been an ordained minister since 1986. He served in two congregations, in Iowa and Michigan, prior to his appointment to the seminary as the professor of Church History and New Testament Studies in 1996.

These brief biographies indicate that the editors have spent many years preaching and teaching in the Protestant Reformed Churches. It should come as no surprise, then, that they express to the readers their resolve, by the grace of God, to adhere to the same line marked out by the *Standard Bearer* over the last eighty years.

The past two issues have sketched the magazine's history. From that brief account it is evident that the *SB* has intentionally emphasized doctrine. Its purpose has been to witness to the Reformed faith. The magazine has done so antithetically by setting forth the truth over against the lie. Its writings have also been polemical — defending the truth and refuting error.

The *SB* instructed and led God's people in the battle against common grace and the well-meant offer. It engaged in debate theologians on both sides of the Atlantic on the doctrine of the covenant. In the end, the *SB* demonstrated the unreformed character of conditions in the doctrine of God's covenant of grace. Over against that, the *SB* developed the glorious truth of the unconditional covenant of grace.

We remain convinced that that particular doctrine of the covenant is faithful to Scripture and the confessions, draws from the better elements of earlier Reformed theology, and consistently maintains the doctrines of sovereign grace.

In short, the *SB* has been unashamedly true to its subtitle — “A Reformed...Magazine.” The Reformed truth as maintained in the Protestant Reformed Churches is, we believe, the truth that God would have us defend and promote.

I say again, our firm resolve is to use the *SB* for the continued defense and promotion of

the Reformed faith.

We may do nothing else.

As officebearers in the church of Jesus Christ, we have already taken an oath “that we heartily believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine [in the Reformed confessions] do fully agree with the Word of God.” We have vowed “diligently to teach and faithfully to defend” these doctrines. In addition, we have solemnly pledged not only that “we reject all errors that militate against this doctrine,...but that we are disposed to refute and contradict these.” (See the Formula of Subscription, emphasis added.)

Not only that, but when each editor joined the Reformed Free Publishing Association, he affirmed his agreement with the purpose of the organization as expressed in the constitution.

Article II states: “The purpose of this Association shall be:

“1. To witness to the truth contained in the Word of God and expressed in the three Forms of Unity.

“2. To reveal false and deceptive views repugnant thereto.”

Additionally, every writer in

the *SB*, by accepting the responsibility to write, confirms his commitment to “the maintenance, development, and promulgation of our distinctively Protestant Reformed principles by means of the printed word” (Article IV in the Constitution of the Editorial Staff of the *Standard Bearer*.)

Necessity, therefore, is laid upon us. We editors and writers can do nothing other than promote and defend the Reformed truth as confessed and maintained in the Protestant Reformed Churches. By the grace of God, this is our desire.

The *SB* has a task to perform in witnessing to the Reformed faith. Doctrine, being the truth of God, has great value. Every Reformed publication has the obligation both to uphold the historic Reformed doctrines and to develop these doctrines with their implications.

Even as Scripture and the confessions are antithetical, so must the Reformed periodical be. For the sake of clarity as well as the purity of the truth, the lie must be exposed and rejected. God has entrusted His church on earth with His truth. It is precious. It is worth battling for.

Understand that if the *Standard Bearer* will continue to be a witness to the Reformed truth, its message must be confessional. At the same time, it may not merely reaffirm already established dogma. It must not merely describe battles already fought and express agreement with the orthodox position. Were it to do so, the *SB* would be a monu-

ment to dead orthodoxy. On the contrary, the *SB* must be ready to face the errors rampant in the world and in the church today. In addition,

standing on the doctrinal foundation laid by the church in the past, the *SB* must strive for even greater clarity and precision in theology.

This sort of doctrinal writing

I say again, our firm resolve is to use the SB for the continued defense and promotion of the Reformed faith.

...the SB must be ready to face the errors rampant in the world and in the church today.

will not be an academic discussion. Rather it will purpose to edify the believers. Our desire is that believers everywhere might with us reject the lie, and embrace — yea, praise — the glorious truth of God. The goal is that the readers may see the implications of Reformed doctrine and walk in harmony with it to the glory of God.

Contrary to popular myth, the Protestant Reformed Churches do not claim to be the only churches that have truth. But the truth that God has entrusted to us, we will defend to our last breath.

From a doctrinal standpoint, the most blessed and significant gift of God to the PRC is the doctrine of God's unconditional covenant of grace. With all our hearts we confess that God has established His eternal covenant, a bond of friendship, with His elect people in Christ. It is God's covenant — planned eternally, realized in the cross of Christ, and sovereignly established with all those, and those only, who are eternally given to Christ. With heartfelt thankfulness, we acknowledge that God's covenant is an unconditional covenant of grace established with believers and their children in the line of continued generations. We rejoice that nothing of the covenant depends on us. And we bow before His command to live out of that covenant a life of thankful obedience.

That truth we will defend. The doctrine of the covenant is not only

The doctrine of the covenant is not only a particularly Reformed doctrine, it also encompasses, sums up, all of the Reformed faith.

a particularly Reformed doctrine, it also encompasses, sums up, all of the Reformed faith. For this reason the particular doctrine of the covenant that is maintained will influence all of theology for good or for evil. The covenant involves the very heart of theology, namely, God in His triune life. It affects the doctrine of man — before the fall into sin and after. It affects the doctrine of Christ, the Mediator of the covenant — is the covenant with Christ and the elect seed, or with people individually? The doctrine of salvation is affected by one's covenant view — is salvation all God's

work, or does man have to fulfill a condition to receive the benefits of the covenant? The covenant affects the doctrine of the church — starting with the unity of the church (one covenant people or two?) and the sacraments. The covenant has implications for eschatology as well. To mention but one, is the covenant concluded with the second coming of Christ, or does God maintain it eternally?

Errors in the doctrine of the covenant will inevitably lead to errors in all other areas of theology. As proof, consider that an erroneous doctrine of the covenant lies behind the current denial of justification by faith alone.


The covenant has many applications to the Christian's life. Covenant friends of God are called to live spiritually separate from the

world and to keep their garments unspotted. The believer's conception of the covenant will determine his view of marriage, of divorce, and of remarriage. The covenant of grace determines the form and content of the education of covenant children, in home, church, and school.

The doctrine of the covenant is significant beyond words. It must be defended. But we must have positive development of this doctrine as well. The implications must be developed, and the applications mapped out. Much work remains. No area of theology or life need be, or may be, neglected.

These are exciting and dangerous times. The truth is much spoken against. Winds of false doctrine howl, whipping up the seas of controversy. Attacks on the truth rise out of some unexpected places. And often, increasingly so, the focus of the conflict is the doctrine of the covenant.

That the battle for God's truth rages today is not surprising. Through the ages, the church has been continually forced to defend the truth from various attacks. The Lord warned that in the end there would be a great falling away. That falling away is apostasy — active repudiation of the truth.

In light of all that, the *SB* has a high calling. The editors — indeed all the writers — are united in their love for the truth and for the cause of Jesus Christ. We begin with firm purpose and resolve. We daily ask God to establish the work of our hands, to give us wisdom, and to keep us faithful to the task. 


Letters

■ Thanks

I would like to express my thanks to our Lord for the truths of our beloved Reformed faith that I find in the *Standard Bearer*. It is a great blessing to me, my grown sons, and two native pastor friends of mine

in India and Myanmar, two Seminary students in Jackson, Mississippi, and the pastor of our independent Reformed church for whom I have purchased gift subscriptions. We look forward to each issue. The articles about Cov-

enantal Universalism have been especially helpful. May the Lord continue to bless you for the sake of His church in this world.

Dave Postma
Hudsonville, Michigan 

In Memoriam: Rev. George Lanting

Jehovah, who calls the death of His saints precious, called Rev. George Lanting home to his eternal reward on Monday morning, October 18, 2004. Rev. Lanting, at 82 years of age, was, from an earthly perspective, in good health. He did not even have a regular physician. But our sovereign Lord, who determines all things, determined that Rev. Lanting's earthly pilgrimage was finished. By means of a massive heart attack, while taking care of his regular Monday morning chores, he was given the victory described in Psalter #32, stanza 4: "When I in righteousness at last Thy glorious face shall see; when all the weary night is past, and I awake with Thee to view the glories that abide, then, then I shall be satisfied."

Rev. Lanting was born on July 28, 1922 in Lansing IL, the son of Lammert and Mienke Lanting. He graduated from T.F. North High School and learned the electrician trade before serving his country with the U.S. Navy in the South Pacific during WWII. While in the navy he felt a burden for the ministry, and he even received some early training for it when he volunteered to lead a Bible study with fellow soldiers.

Upon returning from the army, he was united in marriage to Wilmina Rutgers on May 15, 1946. For a couple of years he worked with his father on a farm in Illinois, but the burden for the ministry increased. The need for pastors was also increasing in the denomination. Finally, at the prodding of Rev. Schipper, he decided to pursue both his pre-seminary and seminary courses at the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC). In 1948 he was admitted to the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

He completed all his college and seminary training by June 9, 1953, when he graduated along with E. Emanuel, R. Harbach, M. Koerner, and J. McCollum. He was ordained and installed in the ministry in October 1953 at Grand Haven, Michigan Protestant Reformed Church. In 1959 he accepted a call to serve in First PRC Holland, Michigan. In 1966 he went to serve in First PRC Edgerton, Minnesota. In 1974 he accepted the call to labor in Loveland PRC in Loveland, Colorado. He accepted the call to Pella PRC in Pella, Iowa in 1981. He retired from the active ministry in 1986 and moved back to South Holland, IL.

Rev. Lanting was my pastor in Edgerton, MN for the first five years of my life, baptizing me in 1969. In 1998 God reversed the roles, when I was called to serve as his pastor in South Holland. He made these years a privilege and joy for me, helping out with pastoral visits whenever he could. When prompted, he would give, in his careful and kind manner, wise words of advice.


Rev. Lanting was soft-spoken, unassuming, not one to seek prominence among men. After his retirement he served many years as church visitor of Classis West, as well as helping out with preaching and catechism teaching, especially during South Holland's vacancies and at the time of the organization of Peace Protestant Reformed Church. At the age of 74, after experiencing memory lapses while teaching catechism, he made the difficult decision to quit preaching in the churches.

Rev. Lanting is survived by his wife Wilmina of 58 years; ten children; thirty-three grand children; and three great-grandchildren.

He was a respected spiritual

leader in his family, in the church, and in the local school societies. He enjoyed the company of his children and grandchildren and was often known to say: "Come again when you can't stay so long."

Now this faithful servant rests from his labors. He would be the first to remind us that it was only by grace and with much imperfection that he performed his work. In Rev. Lanting, God gave us an example of a humble servant in the cause of Jesus Christ. May God continue to give our churches humble men who love His church and are committed to the gospel ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our prayers are with his bereaved widow, Mrs. Wilmina Lanting, and the family. May God comfort them in this time of need. "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:18, 19). 



Rev. George Lanting
July 28, 1922 - October 18, 2004

■ We Have Met the Enemy

The cover article of the September 22, 2004 issue of *Christian Renewal* is entitled "The Present State of Unions — How we got here; where we're likely going," by Barbara Curtis. It is an article well worth reading in its entirety. She aptly points out that we are in the present battle against the legitimizing and legalization of same-sex marriage not only because the homosexual community has been busily and successfully advancing its agenda. She correctly asserts, I believe, that much of the blame for the undermining of God's ordinance of marriage must be laid at the door of the churches. Barbara Curtis writes:

Here's how Frederica Mathewes-Green, a writer on early Christian spirituality and cultural commentator, sees it:

"It's heteros who made marriage into a garbage dump. The ubiquity of soft porn, the 50% divorce rate, the sexualizing of little children, all of these have been destroying marriage for decades now, and it's not evil gays who did it. That we wake up and start shouting when some male couple asks for a marriage license is pathetic. Homosexuality does not pose a temptation to straights, that is, 98% of the population, yet the institution of marriage has been dying very efficiently without them. The loss of the label 'marriage' as applying only to hetero couples is a very grave step and must be opposed, but in some ways it's like finally chiseling the date on a tombstone."

Hold that thought. Then consider that historically, the purpose of marriage was the procreation and rearing of children. Not just

Catholicism, but all denominations forbade birth control.

But by 1930, the Anglican Church became the first to change its tune, declaring that "Each couple must decide for themselves, as in the sight of God," about "scientific methods to prevent conception...."

The other Protestant denominations quickly followed suit — giving up any hope of affecting the world and instead becoming conformed to it.

As a result, the concept of marriage in America changed, from an institution based on maintaining the well-being of the family and children to a couple who are already complete and may or may not want children at all.

Even putting aside questions of the value of children — God's word calls them blessings and rewards, while we think nowadays in terms of financial liabilities and distractions — we can see the first shift in marriage from surrender and selflessness to "Have it your way."

And nothing says "Have it your way" like divorce, once an option only for the hardest hearts, now quick and convenient, thanks to the 1975 no-fault divorce law, which enables either partner to undo the marriage vows regardless of the desires or needs of the other partner or children.

The results are clear: While 14% of white women married in the 1940s eventually divorced, 50% of women married in the 60s and 70s have already divorced, with more to come.

It doesn't help at all that Christians of all persuasions have not upheld the sanctity of marriage. A 2001 study by Barna Research Group showed the divorce rate for believers was pretty much the same as for others — 33% to 34%.

And how many pastors — even in high and lofty places — have put years of anti-divorce preaching behind them in order to sever their own marriage ties?...

The article concludes:

Which brings me back to this point: Yes, same-sex marriage may work to undermine the institution of marriage, but not nearly as much as it has already been undermined by contraception, casual sex, cohabitation, divorce, and abortion — all the times individually and collectively we have chosen selfishness over selflessness.

With studies indicating Christians are very much part of all of these problems, it's hard to feel righteous when addressing the problems with gay marriage.

The truth is, we're very much a part of the prevailing ethos of "Have it your way!" We've put our desires before the needs of others and tried to conform God's plan for marriage to fit what's comfortable for us.

What we didn't realize [was] that in so doing we were helping pave the way for gay marriage. For, once we began saying no to God's plan for marriage, others could as well.

Well said. But, sadly, one hears scarcely a whisper of acknowledgment from churches, also conservative Reformed and Presbyterian churches, in this regard. The failure of churches to exercise the keys of the kingdom and the failure of churches to maintain the truth of Scripture concerning marriage and family, perhaps especially as regards divorce and remarriage, have contributed greatly to where we stand at the present time.

As Barbara Curtis makes plain, "we're pulling some very heavy — and largely unexamined — baggage as we go." May God grant us grace humbly to confess our sins and failures in upholding God's ordinance of marriage. How true it is, as stated long ago by a comic strip character, "We have met the enemy, and he is us!"

Rev. DeVries is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church in Wingham, Ontario, Canada.

■ Those Philosopher-King-Judges

The article referred to above by Barbara Curtis also demonstrates the horrendous usurping of power by the courts in recent years. Her article begins:

Ten years ago, mainstream America didn't find the idea of homosexual marriage alarming — they just found it absurd and preposterous. Now the joke's on us.

And it's not over by a long shot. In fact, it won't be over until gay marriage isn't confined to a handful of states and a few renegade towns, but has become the law of the land, probably through a Supreme Court coup similar to *Roe v. Wade*....

In 1960 all fifty states had laws against sodomy. Forty-three years later 37 states had repealed those laws, but 13 still had them on the books. All were invalidated on June 26, 2003, when the Supreme Court struck down 6-3 a Texas anti-sodomy law.

Many saw the writing on the wall, including Justice Antonin Scalia, who warned that the ruling would lead to the legalization of same-sex marriage, imposed against the will of the people through the courts.

Sure enough, on February 4, 2004 the Massachusetts Supreme Court, in a 4-3 ruling, ordered the state legislature to rewrite the state's marriage laws to allow for same-sex marriage. With victory at hand, some renegade towns — most noticeably San Francisco — jumped the gun and began issuing marriage licenses not backed by proper legislation. On May 17 Massachusetts became the first state to officially grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples. In the first week alone, 3000 same-sex couples came from far and wide to tie the knot.

Two months later, under pressure from President Bush and traditional family organizations for a constitutional amendment limiting marriage to the union of one man and one woman (as opposed to two men, two women, one man and six women, one woman and her dog, and who knows what else

we haven't thought of), our Pontius Pilate Senate washed its hands of the matter by voting not to vote — thus turning the issue back to the states and the courts.

In a post-Roe world, it's easy to see where this is going. By August 2004, 46 states were home to same-sex couples returned from Massachusetts nuptials, all of whom want their marriages recognized in their own states. The first suit has been brought in Florida, by Rev. Nancy Wilson and new wife (well, new legally, but according to the Sarasota Metropolitan Community Church, "her spouse of 25 years").

Several states have already begun voter initiatives to allow citizens to inform their legislature of their will, but even if they pass, many are already doomed to die. Consider the case of California's Defense of Marriage Act passed in 2000, 61% to 39% across the state, with only four of 58 counties opposed. The ultra-leftist California legislature refused to act on it. And while many other state legislatures will gladly underwrite the will of the citizenry in this matter, many state courts will promptly strike down the laws they've written.

Which means in several years we'll end up with a patchwork of state laws having to do with same-sex marriage (the reason why the left is suddenly touting states' rights). As in the case of *Roe v. Wade*, or the more recent anti-sodomy case, some group like GLAD (Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders — MDV) will step in and challenge one state's law before the Supreme Court. And with the present composition of the Court, in all likelihood any state laws prohibiting or limiting gay marriage will be struck down.

Sad to say, things are not different in Canada. In a recent Communique of the Christian Heritage Party, National Leader Ron Gray entitles his article with the question, "Who really rules Canada?" His answer:

Of this you can be very, very sure; it is not the nation's ordinary citizens.

Canada is no longer a democracy. For years this nation has been an oligarchy: a self-serving rule by self-perpetuating cliques.

The late Pierre Trudeau greatly admired Plato's vision of "philosopher-kings" — visualizing himself as the ideal, of course. His disdain for the common people then ushered in real philosopher-kings: judges, appointed to office for life and answerable to no one. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms, entrenched in Canada's Constitution, carried the hidden seeds of power for these philosopher-king-judges, like a ticking time-bomb. The judges of that day toyed with it, and no one objected. They went a little further; still no opposition was raised.

In the last decade, the judges have vaulted into the saddle — wearing spurs.

There is no longer any pretense of "separation of powers" or of adherence to principle. Political correctness now controls our nation. The judges, impervious to criticism, carry forward a radical Secularist agenda as proxies for the timid Cabinet which anoints them.

Close behind the judges are the apprentice philosopher-kings — a few highly politicized civil servants.

Not only do we have judges rewriting laws — and even the Constitution itself; now the taxman is arrogantly telling the church what may and may not be spoken about when an election is in the air: social policy is off-limits, and so are topics identified with the policies of any political party. Should a priest or pastor have the temerity to teach church doctrine on a controversial subject like abortion or same-sex marriage to his congregation, CCRA (Canada Customs and Revenue Agency) threatens that it might revoke that church's right to issue charitable tax receipts.

Note that agencies that have supported terrorist organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah are still active as "charities" — as the pigs in Orwell's *Animal Farm* observed, "All animals are equal; but some are more equal than others."

Of Franklin Roosevelt's famous

"Four Freedoms" — Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Speech, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear — the first two are now on the endangered species list in Canada. Ask Scott Brockie, Chris Kempling, Hugh Owens, Don Spratt, or Ken Campbell. All these men have been persecuted by the Political Correctness cops.

Where today does one find civil servants — politicians and judges — who consider themselves to be the "ministers of God" (Rom. 13:6)? Where does one find such "minis-

ters of God" who realize that they have a very limited calling — to protect the upright citizens and to punish those who do evil (the criminals)? Certainly the philosopher-king-judges of our day do not want to recognize the limited calling they have. Many of them appear determined to mold society according to their humanistic and anti-christian vision.

But God will not be mocked. For, in spite of themselves, they are His ministers. And they will be judged as such. They are held ac-

countable before God now and will be also in the day of judgment. Disobedient "ministers of God" shall receive to themselves damnation. As we sing from Psalter number 223 (a versification of Psalm 82):

Where'er His creatures gather
the unseen God is near;
Let rulers fear their Ruler,
their Judge let judges fear.
How long, ye earthly judges,
will ye pervert the right?
How long shall wicked persons
have favor in your sight?



Day of Shadows

George M. Ophoff

The Types of Scripture (11)

In a previous article, attention was called to the fact that the typical-symbolical materials of the old dispensation are not confined within the boundaries of the ceremonial law. The utterances of the prophets and the apostles indicate that events and persons other than those covered by the precepts of the ceremonial law were designed by God to exhibit the realities of the kingdom of heaven. Adam and Elijah were, according to the testimony of Scripture, figures of Christ just as really as were the priests. The symbolical-typical persons and transactions lying within the circle of the law may for convenience be called *ritual* types, whereas persons and events not covered by the law may be called *historical* types.

In respect to this latter class of types the following questions arise: (1) What is the extent of this field? (2) What is its scope? These questions, it will be seen at once, need not be raised with respect to the ritual shadows of the old dispensation, for this province is clearly marked off by the *law*. But concerning only *some* of the historical types do we have Jehovah's word for it that they may be considered types. The following persons or characters and transactions are specifically identified in Scripture as types: 1. Persons and characters: Adam (Rom. 5:11, 12; I Cor. 15:22); Melchizedek (Heb. 7); Sarah and Hagar, Ishmael and Isaac, and by implication Abraham (Gal. 4:22-35); Moses (Gal. 3:19; Acts 3:22-26); Jonah (Matt. 12:40); David (Ezek. 37:24; Luke 1:32, etc.); Solomon (II Sam. 7); Zerubbabel and Joshua (Zech. 3, 4; Hag. 2:23). 2. Transactions or events: the preservation of Noah and his family in the ark (I Pet. 3:20); the redemption from Egypt and its passover-memorial (Luke 12:15, 16; I Cor. 5:7); the exodus (Matt. 11:15); the passage through the Red Sea; the giving of

manna; Moses' veiling of his face while the law was read; the water flowing from the smitten rock; the serpent lifted up for healing in the wilderness, and some other things that befell the Israelites there (I Cor. 10; John 3:14; 5:33; Rev. 11:18). (The above list was taken from Fairbairn's *The Typology of Scripture*.)

But it cannot be true that only the above personages and events may be regarded as prefiguring similar events under the gospel. It must not be supposed that the inspired writers meant to identify every historical type of the old dispensation. It appears, rather, that they selected materials from a storehouse where many more are to be found.

What then is the scope of this field? It is possible for one to discover its boundaries. This can be done by examining the examples introduced by the inspired writers. These examples soon yield the principles to which these writers adhered when making their choice.

First Principle of Interpretation

The first of these principles is

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that there must be an inner agreement between two events or transactions if they are to be considered to have a relation of type and antitype, shadow and body. To express it negatively, a transaction should not be considered to be a type simply because it is outwardly similar to the event which it is supposed to prefigure. Two events or personages must embody the same ideas and truths if the one is to be regarded as a shadow of the other. To this should be added that the type necessarily exhibits the divine truth of that which it typifies, though on a lower and earthly scale.

Adam: That this rule is a proper one is seen at once when applied to such typical events and persons which have the sanction of Scripture. According to the testimony of Paul, Adam is a figure of Christ. "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (Rom. 5:14). The point of convergence is expressed by the following Scripture: "For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17). The relation that the first man sustained to the human race was that of head. In like manner, Christ is the head of redeemed humanity. Hence, as Adam's sin was imputed unto the entire race of humanity, so the righteousness of Christ became the property of those whom He represented. The inner agreement between type and antitype is, in this case, the headship.

Melchizedek: Melchizedek prefigured Christ. "For that after the similitude of Melchizedek there arises another priest" (Heb. 7:15). There are several points of convergence. Melchizedek was, as is

Christ, priest of the most high God, king of righteousness, king of Salem, which is king of peace. Both are without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life. Both Melchizedek and Christ exhibit, in their persons and in their work, the same great principles of truth. There is, then, inner agreement between them. From this it does not follow, however, that Melchizedek and Christ were of equal rank and that one plane of action was common to both. The very terms "type" and "antitype" signify that such was not the case. Melchizedek was man, Christ was the Son of God. His priestly and kingly duties had a value and meaning of their own. The fact remains, however, that the life and work of both these personages display striking similarities. Each is priest and king, truly devoted to the cause of God. Hence, each is without beginning and without end.

For this reason, he to whom Abraham gave a tenth is referred to as a prefiguration of that great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.

David: David prefigured the Christ. This is evident from the written record of the utterances of Ezekiel.

And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children forever; and my servant David shall be their prince forever (Ezek. 37:24, 25).

David had been elevated to a position of theocratic king over the inheritance of Jehovah. He was the prime minister of God to whom

had been assigned the task of ruling and protecting, as the servant of Jehovah, the subjects of that symbolical kingdom of heaven, the real legislator and judge of which was no one less than God. David and his kingdom were types of that spiritual kingdom of heaven, the citizens of which are the redeemed, and the King of which is Jesus Christ. The former could very well typify the latter in that both kingdoms, together with their kings, exhibited, each in its own way and in its own sphere, the power, the sovereignty, the justice, the holiness, and the mercy of God. Here again we are able to discover an inner agreement between type and antitype.

Ishmael and Isaac: Again Ishmael and Isaac are named types by the inspired writer Paul. The passage reads:

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free (Gal. 4:29-31).

Ishmael is here presented as a type of the world. The point of contact is his manner of behavior toward Isaac, the child of the promise and a type of the church. Of Ishmael it is recorded that he persecuted Isaac. The world likewise assails the church. The inner agreement between type and antitype is, so it appears, there.

Passover: So it is also with respect to the Passover memorial. The entire transaction is a vivid picture of the peace and safety of those covered by the blood of Christ. There are corresponding elements throughout. The Passover,

as well as the cross of Christ, reveals the justice and mercy of God.




Let us now apply the above principle of interpretation to some such events in sacred history that the inspired writers, in their search for suitable figures, passed by. Let us do so for the purpose of ascertaining whether the above rule, if adhered to, aids one in making a proper selection.

Joseph: Joseph is held to be a type of Christ by some typologists but not by others. We need not hesitate, however, to place him in a class with the types. The events constituting his life and the principles of truth which that life of his exhibits are such as connect him with Christ. Here again there is inner agreement. Joseph as well as Christ was hated by his wicked brothers because of his genuine piety. The sacred record asserts that the evil conduct of his brothers filled his soul with resentment, that he was wont to bring to his father their evil report. For this reason he was hated by his brothers, who sold him to heathen merchantmen, who brought him to Egypt. There he was added to Potiphar's household. He soon gains Potiphar's

confidence, with the result that he, Joseph, is made overseer over his master's house. His integrity is rewarded by a prison term. Thereupon he receives insight into Pharaoh's dreams. Recognized by Pharaoh as one in whom the Spirit of God was, he is subsequently set over all the land of Egypt. Only in the throne was Pharaoh greater than he. As the exalted one, Joseph now feeds those who had sought his ruin. His brothers come to him for bread. By dint of circumstances the entire land of Egypt, with all its inhabitants, becomes the personal property of the king who, through Joseph, provides for his subjects as for his children.

"Through suffering to high honor" is applicable to Joseph, as well as to Christ. Joseph and Jesus were made to pass through the valley of the shadow of death on their way to glory. The exalted Christ, having suffered for sin, feeds His brethren. He alone has bread. His is the bread of life. To Him the sinner must turn, would he live. Joseph, too, provides his brethren with bread. He alone has bread. To him must men turn would they not perish. It is Joseph, then, who stands between his brethren and death. That inner agreement is

there. Hence, we may feel assured that Joseph is a shadow of Christ.*

Stone: A failure to adhere to the rule in question accounts for it that the stone that Jacob used as a pillow is looked upon by some as a type of Christ. But what concord hath this particular stone with Christ? There is no common principle connecting the two. True, as Christ is the support of a redeemed people, so the stone served to support the head of the slumbering Jacob. As Fairbairn points out, however, "the use which Jacob made of the stone was quite different from that in respect to which Christ is exhibited as the stone laid in Zion — being laid, not for the repose or slumber, but for the stability and support of a ransomed people. For this the strength and durability of a rock were absolutely indispensable; but they contribute nothing to the fitness of what Jacob's necessities drove him to employ as a temporary pillow. It was his misfortune, not his privilege, to be obliged to resort to a stone for such a purpose." 

* For another view of Joseph, which does not make him a type of Christ, see H.C. Hoeksema, *Unfolding Covenant History*, vol. 3, pp. 105-210.

Search the Scripture

Rev. Ronald Hanko

Haggai: Rebuilding the Church (11)

The Second Prophecy (cont.)

6. For thus saith the Lord of hosts; yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;
7. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

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Christ is this Desire of the nations of whom Haggai prophesies. He is desirable, as the one described in Psalm 45:2:

Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

He is desirable, as the one in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3), as the one

who is the only-begotten Son of God come in the flesh, as the Savior of sinners, whose blood is more precious than gold or silver. He is desirable in His person, in His works, and in His gifts — as the one in whom we are chosen of God, our Redeemer, Deliverer, Intercessor, and Judge. There is nothing undesirable about Him, and the fact that so many do not desire Him is not a reflection on His glory but a testimony to their blindness.

That body of Christ, which is the true temple of God, is not only His own flesh and blood, assumed through the incarnation, but also His church. We are, as Paul says in Ephesians 5:30, "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." That is, as Paul also admits in Ephesians 5 (v. 32), a very great mystery, but it is the mystery of Christ and the church. The prophecy of Haggai 2:7, therefore, is a prophecy of the rebuilding of the temple, not as a house made with hands, but in its true spiritual reality. It is a prophecy of Christ as Immanuel, God with us. It is a prophecy of the realization of God's covenant in Christ.

In that way, God's house is filled with glory, glory that far transcends the splendor of Solomon's temple. The glory of that true temple is the glory of the living God Himself revealed in Jesus Christ as the God of His people. The Lord of hosts Himself guarantees it. As Lord of hosts He uses even Herod and Pontius Pilate, the Jews and the Gentiles, in their rebellion against Him and His Son, to insure that that house be built on everlasting foundations and that each stone of which that house is built be chosen and precious in relation to the chief cornerstone.

That He is the desire of all nations means that the true house of God, that spiritual temple called the church, would be the place of God's covenant, not for one nation, the Jews, but for all the nations of the world, that is, for God's elect out of every nation. In that way, too, God would add to the glory of His house in the latter days until its glory would outshine the glory of Solomon's temple as the light of the sun outshines a little flickering candle. God prophesies through Haggai the gathering of the Gentiles and the building of that house in which the Gentiles would be no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets and on Jesus Christ the

chief cornerstone, an habitation of God through the Spirit.

8. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.

Having spoken of the future glory of His house, God reminds the Jews and us that the glory of His house is not in externals but in Christ. When He says that the gold and silver are all His, He refers to all the gold and silver that the world contains, and He asserts His sovereign ownership of them as Creator. He does that by way of telling Judah that if He had wanted this earthly temple that they were building to be gloriously decorated with gold and silver, He could very well have seen to that. The fact that He had not given them gold and silver as He had to Solomon was proof that He did not want this house to be externally glorious. Solomon had used 600 talents of gold just in the holy of holies in the first temple. This temple was plain and unadorned.

Yet God did provide for them. Ezra tells us that when the Jews began again to build, they were confronted by the provincial governor. Tatnai asked what they were doing. Instead of ceasing the work, they continued, and when a formal inquiry was made by Darius, they answered him by letter and told the story of how Cyrus had sent them back for the express purpose of rebuilding the temple. That letter initiated a search through the records of Babylon that confirmed what the Jews had written, and Darius, instead of ordering the work stopped, commanded Tatnai to let the work alone and to provide the people with money for the building and with animals and other commodities for the sacrifices.

God did not provide enough gold and silver to make this temple as glorious as Solomon's, but He did prove in these events that He was able to do so if He wanted to. That He did not was something the people had to learn.

There is a lesson in that also for us as members of the New Testament church. Even now the glory of the church is not to be determined by the number of her members — though the elect will be in glory a multitude that no man can number — nor by pomp and circumstance and elaborate liturgies. It is not in a multitude of programs and ministries, not in earthly wealth and power, not in expensive buildings, but solely in the fact that the church is the body of Christ, joined in Him to God Himself, and beloved of God.

9. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.

This latter house is not the building that the Jews were erecting, but the true temple, called in verse 7 the Desire of all nations. The earthly house built in Jerusalem in the days of Haggai never had any earthly glory. It remained an empty shell, without ark or holy fire or cloud of glory. Some suggest that the building was made glorious when Christ actually walked in it, but that was really a different temple, usually referred to as Herod's temple, and even Christ's presence in it could not make it anything more than it was, an earthly building that was little used for the true worship of God and often used as a den of merchandise.

God, therefore, is teaching His people to look for the coming of Christ by taking away the external and earthly splendor of the temple. Because it was a little while until the coming of the Desire of all nations, the earthly house, which had been Israel's desire through all its history, had to begin to decrease in order that He might increase. The necessity of that is seen in the attitude of the Jews who lived at the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. They were so enamored of the

building that they did not recognize or want Him who was the true temple of God. They rejected and crucified Him, though He was the fulfillment of everything their beloved temple pictured. And so, in the end, God took even that away from them.

The glory of the true temple would be the promised peace of which God speaks through Haggai. For the Jews, that peace was due to God's protection from their enemies the Samaritans, whom God forced to provide the things necessary for the temple and its worship. That peace, however, would not last forever, and indeed soon departed from them. We see, then, that God had a better peace in mind, the blessed peace that He gives us through Jesus Christ when He delivers us from our great spiritual enemies, the devil, the flesh, and the world. Indeed, He not only delivers us from their power, but uses them also to provide what is necessary for the building of His house. It is by their hands that the stone, rejected and despised, becomes the head of the corner. The glory of the true temple for us is the peace we have with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

That God reduced the external glory of His house in the days of the return, so that the people might


look for the coming of Christ, is true today also. In these last days of the New Testament, just as in the last days of the Old, the church is reduced to a remnant and is poor and despised, retaining none of her former glory as in the days of the apostles or of the Reformation. But God has His purpose in that as He did with Judah. We, too, seeing the lesser glory of God's house, must not be discouraged and despair and cease our work, but continue in the confidence that the Desire of all nations shall soon come, and through His coming the house of God will receive all the glory that God has promised, for through His coming the tabernacle of God will come from heaven and God will dwell with us and be our God and we shall be His people (Rev. 21:2-4).

The lesser glory of God's house in the latter days is not a reason for discouragement, then, but a reason for hope, for it is the proof, for us also, that He whom we desire above all will soon come again. Nor may we as we witness the beginning of the shaking of all things that shall accompany His coming cease our labors and simply wait for Him, but "receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved," we must serve God with reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28).

The Third Prophecy: Haggai 2:10-19

10. In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,


This third prophecy comes a little over two months (63 days) after the previous, at a time when the people were busy at work on the temple. They would not be finished with the work for nearly four years, so this prophecy comes very shortly after they had begun and long before they were finished. It is, though couched in the form of two questions about the law, really an admonition to the people to keep themselves holy in the work they were doing, and it concludes with a promise of blessing should they do so.

As with the previous prophecies, God identifies Himself as Jehovah, the covenant God of His people. He does that because they were at work on His house, the Old Testament place of His covenant and of the covenant fellowship that He enjoyed with them. The name amounts, therefore, in this passage, to a reassurance that He would dwell in the house as He had promised and continue His covenant with them (1:8; 2:2:4, 5). 

All Thy Works Shall Praise Thee

Mr. Joel Minderhoud

Out of His Treasuries

ur God has created the wind such that it has a marvelous ability, when understood in the light of Scripture, to speak to us in so many dif-

ferent ways and with so many different voices. And yet, as always, it is the speech of God, who uses and directs the wind to serve His purposes. So it has been since the early days of the creation. One need only to get out his Bible and go through the many, many passages on wind to see that this is so (cf. Gen. 8:1, I Kings 19:11ff., Ps. 135:7, Prov. 30:4, Hos. 8:7, Jonah

4:8, Mark 4:37-41, and Eph. 4:14). In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for air, or wind, is often translated either as spirit, wind, or breath, depending on the context. This is true in the New Testament as well. Hence, we see that the very word itself is full of meaning and is used often throughout the Scriptures. God continues to use and direct the wind even today.

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One cannot help but think of the raging hurricane winds of Charlie, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne that God sent to ravage the coastal areas this fall. Each and every day our lives are touched by the wind, in effect either big or small. Wind is truly a marvelous creature of our God, a tool in His hand. Let us take note of it! Let us stop in the midst of the whirlwind of our lives and pause to consider it for a time and appreciate the power and wisdom of our sovereign Creator.

The Nature of Wind

Wind, simply put, is the movement of masses of air molecules. This movement, though influenced by many factors, such as topography and the earth's rotation, is fundamentally caused by differences of air pressure found within the earth's atmosphere. Air molecules are constantly whizzing around and bumping into each other and whatever else they come into contact with at amazing speeds, and this causes pressure – what we call air pressure, the force that the air puts on whatever it touches. Warm the air, and the speed of the molecules increases, thereby increasing the pressure as well. Because of varying temperatures within the earth's atmosphere due to various land features and proximity to the sun, air pressure is constantly changing – though it changes so slowly on the earth's surface that many of us do not even notice it. Thus, the atmosphere develops masses of air that will either have a higher pressure than their surroundings or a lower pressure. In the providence of God, these air masses with differing pressures try to balance out. Thus, there is movement of an air mass of high pressure to an area with low pressure. This is what we call “wind.” The greater the pressure difference and the shorter the distance between the high and low air masses, the stronger the wind.

Wind comes, of course, in many different varieties. There are

the global wind patterns that are due to the permanently cold (poles) and warm (equator) areas and the jet streams that develop when huge temperature differences within the atmosphere create great pressure differences, producing a slim band of high-speed winds in the upper atmosphere. There are the local winds, with which we are more familiar, whether it be an icy cold blast, a gentle cool breeze, or even the hot, dry winds and the tempestuous stormy gales. All of these different varieties are the work of our God. God speaks, and the wind moves – whithersoever the LORD wills. The wind – that powerful and mysterious creation of God – is again brought before our minds as we see the devastations that lie in its wake as hurricane after hurricane smashes the Eastern coastal regions of the USA, and we are again required to consider what spiritual things God teaches us in His use of this aspect of creation. “Praise ye the LORD ... praise ye Him, all his hosts ... stormy wind fulfilling his word” (Ps. 148:1,2,8).

Wind and the Holy Spirit

Wind is an appropriate object of our study. It is that for a number of reasons, but perhaps especially because it is, in Scripture, a distinct picture of the Holy Spirit. We read, for example, that it was by a sound as of a mighty rushing wind that God introduced to the church world at Pentecost the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. Jesus “breathed” (wind) on His disciples and said unto them “Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22). Not only do these biblical references cause us to see the wind as a picture of the Holy Spirit, but the word for “Holy Spirit” itself means “breath,” as Rev. Hoeksema demonstrated in his *Reformed Dogmatics*. “For He is the Spirit, the *Ruach* of God, the *Pneuma*, *Spiritus*, wind, breath.”¹ Professor Engelsma develops this further in his master's thesis when he writes about the Holy Spirit as the Breath of God.

The biblical basis for taking the name Spirit as essentially Breath is the following. A comparison of Gen. 1:2 and 2:7 with Psalm 33:6 and 104:29, 30 shows that the Spirit in whom God created is the Breath of God. In New Testament Scripture, Jesus represented the Spirit of Pentecost as the Breath that Jesus Himself breathed on His disciples (John 20:21-13). *The Spirit is not Wind in general, but that specific Wind who is the Breath of God* (emphasis JM). The Breath of God produced sacred Scripture (II Tim. 3:16). The Breath of God regenerates men and women as He wills (John 3:3-8) and quickens the church (Ezek. 37: 1-14). The Breath of God will one day raise the bodies of the children of God (Rom. 8:23), in which redemption creation itself will share (Rom. 8: 19-22). The Breath of God who originally created all things (Gen. 1:2) will in the end renew all things.²

The covenant life of fellowship within the Trinity consists of the Holy Spirit as “wind,” or “breath,” passing back and forth between the Father and the Son. Professor Engelsma continues:

On the basis of the name of the third person – Breath – and in harmony with His being the *vinculum amoris* (the bond of love JM) of the Trinity, the procession of the Spirit should be understood as the breathing of ardent love. The Father breathes forth the Spirit as love to the Son, and the Son breathes forth the Spirit as love to the Father. This Breath of paternal and of filial love is essential and personal, but He is the Breath of love.³

1. Hoeksema, Herman. *The Triple Knowledge: An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism*, vol. 2. RFPA: Grand Rapids, MI, 1971, p. 153.

2. Engelsma, David J. *Trinity and Covenant: A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Calvin Seminary for the Degree of Master of Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, p. 74 (footnote 67).

3. *Ibid*, 77.

This covenant life of fellowship and love within the Trinity is what God shares with us through Jesus Christ. God draws us near to Himself and loves us and reveals Himself to us. The Spirit applies these benefits to us, and by the Spirit's work we commune and fellowship with God in prayer and throughout our life. When we see the wind in creation we are reminded of the Holy Spirit, who is the bond of love between God the Father and God the Son and who brings us effectually into intimate fellowship with God the Father as well. What a blessing then is ours to have the eyes to see the beautiful pictures God places in the creation to teach us about Himself!

The Holy Spirit's nature and activity are also pictured for us in the wind. *The wind is efficacious* — it accomplishes that which God sends it to do. "He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow" (Ps. 147: 18b). When the hurricane wind blows, it knocks over and destroys whatever God calls it to destroy. So it is with the Spirit. He enters the heart of whomever He desires, powerfully, effectually, and irresistibly changing that heart into a soft heart. As the wind knocks over the home of one man and not the home of another, so the Spirit regenerates the heart of one man and not the heart of another. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). God is efficaciously sovereign over all things, including salvation. Man does not choose God. Man does not invite God into His heart. Just as God sends the wind wherever He pleases, so too God sends His Spirit, and "breathes" the Spirit upon whomever He desires.

Wind is observed by its effects. When the gentle breeze blows we know of its presence only by observing the gentle rustling of the leaves. When the hurricane wind

passes, we know of its presence by the destruction left in its path. So it is with the Spirit. We cannot see the Spirit, yet we see the fruit of His work. As regenerated and sanctified children of God, we bring forth good fruit. We begin in this life to live holy lives. We grow in our faith and our assurance of salvation. These are the fruits of the work of the unseen Spirit of Christ.

The wind is also powerful. Man attempts to utilize some of the power of the wind. It is a gift of God used to dry our clothes, pump our water, produce our electricity, or even fill our sails. We have learned that the power available is proportional to the cube of wind speed. Thus, if wind speeds double, the power available is eight times greater. Accordingly, as wind speeds increase, the amount of damage that can occur increases rapidly too. We have witnessed this in recent months as we observed hurricanes battering the Caribbean. Many of us have seen homes and buildings decimated by hurricanes or tornados or the like. Others of us have seen the wind's effects in branches knocked off trees or entire trees uprooted by stiff straight winds. We shake our heads in amazement and in disbelief. We cannot fathom such power. We ought to stand in awe of this small demonstration of God's power in the wind.

So too is the Spirit powerful. Nothing hinders His work. No sinner is too difficult to regenerate and sanctify. We, as the most wretched of sinners, are changed into the most beautiful children of God, living in holiness and blessed fellowship with God, because of the ever-powerful work of the Spirit — the breath of God. God causes the wind to blow and it brings new life (Ps. 147:18; Ps. 104: 29,30; Ezek. 37:1-14). This is the powerful work of the Spirit!

Throughout the Scriptures and the creation these attributes and aspects of the work of the Spirit are

pictured for us, though in a limited way, by the wind. May our prayer be that God give us "eyes to see" and "ears to hear" His marvelous works as He uses simple physical pictures to teach us about Himself.

Wind: Judgment

Most certainly we see in the violent winds the judgment of God on a wicked, sin-cursed world. The creation itself suffers because of the fall of man. God sends the wind also for the purpose of showing and bringing His judgment on the wicked world. When we see the wind, especially the fierce and stormy wind, we must humbly acknowledge the Almighty God who comes in judgment and who shows us that the end is near, and with it, the final judgment. Almost every reference to the east wind in the Old Testament is in connection with God's judgment on the wicked. It is the east wind that sent the locusts in the eighth plague on Egypt (Ex. 10), breaks the ships of Tarshish (Ps. 48:7), and scatters the people who have forgotten the Lord (Jer. 18:17). And we see God's judgment practically today too when the wind strikes. He comes in those devastations to show the world His displeasure in their wickedness. Clearly, Christ comes again, and He comes in the way of "pestilences and earthquakes, in divers places" (Matt. 24:7). He comes in the way of the sending of the four horses and riders, including a horse and rider that brings death in all its forms — death even because of "natural disasters" (cf. Rev. 6: 8). The wind, in all its violent forms, shows us the Christ who returns in judgment. As hurricanes beat upon the coastal regions of America, let us be watchful, for our Redeemer truly is returning. O church of our God, wake up, listen, and repent! Christ comes!!

And Blessing!

We, as His people, see Christ returning in triumph. He is the

Victor. And we share in that victory. For us, His coming is a great blessing! He comes to rid us of all our enemies. Just as the wind powerfully and effectively destroyed the church's enemies in the Old Testament, so too the Spirit of Christ comes powerfully to destroy our enemies today. For example, God sent an east wind — that wind of judgment — to dry up the Red Sea. The Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry ground. In the way of passing through the sea, Israel was delivered from their enemies. From a certain perspective, that wind was their deliverer. It saved them, but destroyed the enemy. That wind was judgment for Pharaoh, but blessing for Israel! The same wind — both judgment and blessing.

When we experience (firsthand or otherwise) the devastations of powerful winds, not only must we acknowledge the power of our sovereign God coming in judgment upon a wicked world, but we must also see the positive preservation of His people. Yes, the wind


teaches us that God preserves us powerfully, in the way of destroying our enemy! How often do we not cry out with the Psalmist "deliver me from my enemies"! And God powerfully does so and often uses the wind as a picture of that. Consider these Psalms:

Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase them (35:5).

Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away (as by the wind JM), so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God (68:1-2).

Of course, we do not desire the *physical* destruction of our enemies in this life. We do not participate in "Christian jihad." No, we fight spiritual foes. Our enemies are our own sinful nature, the Devil and his host, and the wicked world and its temptations. We desire that our spiritual foes be destroyed, and be destroyed with spiritual weapons.

So, when homes and buildings are knocked flat by a hurricane wind, we see in that activity and power of the wind a picture of the Spirit of Christ in all His power destroying our sinful nature and the Devil and all his host. "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (II Thess. 2:8). Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Come and powerfully destroy all our spiritual enemies so that we might be freed from sin and might dwell in perfect blessed fellowship with the triune God and with all the saints in a perfect world without end. This is blessing for us!

Praise God for the Wind — the Wind (Breath) that powerfully and effectually sanctifies us and delivers us from all our spiritual foes! May God give us the grace to look at the physical wind and consider how great a God is our God and be thankful for all the great wonders He is doing in and through us! 

Annual Report

Mr. Michael Lotterman

Reformed Free Publishing Association 2004 Annual Secretary's Report

"*Publishing the Reformed Truth since 1924.*" So states the recently printed catalog of RFPA published materials. Not satisfied with publishing the spiritual fluff widely available today, the Reformed Free Publishing Association dedicates itself to the publication of material that faithfully and boldly witnesses

to the truth as it is developed and expressed in the Reformed tradition. By the grace of God it has done so for eighty years. May He be pleased to continue to bless our labor.

By way of this report the Board of the RFPA informs its supporters of the work in which it has busied itself in the past year. In many ways we stand at the beginning of a new era for the RFPA. A new system of editorship for the *Standard Bearer* will begin soon. We

presently have more books, both reprints and new volumes, than at any previous time in our history. We have budgeted funds to create awareness of our publications in many new ways. We contemplate the relocation of the RFPA to a new facility. God has given us much to be thankful for, but also much to be responsible for.

The premier publication of the RFPA continues to be the *Standard Bearer*. In the second book of Timothy, Paul calls us as workmen to

Mr. Lotterman, a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church (Walker), is the retired secretary of the RFPA.

"rightly divide the word of truth." In so many ways this is the goal of the *Standard Bearer*. Led by capable editors and authors, we rightly divide the truth by its sound development and its use in defense against today's errors. Under the new series title "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth," the RFPA released last fall the first volume, *Common Grace Revisited*. This summer we distributed the second volume, entitled *Reformed Worship*. The chapters of these books originally appeared as series articles in the *Standard Bearer*, and the goal of publishing them in soft-cover form is to give broader life to the subjects as first treated by the editorial staff. They are available from the RFPA for under \$7.00, although book club members receive them as a complimentary benefit to their membership. The next title, *The Providence of God*, should be available within six months.

Last fall several thousand copies of a special issue of the *Standard Bearer* were sent as a promotion for new subscriptions. As a result, nearly 200 new subscribers took advantage of our offer for a free half-year subscription. We also take opportunity to remind Protestant Reformed consistories of our ongoing offer of a free full year's subscription to newlyweds and new confessing members who join the PRC. Our subscription base now includes 2630 subscribers. That these writings have been a blessing to readers throughout the world is seen in the many letters of thanks and encouragement the editor and the RFPA receive.

Without debate the most significant development regarding the *Standard Bearer* is the search to replace our retiring editor. Prof. David J. Engelsma reported to our readers last fall his intention to resign as editor at the end of this volume year. We are deeply thankful to Prof. Engelsma for his faithful labors as editor for the past sixteen years. He is only the third editor in the eighty-

year history of the publication of our magazine. He has given faithful voice to the purpose of witnessing to the Reformed faith, using the power of the pen to proclaim the truth clearly and boldly.

A committee to seek Prof. Engelsma's replacement reported this spring that they were unable to find a person with suitable qualifications who could perform alone the duties of editor without risk to his present work, be it in the pastorate or in the seminary. As a result, for an interim period the editorship will be shared by Prof. R. Dykstra, Prof. B. Gritters, and Rev. K. Koole. This is a temporary solution. Convinced that a sole editorship is preferred, the *Standard Bearer* editorial staff continues to be committed to that goal.

The RFPA offers a broad selection of doctrinal books, commentaries, devotionals, and practical works, all of which are based on soundly Reformed biblical exegesis and a lively application of the Reformed creeds. As mentioned earlier, we presently have more books, both reprints and new volumes, than at any previous time in our history. We currently have sixteen works in progress. In addition to *Reformed Worship*, in the past year the fourth volume in the series *Unfolding Covenant History* was released. We thank Mark Hoeksema for his work editing these treatments of Old Testament history produced originally by his father, Prof. H. C. Hoeksema. Future volumes in this estimated eight-volume set will be written by Prof. David J. Engelsma.

Reprints of *Mysteries of the Kingdom* by Prof. H. Hanko and *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. I by Rev. H. Hoeksema were also released this past year. (*R.D.*, vol. II should be available by early 2005.) Rather than simply reprinting these works, every effort has been made to improve them. Prof. Hanko rewrote and expanded on many of the subjects in his book on parables. Vari-

ous enhancements were made also in the design of the book, so that what we have is largely a new work. Although reprints are not automatically sent to book club members, because of the changes almost all of our members, when given the opportunity, chose to purchase these volumes.

The improvements to *Reformed Dogmatics* were also extensive. In the new edition the reader will notice no change in the substance of the book. Hoeksema remains himself: exegetical, forceful, and clear in his treatment of the tenets of the Reformed faith. Editorial improvements have been made to the form of the book only. Long paragraphs and sentences have been broken up. Chapter sub-headings and Scripture references have been added. The subject index has been improved with more references. The Scripture text index has been expanded. Foreign words have been translated. We found *Reformed Dogmatics* by Rev. Herman Hoeksema to be worthy of our best effort. The result is a new two-volume edition that is clearer and more readable and should serve the reader well.

The RFPA has also been diligent in the production of several new volumes this past year. *Doctrine According to Godliness*, a collection of short treatments of Reformed doctrines by Rev. R. Hanko, should be released this fall. *Unfolding Covenant History*, vol. 5 should be ready in early 2005. We intend to release a series of radio sermons under the working title *Of God and Man* by summer 2005.

At present we have 1035 book club members. These members automatically receive new releases as they are made available. In this way the high cost of publishing new books is recovered quickly, without tying up valuable funds in inventory. More importantly, these book club members have found a way to expand their personal libraries with books provided by a proven Reformed publisher.

Our new starter packs are also a great way to encourage young adults, newly marrieds, and friends to begin building a Reformed library. In a selection of price ranges one can combine some of our more popular titles as gifts for appropriate occasions.

The RFPA website has a new look and is easier to use after improvements were made this past year. Our staff can now keep the site current by adding new books and making changes to the on-line catalog. To subscribe to the *Standard Bearer*, join the book club, order a starter pack, or purchase any of our titles, see rfpa.org for details. A major project of posting on the website all the archive issues of the *Standard Bearer* and providing search capabilities is ongoing. This will give readers around the world instant access to our archives and bring additional traffic to our site.

As members of the Christian Bookseller's Association (CBA), we presented our materials in the 2004 International CBA Convention this past summer. We are convinced that this is an effective way to sell our wares, and preliminary reports support this conviction. Over 10,000 attendees, representing retailers, distributors, buyers, and

publishers, attended the convention. We intend to monitor the results of participating in this convention to evaluate our involvement with them in the future.

Our operations have undergone changes in the past year. The business managers of both the book and *Standard Bearer* divisions asked to be relieved of their managerial responsibilities. This occasioned an opportunity for the Board to restructure our management situation by combining the divisions into one RFPA business manager position. We welcome Tim Pipe, Sr. to this new position. Tim brings considerable managerial talents to the RFPA, and we look forward to his being involved in our operations in many ways.

Like a baby bird nudged from the nest, the RFPA has been asked by the PRC seminary to find a more permanent home. Having outgrown our office and warehouse space in the seminary, we have searched extensively in the past year for a new business location. Within the next few months we intend to bring for your consideration a building proposal that we feel gives us both short-term accommodations and long-term potential.

Financially, the RFPA continues to enjoy a favorable position. We again have received generous financial support from church collections and individual donors. The book division received gifts totaling \$36,000, and the *Standard Bearer* received \$43,600. We thank the many sources for these gifts. We are humbled that God, the Giver of the Perfect Gift, moves so many to support our cause. Although our financial statements indicate tremendous growth in the last few years, we anticipate considerable expenses in the near future. Our new building, increases in staff, and a growing operational budget indicate more funds are needed. Please continue to remember the RFPA in your giving.

Finally, a word of thanks to the many whose faithful labors have contributed to the good of the RFPA in the past year. These include our editors, authors, staff, proofreaders, Board members, and numerous volunteers who have used their time and talents to perform a host of tasks. Thanks be to God for the privilege of laboring as His servants in this work. May He continue to use our weak efforts for the building up of His church and the glory of His name.



When Thou Sittest In Thine House

Abraham Kuyper

A Virtuous Woman

The Housewife

Our translators do not speak in Proverbs 31:10 of the "virtuous" but of the "real" housewife, and there is some

difference here. In our times at least, one thinks of a "virtuous" housewife as one who is reliable, good-natured, and home-loving; but he who speaks of a *real* housewife means not merely an honest and good person, but one who is truly meritorious *as a housewife*.

And such was the meaning of the Proverb-poet.

In this beautiful song, in which Lemuel outlines the picture of the

real housewife, almost no mention is made of the quiet virtues of this woman.

It says "that she feareth the Lord"; but this, too, is not taken subjectively, but objectively. A woman who shows in her *house-keeping* that she does not pursue vanity, but feareth the Lord, she shall be *praised*.

For it says: "Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman

Reprinted from When Thou Sittest In Thine House, by Abraham Kuyper, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1929. Used by permission of Eerdmans Publishing Co.

that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

There is even no appeal to verse 11: "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her," as though this were said in praise of her marital faithfulness; for this word has nothing to do with it, and means only that the head of the house is altogether confident that his wife shall take good care of him. It states this literally and in so many words: "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, that he shall lack no good, i.e., not anything that he needs."

Over-spiritual people will find this very prosaic; but such is Holy Scripture.

Does not Holy Scripture say of a minister or elder that he who doth not know how to rule his own house is worse than an infidel — which of course means to say that such a one injures the church of Christ more still than an infidel?

But actually the fundamental thought in both Old and New Testaments here too is one.

The *real* minister or elder must first rule his own house and then the house of God.

So the *real* housewife is evident first in this, and most in this, that she shows herself capable of taking good care of her house and of ruling it well.



The words themselves of the Proverb-poet indicate this.

That for which this genuine housewife is praised consists of six things: first, that she takes good care of her husband; second, of her children; third, of her maidservants; fourth, of the poor; fifth, of her goods; and sixth, of her house.

She cares for her *husband*.

This stands at the head in verses 11 and 12 as her first marriage obligation: "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall lack no good thing. She doeth him good and not evil all the days of her life."

Then she cares for *her children*.

Read it in verses 26 and 28: "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed."

In the third place, she cares for *her maidens*.

This you see in verse 15, where it reads, "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens."

In the fourth place, she cares for *the poor*.

"She stretches out her hand to the poor; yea, she stretches forth her hands to the needy" (v. 20).

This is her care for her *live* goods.

And this care for her live goods is so brilliantly crowned, that her husband and her children receive honor in the gate of the city, and every one in the gates praises her by reason of the works of her hands.



But this does not satisfy her.

The largest place in Proverbs 31 is devoted to her care for her *goods* and her *house*.

Especially for her goods.

In the house there must be provisions, there must be supplies, and abundance of all sorts of goods.

And this genuine housewife did not harbor the idea that her husband must earn everything, and that she needs but live on his money; but she herself was diligent, she worked in the hours which she saved to prepare wares for sale, and these she did so well that they fetched high prices, and thus brought in gains, even to the extent that she was able to lay by and buy herself a field.

She spins and embroiders and makes ornaments.

Read it in verses 13 and 14: "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands; she is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar."

After that again in verses 19

and 22: "She layeth her hand to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple."

And these products of her hands she *sells*. See it in verses 17 and 18 and 24: "She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good; her candle goeth not out by night. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant."

And with that merchandise of what she herself spun and embroidered she is so prosperous that she lays by a small fortune.

So says verse 16: "She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard."



And what finally concerns her care in the narrower sense for *house* and *household*, in this too she does excellent work.

She wastes no time in sleep, but works evenings longer than it is day, and in the morning she is the first out of bed.

As it tells in verse 18: "Her candle goeth not out by night"; and in verse 15: "She riseth also while it is yet night."

Neither does she leave the care of her house to her servants, but she herself giveth meat to her household. Read it in verse 15: "She giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens."

She is most careful too as to her own personal appearance: "Her clothing is fine linen and purple. Strength and honor are her clothing" — which means that she wears articles of good quality, and knows how to do this with taste and good form.

She has an eye to the whole house — the halls, the garrets, and the cellars. She is always busy. "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

Yea, to add this to it also, she cares not only for her goods and for her household, but also for the house itself.

As it says in verse 21: "She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household is clothed with scarlet" — something that is to be understood of Eastern houses like this, that when there was no paper yet, the walls were hung with tapestries; and this was done with double thicknesses in winter, that the indoors might be the warmer.

All this the Proverb-poet adds together as marks of a housewife that feareth the Lord, and who for the sake of the fear of the Lord responds to her high calling as mistress of the house.



Lemuel does not draw this picture of a woman of the middle class or of a woman of the lower ranks of society, but of a woman of years in the high walks of life. For it says that *King* Lemuel thus drew the image of a woman for his son.

This was not yet the Christian

woman, but a Jewish woman, who lived in the fear of the Lord.

And he who in the days of the Reformation takes the Christian woman at her best knows in how serious and substantial a way the real housewife acquitted herself of her task as wife to her husband, as mother to her children, and as mistress of the house to her servants.

So was, and sometimes still is, the real housewife, to whom God grants, according to verse 25, "to rejoice in time to come."

That not every woman can be like this is granted.

Not every woman has this physical strength and welfare at her command. Not every woman is endowed with such strength of mind, wisdom of insight, and admirable power of will.

And He who knows the talents of every one, here too shall pass a righteous judgment.


It must also be granted that with present-day factories and stores, a woman is now no more able by her spindle and embroideries to lay by competencies.

With the change of times this too is altered.

But when the genuine housewife in old times so cared for her husband, children, and servants, and then had time left for spinning and embroidering to earn enough money to buy fields, how much greater should be the care for husband, children, servants, and houses now, when the "real housewife" is under no more necessity to embroider for trade, and is able to give all her time to her household!

You realize, that the task and calling of caring for the interests of the home is so much the more urgent.

And in these days so many fall short in this, who, alas, thereby stand behind even this Jewish housewife.

And when by reason of this the reading of Proverbs 31 sends the blush to the cheeks of many of our women, is there then no cause for laying hold of oneself in the fear of the Lord, and of doing what it says in verse 17: "She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms"? 

Book Reviews

Truth For Life: A Devotional Commentary on the Epistle of James, by John Blanchard. Webster, New York: Evangelical Press USA, 2003. Pp. vii - 404. \$16.99 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. Robert D. Decker.]

In many ways this is a fine commentary on the *Epistle of James*. The author's title accurately states that this is a devotional commentary. The author's writing style is pleasing, nicely worded, and easy to read. The style is not at all cluttered with the technical language of Hermeneutics (rules for Bible exposition). This means that the commentary, though the author works from the Greek, can profit-

ably be used for personal and family devotions as well as to prepare one for a Bible Study Society.

An example of the author's style is as follows:

We need to carry this same lofty conception of our Saviour into our evangelism, too. When a friend of mine was still a young preacher he was given a piece of advice that I have never heard bettered; "Young man, whenever you preach, be sure that you do two things — lift the Saviour high and lay the sinner low." That advice was never more relevant than now. Some evangelism seems to me to run the risk of suggesting that there are ways in which a sinner can bring himself into the po-

sition where he will be acceptable to the Saviour, and then of bringing the Lord down in order to make him accessible to the sinner, so that one is eventually presented with the suggestion that two equals should come to an agreement. Beware of anything that remotely smacks of that kind of thing! Lift the Saviour high! Speak of his glory, his majesty, and his power, as well as of his mercy, love and grace. Then lay the sinner low. Show him that he is not just unhappy or unfulfilled, but "dead in ...transgressions and sins" (Ephesians 2:1) and in need of a miracle if he is ever to receive eternal life (pp. 12-13).

Blanchard finds the theme of

the Epistle in chapter two verses 14-26, where James speaks of the relationship between faith and works. This reviewer is of the conviction that the theme of the Epistle of James is summed in chapter 1:26-27. Blanchard's interpretation of the passage, however, is right on target. The author faces head on the question whether the passage is in conflict with Romans 3:28. After he writes, "Now if Paul and James *are* in conflict, then the whole of the New Testament is in ruins, and the authority and unity of the Bible destroyed," Blanchard demonstrates conclusively that there is no conflict at all between those two passages (cf. pp. 159 - 175). The advocates of the heresy of justification by faith and works would do well to ponder what


Blanchard has to say in the two chapters cited above.

The author clearly and sharply refutes the heresy of Arminianism (cf. p. 64). Blanchard also clearly affirms the doctrine of God's sovereign predestination. Writes he, "Remove that truth from the Bible and you are left with a haphazard jumble of religious words; recognize it in the Bible and you have a firm basis for everything else you read" (p. 122). Blanchard continues by explaining that predestination is "incontestable," "unconventional," and "unconditional" (cf. pp. 122-126).

The commentary is not without faults. Blanchard strongly affirms the error of common grace by misinterpreting the common, so-called "proof texts" (Ps. 145:9 & 16; I Tim. 4:10; Matt. 5:45). The author does

this while interpreting James 4:4-6! This would mean, if Blanchard's view were correct, that God is gracious to His and our enemies whom the saints may not love, and that God, at one and the same time, is gracious to the proud and resists the proud!

Blanchard also incorrectly interprets James 5:14-15 to refer to physical healing. This reviewer would point out that the AV translation of the Greek verb in verse 15 is correct. The text reads, "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick...." The text does not read, "shall heal the sick." As a matter of fact, the text continues by speaking of the forgiveness of the sins of the sick person.

With these *caveats* we recommend the commentary. 

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

Evangelism Activities

Our churches, as heirs of the Reformation, have the privilege annually to celebrate the great work of God that we call the Reformation. Many of our churches sponsored lectures around the end of October or in early November to do just that.

The Extension Committee of the Lynden, WA PRC sponsored a lecture October 29 at their church. Rev. Ron Hanko, their pastor, spoke on the theme, "Reformation and Christian Living." During this lecture Rev. Hanko looked at three important questions: How did the Reformation change the way Christians live? How did the Reformation promote godliness and holiness? How has Christian living declined since the Reformation?

Members of the Bethel PRC in

Roselle, IL sponsored a Reformation Celebration on October 22. Rev. Ron Cammenga was this year's featured speaker, speaking on the topic, "The Heart of the Reformation: Does it Beat Today? Does it Beat in You?"

The Evangelism Committee of the South Holland, IL PRC invited all interested to join with them for a lecture on October 29. Rev. Ron VanOverloop examined the idea, the motivation, and the method of "Personal witnessing of our faith to others."

Also on October 29, the Evangelism Committee of the First PRC of Holland, MI sponsored a Reformation Day lecture entitled "Solo Christo," the second of the five solas of the great historic Reformation. Their pastor, Rev. Charles Terpstra, was the speaker.

Rev. Richard Smit, pastor of the Immanuel PRC in Lacombe, AB, Canada, was the featured speaker at a Reformation Day lecture on October 29 sponsored by Immanuel's Evangelism Committee. Rev. Smit spoke on the subject, "The

Faith Alone by Which We Are Justified."

The Reformed Witness Committee, made up of members from our two congregations in Iowa (Doon and Hull) along with members from the Edgerton, MN PRC, sponsored a Fall Lecture on October 29 at Dordt College Chapel. Rev. Steven Key, pastor of Hull, spoke on the theme, "Restoring the Foundation for Christian Piety."

Mission Activities

Not only did many of our congregations sponsor Reformation celebrations last month, but several of our mission outreaches did the same.

Prof. H. Hanko, spending time in South Wales on behalf of our Domestic Mission Committee, spoke on October 22 in Leicestershire on the theme, "Revival or Reformation: What Does the Church Need?"

The Young Adults of the Ghana Mission hosted their second annual Reformation Day Lectures at the University of Ghana on October 29

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

and 30. Our missionary, Rev. Rodney Miersma, spoke on "The Sixteenth Century Reformation" and "Reformed Yet Always Reforming."

The Pittsburgh Mission sponsored an entire weekend, October 28 through 31, for a Reformation Celebration. Revs. Wilbur Bruinsma and Carl Haak were the featured speakers and also preached on the Lord's Day. On Thursday a local religious radio station gave Missionary Jaki Mahtani, Rev. Bruinsma, and Rev. Haak a three-hour live interview, along with opportunity for listeners to call in and ask questions. Rev. Mahtani reported that the entire three hours were filled dealing with questions from listeners. Then on Friday evening, Revs. Haak and Bruinsma helped develop this year's theme in Pittsburgh, "Reaching the Nations with the Gospel of Grace," by speaking on "The Reformation's Return to the Gospel of Grace," and "The Missionary Zeal of the Reformers." On Saturday there was a forum on missions, with members from our various Evangelism Committees present to discuss their work.

The weekend of October 22-23 Rev. Rodney Kleyn and Elder Dave Moelker worshiped with the PR Fellowship of Fayetteville. These two men were there as representatives of our churches' Domestic

Mission Committee. Plans called for Rev. Kleyn to preach twice on Sunday, as well as for both men to visit with the Fellowship's steering committee and some of the member families.

Young People's Activities

The Young People's Societies of the Faith PRC in Jenison, MI, next year's host for the annual young people's convention, sponsored a concert on October 31 at Fair Haven Ministries in Jenison, MI. This concert featured the Trinity Men Singers, the Voices of Victory, and the Hope Heralds. The evening included a time of singing by each group and concluded with all the men together singing praise to God. Each group sang songs of praise and thanksgiving to God, a wonderful way to bring a day of worship to a close. A collection was taken to cover the cost of the facility and to help with expenses of the 2005 YP Convention.

Saturday, October 30, young people from the Grace PRC in Standale, MI and young people from the Hudsonville, MI PRC were busy with or took part in Christian Service Day and Fall Clean-Up Day respectively. The young people from these two churches gave of themselves by performing free services for members of their congregations.

Minister Activities

Monday, October 18, one of our churches' emeriti ministers, Rev. George Lanting, was taken home to be with His Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Rev. Lanting served our churches for 33 years. After his ordination in 1953, he served congregations in Grand Haven, MI; First of Holland, MI; First of Edgerton, MN; Loveland, CO; and Pella, IA. We extend our Christian sympathy to the family.


Our seminary announces with gratitude to God that Seminarians Andrew Lanning and Clay Spronk, both juniors, have been licensed to speak a word of edification in the churches. They both spoke for the first time on October 31.

Rev. Ron Cammenga accepted the call he received to serve as pastor of the Faith PRC in Jenison, MI.

Rev. Audred Spriensma, currently serving as denominational missionary in the Philippines, has declined the call to Bethel PRC.

The Doon, Iowa PRC has a new trio consisting of Revs. A. Brummel, D. Overway, and C. Terpstra.

From a trio of the Revs. W. Bruinsma, J. Mahtani, and J. Slopsma, the congregation of First PRC in Edmonton, AB, Canada extended a call to Rev. Slopsma.

The Hudsonville, MI PRC will call a pastor from a trio of the Revs. A. Brummel, W. Bruinsma, and C. Terpstra. 

Announcements

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council and congregation of the Hull PRC express their sincere Christian sympathy to Mr. Art and Mary Bleyenbergh on the passing away of her mother,

MRS. JACOB KUIPER.

May they find their comfort from God's Word in Isaiah 40:31, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

*Rev. Steven Key, Pres.
Mr. Alvin Bylsma, Clerk*

NOTICE!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, January 12, 2005, at the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Material for this session must be in the hands of the stated clerk by December 11, 2004.

*Jon J. Huiskens
Stated Clerk*

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council and congregation of Southwest PRC express their Christian sympathies to our beloved pastor, Rev. Ronald Cammenga and family, and fellow officebearer, deacon Marc Kuiper, in the death of their son and brother-in-law,

DANIEL EDWARD CAMMENG.

May they find comfort in God's Word in Job 1:21b, 22: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

*William DeKraker, Vice-President
Darrel Huiskens, Clerk*

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

On October 18, 2004, our Heavenly Father, in His inscrutable wisdom, called

REV. GEORGE LANTING

to his eternal reward, as he was through death translated from the church militant to the church triumphant. The consistory and congregation of South Holland PRC convey our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Lanting and family as we with the entire denomination mourn the loss of this faithful servant of the Lord. We are grateful to God for Rev. Lanting's diligent labors as a minister of the gospel in our churches and as minister emeritus in our congregation. May we and the family find our joy and comfort in the word of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3

Rev. Allen Brummel, President
George DeJong, Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On October 22, 2004 our parents and grandparents,

MR. and MRS. BILL OOMKES, celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary. We are grateful to God for the years He has given them and for His continued blessings and mercies. We are thankful He has given us God-fearing parents. Our prayer is that God will continue to sustain them and bless their marriage in years to come. Psalm 90:1, 2: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

❖ Gary & Sheryl Zandstra

Amanda, Tiffany, Hannah, Josiah, Mikayla

❖ Steve & Joan VanderZiel

Amy, Andy, Melissa, Kelly, Kyle

❖ Jim & Mary Brander

Kendra, Josh, Cassie, Toby

❖ Mark & Amy Oomkes

Taylor & Lisa

❖ Arjen & Jodi Vreugdenhil

Byron Center, Michigan

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

We are pleased to announce that our parents and grandparents,

HENRY and CORYNNA BOER,

celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on November 22, 2004. We thank the Lord for their years together as husband and wife and as our faithful parents. We pray that God will continue to bless them and be with them in the years to come, and we thank them for the godly example they have given us. "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children" (Psalm 103:17).

❖ Scott and Deb Boer

Ryan

❖ Todd Boer

Nathan

❖ Shawne Becker

Aubrey

Jenison, Michigan

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The students and teachers of Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School (Walker, MI) express their Christian sympathy to Tracy (8th grade), Cherith (6th grade), Jared (3rd grade) Cammenga and their family in the death of their brother and son, a junior at Covenant Christian High School,

DANIEL CAMMENGA,

on November 2, 2004. May the Lord give you comfort and peace in the words of I Corinthians 15:54, 55, and 57: "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ... But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Ron Koole, Principal

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The *Standard Bearer* staff express our sincere sympathy to long-time staff member, Rev. Ronald Cammenga, his wife Rhonda, and their family, in the death of their son,

DANIEL EDWARD CAMMENGA.

The Lord took Daniel home through a car wreck on November 2, 2004. Born on January 3, 1988, Daniel was 16.

May the wonder of grace work into the hearts of the Cammenga family the saving truth that "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27).

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The students, faculty, and staff of Covenant Christian High School extend their Christian sympathy to Rev. and Mrs. Cammenga and their family, and to the grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins of

DANIEL CAMMENGA,

who was taken home to be with his Savior in glory. We pray that God will give you comfort and peace during this difficult time. "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles" (Psalm 34:17).

Rick Noorman, Principal

Reformed Witness Hour

Topics for December

Date	Topic	Text
December 5	"Knowing Whom We Believe: Christ"	Matthew 16:16
December 12	"Knowing Whom We Believe: Only Begotten Son, Our Lord"	John 20:19-31
December 19	"Knowing Whom We Believe: Immanuel"	Matthew 1:21
December 26	"I Will Build My Church"	Matthew 16:18