



# *THE* **STANDARD BEARER**

**A Reformed  
Semi-Monthly  
Magazine**

**It is exactly  
the worth of the Psalms  
that they are Christ's  
own Word about Himself.**

**They are not  
a religious man's words  
about man's  
religious feelings,  
problems,  
and aspirations....**

**See "Music in the Church"—page 374.**

**Vol. 71, No. 15  
May 1, 1995**

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## In This Issue ...

... are no typographical errors. Or so we fondly hope.

Proofreading, in order to catch such mistakes, is an important, laborious part of the process of publishing each issue of the *Standard Bearer*. Several painstaking readings of the copy by different persons on the staff precede the appearance of each issue in the home of our readers.

Invariably, when a typo does slip through, the fault is ours. Our printer, the Eerdmans Printing Company of Grand Rapids, does a superb job of printing the magazine. We missed the misspelling, or the obviously wrong word in the sentence, or the omission.

Or the wrong date.

We have eagle-eyed readers who spot the errors.

One such reader is Dirk Henry Flack of Sarcoxie, Missouri. In an envelope addressed "Please *rush* to the *Standard Bearer*" was the following note in a shaky, but perfectly legible hand:

A serious mishap has befallen upon our beloved *SB*. A misstatement has been printed on p. 323 of issue Apr. 1/95. Halfways down center column, on right hand edge, it states the year "1934," which in reality was the year 1834. Later today I aim to enclose copy, and mail quickly.

Mr. Flack is right, of course. The *Afscheiding* in the Netherlands took place in 1834. We missed the mistake. We correct it now.

Dirk Henry Flack is 95 years old.

He is evidently sharp of eye and keen of mind.

He is also about the business of reading carefully "our beloved *SB*" early. The note was dated, "6:30 A.M., Apr. 6-95."

It is enough to make us redouble our efforts at proofreading to prevent such "serious mishaps" from befalling the *SB*.

It also makes us grateful for serious, friendly readers like the 95-year old Dirk Henry Flack of Sarcoxie, Missouri.

— DJE



THE  
**STANDARD  
BEARER**

ISSN 0362-4692

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August.  
Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.,  
4949 Ivanrest Ave., Grandville, MI 49418. Second Class  
Postage Paid at Grandville, Michigan.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Standard Bearer,  
P.O. Box 603, Grandville, MI 49468-0603.

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### BOUND VOLUMES

The Business Office will accept standing orders for bound copies of the current volume. Such orders are filled as soon as possible after completion of a volume year.

16mm microfilm, 35mm microfilm and 105mm microfiche, and article copies are available through University Microfilms International.

# Stewards of God's Manifold Grace

*As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

I Peter 4:10

Manifold grace!

Our God is the God of all grace. He is infinitely glorious in all His divine perfections, eternally blessed in the intimacy of His covenant life as three Persons within the one divine Being. He is the God of all grace, beautiful, adorable, ever glorious in His majesty.

He who called the things that were not as though they were and upholds them by His almighty power declares to us:

The cattle on a thousand hills  
And all the forest beasts are  
Mine,  
Each mountain bird to Me is  
known,  
Whatever roams the field I  
own.

And we also belong to Him, not only because He is our Creator, as marvelous as that may be, but also because He has made us His peculiar possession in Christ Jesus according to sovereign election.

In eternal good pleasure and amazing grace, for reasons in Himself, God chose us, redeemed us through the atoning death of His

Son, and has given His Spirit into our hearts, making us new creatures in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We who were dead in trespasses and sins, children of Satan, rebels who defiantly transgressed all His commandments, worthy only of everlasting condemnation in torments of hell, God raises out of death into life, delivers out of darkness into His marvelous light, and makes us sons and daughters, heirs of eternal salvation.

While millions perish in their sins, cast out forever, God has separated us unto Himself in eternal, boundless love, and claims us as His very own: "My children!" "My chosen!" "My peculiar possession!"

This God is our God forever and ever. We have a place in His church, among the assembly of the saints, with a rightful claim to all His promises.

And, with all that, we are privileged to love and to serve Him as stewards in His house, serving His purpose to the glory of His matchless Name. In worship and in holy adoration we confess,

All that I am I owe to Thee,  
Thy wisdom, Lord, hath  
fashioned me;  
I give my maker thankful  
praise,  
Whose wondrous works my  
soul amaze.

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Blessed gift!  
Every true member of the

church receives his own gracious endowment as steward in the house of God, his own place and calling among the brethren. In the office of believers we receive the anointing of Christ, to be devoted to God as prophets, priests, and kings.

According to Jesus' parable, one receives five talents, another two, and another one, each according to his ability (Matt. 25:14, 15).

The stewards referred to in the parable were often household slaves. They might be intelligent and capable persons, but they were owned by their lord and master, in every way completely subservient to him.

In a far richer sense we confess, "I am not my own; I belong with body and soul, for time and eternity, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who is now gone into glory, makes me a steward in God's house, entrusting His goods to my care, and upon our Lord's return requires of me that I give an account of my stewardship."

Scripture assures us, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Among all the people of God who have lived on this earth there are no two alike. Among all those living today, each is an individual with his own distinctive nature, characteristics, gifts, and talents.

For each of us God has determined our parents, our time and place of birth, and the span of our lives. Each of us has his or her own

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

place in our own families, among our friends, in our church and our environment.

We are God's workmanship. Each of us is custom made, as it were, exactly as God determined from all eternity, in order that we may serve our own appointed purpose here on earth.

Every single member of the body of Christ, whether young or old, must fulfill his unique task. We are members one of another as belonging to the body of Christ, each functioning in his or her own place for the salvation of the body.

Each father as head of the family, each mother as she carries out her duties in the home, each son or daughter, each brother or sister, in the home as prophet. This is also our calling in the church and in the midst of the world. God's mandate is, "Ye are My witnesses."

Each of us must consecrate his life in the fear of the Lord. Children as well as adults are told, "Whether you eat, or whether you drink, or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God."

Each of us has the responsibility to fight the battle of faith, defend the truth, maintain God's Name, and resist all the onslaughts of the devil in an evil world.

What a blessed privilege! Together we serve for the coming of God's kingdom in the day of the Lord!

◆◆◆ ◆◆◆ ◆◆◆ ◆◆◆

Stewards.

The God of all grace bestows upon us the many and various blessings of grace whereby we are graced in the Beloved.

The Spirit of Christ has called us out of death into life. We live, yet not we, Christ lives in us. According to that new life we walk by faith and not by sight, capable of crucifying the flesh and living a new and holy life. If and when we falter

and fall into sin, God in mercy forgives upon confession of our sins. He justifies, sanctifies, and preserves us from day to day as we walk life's pathway.

We are called to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

We are not robots that mechanically move about, but

we are rational, moral, thinking, willing persons, who are responsible to God for all that we do.

We have a responsibility for ourselves, but also for the fellow members of the body of Christ. The gift that we receive must be ministered one for the other.

We have a responsibility, first of all, toward our family. Also to the members of the congregation and denomination in which we reside, and also to God's universal church. That church is gathered, protected, and defended by no one less than the Son of God, the Lord of glory; but He uses means toward that end.

We must bear with one another's weaknesses, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ has forgiven us. At all times we must be ready to give a cup of water to the thirsty, a slice of bread to the hungry, lodging to the stranger, and a visit to the needy. There may even be a Lazarus at our doorstep, filthy, full of sores, and hungry. In as much as we extend a hand to one of the least of the brethren, we have done it unto Christ.

This includes that we are ready at all times to give an account of the hope that is within us. Always, every day of our lives, in all that we say and do, we are stewards of the manifold grace of God. What are you and I doing with the talents that have been entrusted to us? "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10).

We all without exception must stand in judgment. Our whole life

in all its minute details will pass in review before us. We will be judged accordingly.

Our only salvation will be that Christ, who died for us and is risen, is our Judge. All our works that we performed will be burned like straw and stubble. Only that which was performed by the Spirit of Christ through us will stand. Christ's work in and through us will determine our place in glory.

Maybe we have but one talent. We may feel that if we only had more we could do far more for the kingdom.

I knew a woman who because of some infirmity spent most of her life in Pine Rest. There was one thing that troubled her. She seemed so useless in this world. She could not have a family or be active in the church.

In order to take away some of the monotony in her life, she was placed in the wash room, where the women who suffered from depression washed away their tears. This woman did not preach to them. She did not know how, nor did she intend to do that. She had but a word, also for the weary. She told them to pray, assured them that God understood, and that He could help them.

One of these women said when she was recovered, "No one in that hospital helped me as much as the woman in the wash room." And she thought that she amounted to nothing.

Manifold grace! Did Christ entrust you with five talents? Do not despise those who have but one. Were you given two talents? Labor while it is day. Do you have but one? Do not make light of it. We could not handle any more.

In any instance, when we speak let us speak the truth according to the Word of God, and when we work let us work with the ability that God gives us. "That God in all things may be glorified through Christ Jesus, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (v. 11). □

# A Defense of (Reformed) Amillennialism

## 3. Apostasy and Persecution

It is the Reformed doctrine of the last things that the last days are a time of departure from the faith by many and a time of persecution of the true church by a wicked world. Apostasy and persecution characterize the entire age from Christ's ascension to His second coming. They increase and intensify at the very end in connection with the coming of the Antichrist and the establishment of the universal kingdom of the beast.

The Reformed faith repudiates the notion that the last days hold the prospect of the conversion of the majority of the human race so that the true church of Christ is in a position to persecute the ungodly.

### The Reformed Creeds

Reformed doctrine is established by the Reformed creeds. These creeds teach the last days as the time of apostasy and persecution. The Second Helvetic Confession (1566), expressing the conviction of all the leading Reformers, stated:

And from heaven the same Christ will return in judgment, when wickedness will then be at its greatest in the world and when the Antichrist, having corrupted true religion, will fill up all things with superstition and impiety and will cruelly lay waste the Church with bloodshed and flames (Dan., ch. 11). But Christ will come again to claim his own, and by his coming to destroy the Antichrist.... We fur-

ther condemn Jewish dreams that there will be a golden age on earth before the Day of Judgment, and that the pious, having subdued all their godless enemies, will possess all the kingdoms of the earth. For evangelical truth in Matt., chs. 24 and 25, and Luke, ch. 18, and apostolic teaching in II Thess., ch. 2, and II Tim., chs. 3 and 4, present something quite different (*Reformed Confessions of the 16th Century*, ed. Arthur C. Cochrane, Westminster Press, 1966, chap. 11).

The two main sections on eschatology in the "Three Forms of Unity" are Question 52 of the Heidelberg Catechism and Article 37 of the Belgic Confession. Question 52 of the Catechism locates every believer, and by implication the true church, in circumstances of persecution throughout the present age:

Q. What comfort is it to thee that "Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead"?

A. That in all my sorrows and persecutions, with uplifted head I look for the very same person, who before offered himself for my sake, ... to come as judge from heaven: who shall cast all his and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall translate me with all his chosen ones to himself, into heavenly joys and glory.

Article 37 of the Belgic Confession does the same. It declares that the final judgment is

most desirable and comfortable to the righteous and elect: because then their full deliverance shall be perfected, and there they shall receive the fruits of their labor and trouble which they have borne. Their innocence shall be known to all, and they shall see the terrible vengeance which God shall execute on the wicked, who most cruelly persecuted, oppressed and tormented them in this world.

The article continues that it is only then, at Christ's return, that the faithful and elect will be crowned with glory and honor, all tears will be wiped from their eyes, and "their cause which is now condemned by many judges and magistrates, as heretical and impious, will then be known to be the cause of the Son of God."

Not only is there nothing in these articles about any hope of a "golden age," but also the articles plainly rule out the notion of an earthly kingdom of Christ in history.

The ungodly always dominate. The world's rulers always condemn the cause of the true church. The wicked always oppress the saints. The only hope of the church in the world, and their full deliverance, is the second coming of Christ and the final judgment.

This is Reformed doctrine.

Postmillennialism has no basis in the Reformed creeds. Postmillennialism conflicts with the Reformed creeds. Postmillennialism is condemned by the Reformed creeds,

explicitly by the Second Helvetic Confession of 1566, implicitly by the others.

### Perpetual War

As is true of all of the doctrines contained in the Reformed creeds, amillennialism is based on the plain teaching of the Bible.

The original promise of the gospel in Genesis 3:15 put enmity between the church and a wicked world that is spiritually descended from Satan: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed...." Enmity is war. In the war, the ungodly — Satan's spawn — do real, although not fatal, harm to the saints: "... thou shalt bruise his heel." This war with its sufferings for the people of God continues to the very end of time at Christ's return, for Romans 16:20 promises the apostolic church that "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Crushed principally at the cross, Satan is, nevertheless, not crushed finally until the Lord returns to cast him into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). In the meantime, he bruises the heel of Christ's body in the world without any letup.

Psalms 2 teaches that the kings of the earth foolishly set themselves against Jehovah and His Christ until the Christ breaks them with a rod of iron. Revelation 19:11ff. makes clear that the destruction of these raging foes with a rod of iron will occur at Jesus Christ's second coming. That Revelation 19:11ff. refers to the second coming is evident from the opening of heaven (v. 11) and from the fact that at that time Antichrist and his false prophet are cast into hell (v. 20). Until the personal return of Christ, the nations under the government of the kings of the earth make war against Him as He is present in His church by His Word.

The climax of this war against the seed of the woman by the seed of the Serpent will be the persecution of the church by the Antichrist.

This is future with regard to the church at the end of the 20th century. In Revelation 13, John prophesied the world-kingdom of the beast that would make war with the saints. In Revelation 19, the apostle tells us that this beast, with his false prophet, appears in history immediately before the second coming of Christ. At His coming, Christ casts the beast and the false prophet into the lake of fire (v. 20).

This is the clear, irrefutable teaching of II Thessalonians 2. That individual who is "that man of sin," "the son of perdition," and "that Wicked" will be on the scene when the Lord Jesus comes again, for the Lord will "consume (him) with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy (him) with the brightness of his coming" (v. 8). Inasmuch as he will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, and will claim to be God himself, he is Antichrist (v. 4). He will oppose Christ (who is the revelation of God), and he will present himself as Christ's vicar, or substitute. Opposing Christ, he will necessarily oppose Christ's church. This will be great tribulation for the church.

Reformed Christians may differ as to the identity of the Antichrist, whether he will be a certain pope of the Roman Catholic Church or a political figure who will have the backing of the false church headed by Rome. There may be no disagreement among us, that the Antichrist and his assault upon the church are future.

This view of the future is in harmony with the testimony of the Scriptures everywhere that persecution will be the lot of the believers always. "Blessed are ye," said Christ, "when men shall revile you, and persecute you . . . for my sake" (Matt. 5:11). "In the world ye shall have tribulation," He said to the church at His leaving (John 16:33). In every age, God's elect confess, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Rom. 8:36). In II Timothy 3, the apostle expressly de-

scribes the "last days," that is, the present age between Christ's ascension and His return, as the time in which "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (v. 12).

Scripture contradicts postmillennialism's dream of the earthly victory of the church in the future.

### The True Church Becomes Smaller

Leading up to the final, furious fight of Satan's minions under Satan's man against Christ's church is the great apostasy. This is a wholesale falling away from the truth by many who once confessed the faith. Either they truly confessed the faith in their forebears, or they insincerely confessed it personally.

The future is not bright with the prospect of mass conversions, much less the conversion to Christ of a majority of mankind, as is the dream of postmillennialism. On the contrary, the future is dark with the certainty of departure from Christ on the part of many who once professed Him. This is the clear, conclusive doctrine of the apostle in II Thessalonians 2:3: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed." The day of Christ, that is, the day of His personal, visible coming, is preceded by the sign of Antichrist. Antichrist is preceded and produced by apostasy. An outstanding sign of the end in the day of Christ is departure from the truth of the gospel. What this apostasy consists of and how it occurs are suggested in verses 9-12.

The falling away began already in the apostles' time as their struggle with legalism, gnosticism, and antinomism shows. It picked up intensity in the development of Roman Catholicism. Almost at once after the Reformation, Protestantism began to fall away in Arminianism, liberalism, and the mysticism represented today in the charismatic movement.

To those who have eyes to see

the biblical signs, the present condition of the churches manifests plainly the truth of Reformed amillennialism.

The tactic by which postmillennialism tries to escape the force of the biblical passages that forecast apostasy and persecution in the last days is both desperate and deadly dangerous. It consists of referring all of these passages to an event in the past. This event is the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. Whatever in the New Testament, and in the Old as well, predicts tribulation for the people of God has al-

ready been completely fulfilled. Nothing of this applies to the church any longer. Thus, huge chunks of Holy Scripture are made irrelevant to the church, including most of the book of Revelation.

Gary DeMar, who has boasted of postmillennialism's powerful exegesis, interprets II Thessalonians 2 in such a way that nothing in the chapter is future. The man of sin was a "contemporary" of the apostle Paul. The day of the Lord was the day of the destruction of Jerusalem. The apostasy was the falling away of the Jews after the ascension of

Christ. The coming of Christ was Jesus' coming in judgment upon Jerusalem (see DeMar, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church*, American Vision, 1994, pp. 311-350).

Fundamental to this twisting of the Word of God in the interests of the carnal kingdom is the postmillennial understanding of Matthew 24, Jesus' great eschatological discourse.

We look at this passage next time, God willing. □

— DJE

## Letters

### False Prophecies

My purpose in writing to you is to enclose a copy of an article on Harold Camping from a recent issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. You will find it interesting if you have not already received a copy. You may not have, inasmuch as

there is not a PRC in our area. You may wish to make a brief comment in a future issue of the *SB* regarding what was said in this article.

One additional comment. We have purchased a set of audio tapes put out by Ligonier Ministries on "Giants of the Christian Faith" by Dr. John Gerstner. They interpret

common grace vs. special grace as I feel you do. I would highly recommend them to you. You are not in a camp alone.

Thank you at this time for your attention to false prophecies and your comments on them □

Herman Dykstra  
Concord, CA

## The Reader Asks

### Pelted with Questions

We have been receiving the *Standard Bearer* for only two or three months (plus extra copies sent to us by the Evangelism Committee of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church). We eagerly anticipate the arrival of each month's issue; for we are learning a great deal from them. Your magazine has very encouraging, inspiring articles that cause us to think deeply about the Word of God. Thank you!

My husband and I are new to the Reformed faith. After we had studied the "5 points of Calvinism" for maybe two years, God introduced us to the full plan this past October, as He brought along ministry materials from the Protestant Reformed Churches and placed us in an Orthodox Presbyterian Church near where we are living. We love

it! We've never seen the Bible so clearly as we are now beginning to. The Reformed faith "makes sense"; the other parts of Christianity (fragmented with truth and non-truth) left large gaps in the Bible and in a godly life-style.

However, we are full of questions. We were wondering if someone there would mind fielding some questions that have arisen as we have read the *Standard Bearer*? Please forgive our ignorance; at times we really feel like "babes in arms." Thank God we are in His everlasting ones!

1. What does it mean (in a negative connotation) the "offering of the gospel"?

2. There seems to be controversy about something referred to as "common grace." Could you please enlighten us?

3. In your most recent edition, you warned against postmillennialism. Our pastor is amillennial; we understand much of the Reformed community is. We haven't had opportunity to discuss this with him yet (he is fielding so many other of our questions!) Could you please explain further: do the Protestant Reformed Churches stand in the amillennial position, or another? What exactly do these terms mean scripturally? (We used to be premillennial dispensationalists, and that went out the door when we joined the OPC.)

4. Finally, the PRC seem to have made a stand to sing only psalms put to music, rather than hymns. Please understand, we mean no disrespect, but does not Colossians say "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs..."? If you object to

the Arminian influence in some hymns, there are many that clearly (at least to our infant understanding) do proclaim the sovereignty of God (Isaac Watts' hymns, hymns by other Reformers, etc.). Are those allowed at home, or ever at church with PRC people? Can you please explain — scripturally — your stand?

We sincerely hope we are not pelting you with too much at a time. We so appreciate the hard labor of study in the Word and prayer that obviously accompany each issue of the *Standard Bearer*. Thank you for your time with our multitude of questions; and also in your faithfulness in proclaiming God's Word.

Mr. and Mrs. David Lee  
Mountain View, CA

#### Response:

1) The "well-meant offer of the gospel" is a teaching (and practice) found in Calvinistic circles that holds that God in the preaching of the gospel loves every single person who hears the preaching, that God sincerely desires to save every single person who hears the gospel, and that the preaching of the gospel is a gracious offer by God to every hearer to accept the salvation that God wants to give him or her.

The Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) reject this doctrine (and practice) as sheer Arminianism. Arminianism, or "free-willism," is the heresy condemned in the Reformed creed, the Canons of Dordt. It is the lie that Martin Luther fought in his great Reformation work, *The Bondage of the Will*.

The PRC believe that the church must preach the gospel to everybody, calling, or summoning, everybody to repent and believe on Jesus Christ, but that God is gracious in the preaching only to the elect, even as His desire with the preaching is the gathering of His elect church for whom Christ died (see Matt. 22:14; Rom. 9:13, 18).

We are sending you the pamphlet, "Jesus Savior and the Evil of

Hawking Him," by Herman Hoeksema. We recommend the book, *Hyper-Calvinism & the Call of the Gospel*, by David J. Engelsma, available from the Reformed Free Publishing Association (RFPA).

2) "Common grace" is the broader error of which the "well-meant offer" is one (main) element. The doctrine of "common grace" is the teaching that God has an attitude of favor, or love, toward every human (and devil?) throughout life and as long as history lasts and that, therefore, God blesses every human in several important ways. He gives the reprobate ungodly material gifts, e.g., health and riches, as tokens of His love for them. He works in each unregenerated unbeliever by His Spirit to keep him from being totally depraved and to enable him to perform good works. He works by His Spirit in the wicked world so that there is great wisdom and significant goodness in the world that crucified Jesus. Because of this "common grace" goodness and wisdom in the unbelieving world, the church today can and should learn from the unbelieving world. The church should learn that the Bible is a thoroughly human product of history and, therefore, not the inerrant Word of God, e.g., in Genesis 1-11. The church should learn from the world that the explanation of origins is evolution including the descent of man from primates. The church should learn that the wife is not in subjection to her husband in marriage and that women have every right to the offices in the church. The church should also learn from the "common grace" wisdom of the world that homosexuality is a perfectly innocent condition of some persons and that homosexual practice in committed relationships is pleasing to God.

The PRC judge the doctrine of "common grace" to be the denial of the biblical truth of total depravity, the bridge over the antithesis (the spiritual separation of church and world), and the despair of afflicted Christians (for if health is blessing

to the unbeliever, cancer is God's curse upon the godly).

We are sending you the pamphlets, "The Curse-Reward of the Wicked Well-Doer," by Herman Hoeksema, and "Grace Uncommon," by Barrett Gritters. We recommend the book, *Saved by Grace*, by Ron Cammenga and Ron Hanko, and the three-volume work by Herman Hoeksema on the Heidelberg Catechism, *The Triple Knowledge*. (These books are available from the RFPA.)

3) Perhaps the recent editorials in the *Standard Bearer* on postmillennialism are helpful to you in understanding the truth about the last days and, particularly, about what you and all other true believers must expect. Postmillennialism is the teaching that soon a majority of humans will be converted, the entire world will be "Christianized," and a very long period of earthly power, peace, and prosperity will be enjoyed by the church before Christ comes again. There will be no Antichrist and no persecution.

Amillennialism teaches that the "thousand years" of Revelation 20, like much of the book, is figurative. The earthly future for the true church consists of Antichrist (II Thess. 2; Rev. 12, 13) and great persecution.

The PRC are confessionally amillennial.

We are sending you the pamphlets, "The Millennium," "The Antichrist," and "The Mark of the Beast," by Herman Hoeksema, and the pamphlet, "The Antichrist," by Barrett Gritters. We recommend the commentary on Revelation, *Behold He Cometh*, by Herman Hoeksema. (The book is available from the RFPA.)

4) It is the official position of the PRC to sing only the Psalms in the worship of the churches. Thus, they maintain the official stand of the Reformed churches as expressed in Article 69 of the Church Order of Dordt: "In the churches only the 150 Psalms of David ... shall be sung."

Our reasons are the same as those that motivated Dordt. First, the Psalms are the one and only songbook given to the church for use in worship by the Holy Spirit in inspired Scripture. Second, the Psalms are God-centered. Third, although some hymns are sound, invariably the church's opening up of her worship to hymns results in the singing of sentimental, man-centered, "free-willist," and even frivolous hymns. Heresy has often been sung into the church before it was preached. What also happens is that the God-glorifying, profound Psalms are driven out of worship. Hymns drive

out the Psalms just as bad money drives out good.

We wince at your mention of Isaac Watts. Watts was a foe of exclusive Psalm-singing. He was also heretical in his doctrines of the Trinity, the person of Christ, the atonement, and total depravity.

PR people sing good hymns in their homes, schools, and various gatherings for fellowship, although even here we are (or should be) determined to give the Psalms pride of place.

We are sending you the pamphlets, "Psalm Singing," by Jason

Kortering, and "Music in the Church," by David J. Engelsma. The latter explains that the "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" of Colossians 3:16 refer to the Psalms only.

You have indeed "pelted" us with questions. But they are good questions about vital issues in the Reformed and Presbyterian churches today.

We are glad you wrote.

We rejoice with you over your conversion to the Reformed faith. Isn't it grand? □

— Ed. Comm.

*A Cloud Of Witnesses*

*Prof. Herman Hanko*

# Samuel Rutherford: Westminster Divine (1)

## Introduction

All students of church history are agreed that from the time of the apostles to today the history of the church of Christ has never seen two greater assemblies than the Synod of Dordt and the Westminster Assembly. It is a surprising thing that they were both held in the first half of the 17th century — indeed that they were held within 25 years of each other. The times must have been particularly important or dangerous for the church of Christ, for God to give to His people two assemblies such as the world has never known. It was a remarkable age.

While God blessed the Westminster Assembly with many great

men, one man is outstanding, and we choose to tell something of the Westminster Assembly by a sketch of this towering man of God, Samuel Rutherford.

## His early life and work

It is strange that more is known about the early life of other of the saints in the Middle Ages than there is about the early life of these men of God who were instrumental in the work of reformation in the church. But so it is also with Samuel Rutherford. His early life is lost in the mists of forgotten centuries.

He was born around 1600 in a small farming community near Nesbit, in the southern part of the lowlands of Scotland, in the presbytery of Judburgh. His parents were farmers and he was one of three sons. How spiritually minded and God-fearing the family was remains a mystery. There is

some reason to believe that Samuel did not receive much spiritual instruction and that his conversion took place at a later date. An old story, however, speaks of the fact that as a little boy he was barely saved from drowning in a well and that, in gratitude to God, his father dedicated Samuel to the service of Christ.

Even his early education is lost in the past. He probably received early training in an ancient abbey in Judburgh, and went on, at the age of 17, to the College of Edinburgh. Three years later he graduated with a Master of Arts degree, and was hired by the College in 1623 as Regent of Humanity. This post was about the lowest post one could hold in the faculty. The teacher was responsible for teaching Latin to the students who entered the College, for all the instruction was given in Latin and the student, quite obvi-

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ously, had to be thoroughly adept at Latin to gain an education.

There were four higher chairs of philosophy, and the professors in lower branches could apply for any of these four chairs when a vacancy occurred. And, at the first vacancy, four professors did apply, including Rutherford.

It is a measure of the emphasis placed on a classical education in those Reformation days that all four were required to talk for nearly an hour on a given Ode of Horace,<sup>1</sup> and the one most able to do this was chosen. Rutherford won without difficulty. He was on his way to being a classicist without genuine religion. But God's plans were different.

His tenure did not last long, for in 1625 he was asked to resign for what was apparently a moral misdemeanor. This quite effectively put a stop to all his aspirations and hopes for a career in Scotland's universities. That he carried the burden of this lapse with him is evident from what he later wrote to a young man:

The old ashes of the sins of my youth are new fire of sorrow to me . . . . The devil ... is much to be feared, ... for in youth he findeth dry sticks, and dry coals, and a hot hearth-stone; and how soon can he with his flint cast fire, and with his bellows blow it up, and fire the house!

This lapse and dismissal must have made a profound impression upon Rutherford, and it appears as if the Lord used this folly to bring him to true repentance and conversion. He resolved to enter the pastoral ministry, and set about studying for it in the University of Edinburgh.

#### Ministry in Anwoth

In 1627 he assumed the pastorate of a small farming parish in the beautiful area of Anwoth in the southwest part of Scotland, where he ministered to a few farm families

and a few nobility scattered throughout the area. John Welsh, a son-in-law of John Knox, had labored in this very parish up to 1600.

The story of John Welsh is itself a story of constant struggle between the faithful in Scotland and the Stuart kings. One incident, a kind of parenthesis in our story, will illustrate the whole matter. After Welsh had been imprisoned and later exiled to France, he was permitted to return to England. In 1621 his wife was admitted to the presence of James I. A chronicler of those days describes the interview.

The king asked her who her father had been, and she replied, "John Knox."

"Knox and Welsh!" he exclaimed; "the devil never made sic [such] a match as that!"

"It's right like, sir," she said, "for we never speired [asked] his advice."

He then asked how many of John Knox's children were still alive, and if they were lads or lasses. She told him that there were three, and that they were all lasses.

"God be thanked," cried the King, lifting up both his hands, "for if they had been three lads, I had never buiked [enjoyed] my three Kingdoms in peace."

She urged the King to let her husband return to Scotland and to give him his native air.

"Give him his native air!" said James; "give him the devil!"

But her wit flashed out with indignation as she rejoined: "Give that to your hungry courtiers!"

The King at last said that he could return if he would first submit to the Bishops. She lifted her apron, held it out, and made reply in her father's spirit: "Please Your Majesty, I'd rather keep his head there."<sup>2</sup>

Rutherford's ministry in Anwoth lasted nine years and was greatly blessed. His fame as a faithful preacher of the gospel spread, and people came from great distances to hear him preach. But his ministry was also filled with great sorrows. His wife died after a long and painful illness. His mother, who had

come to stay with him, also died in Anwoth. His two children were buried on the hillsides of Anwoth, and he himself was very ill for three months so that he had difficulty preaching even once on the Lord's Day.

Many visitors from the land passed through, especially travelers between Scotland and Ireland; for Stranraer, not far distant from Anwoth, was Scotland's nearest port of travel to Ireland. The renowned Bishop Ussher, Bishop of Dublin, Ireland, was present incognito at a worship service.<sup>3</sup>

#### Exile in Aberdeen

But Rutherford had yet greater sorrows to face. He was a bitter opponent of prelacy and of the Arminianism that almost always accompanied it. For a book he wrote against Arminianism he was summoned to be tried by the Court of High Commission in 1636. Found guilty, he was forbidden to preach or teach and was banished to Aberdeen in the Scottish Highlands and a city which was a stronghold of prelacy.

In this exile in Aberdeen he was shunned by the good citizens of the city who feared the wrath of the king and his minions. But he willingly bore this reproach as from Christ, and wrote to a friend: "That honour that I have prayed for these sixteen years, with submission to my Lord's will, my kind Lord hath now bestowed upon me, even to suffer for my royal and princely King Jesus." The two years spent here were not idle years, however; during that time he wrote hundreds of letters, sent to

<sup>1</sup> A Latin poet of the first century A.D.

<sup>2</sup> Marcus L. Loane, *Makers Of Puritan History*. Quoted from James Young, *Life of John Welsh*.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop Ussher was, though a prelate, a friend of Presbyterians in Ireland. He was the man famous for constructing the chronology which is still in use today in many circles.

all parts of the British Isles. These letters have been gathered into a single volume, and contain some of his best writings.

#### Professor at St. Andrews

After two years, with the resurgence of Presbyterianism in connection with the signing of the National League and Covenant, Rutherford felt free to leave Aberdeen and to return to his beloved congregation in Anwoth. But after being there for but a short time, he was assigned the chair of Divinity at St. Mary's College in St. Andrews. He strenuously resisted, for his heart was not in teaching but in the pastoral ministry. But he had no choice in the

matter. He consented to go only if he would be permitted to preach in St. Andrews in addition to his teaching responsibilities. He told the Commissioners: "There is woe to me if I preach not the gospel, and I know no one who can go between me and that woe." This permission was granted him and he moved to St. Andrews, an influential parish at the center of church life in Scotland.

Here he married again, Jean McMath, but this marriage also was filled with much grief. Although his wife outlived him, he lost his children through untimely deaths. The first two died while he was away in London attending the Westminster Assembly; only one of the five more

children given him lived. God, however, uses even a man's sorrow for the comfort of others. To one who lost a son he wrote: "Your Lord may gather His roses and shake His apples at what season of the year He pleaseth." And to another he wrote: "I know there is a true sorrow that is without tears; and I know there is a real sorrow that is beyond tears."

In St. Andrews Rutherford set about his new work with vigor and favor. He was to remain in this position the rest of his life, although he was to be of service throughout Scotland.

We will continue our story another time. □

*In His Fear*

*Rev. Arie denHartog*

## The Maker and Breaker of a Family's Peace

For some time now in our Young Adults' Society in Redlands we have been studying the book of Proverbs. In my preparations for these studies I am once again deeply impressed with the great wisdom this holy and inspired book of the Word of God contains. I shall use a passage that we recently studied to fulfill my obligation this month for this department in the *Standard Bearer*.

The book of Proverbs, as you probably know, has as its great theme, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The reason why this book contains such absolutely perfect wisdom, such wonder-

ful wisdom that is so very relevant for our everyday life, is that the wisdom of which the book of Proverbs speaks is the wisdom of God. It is not the wisdom of the men of this world, which in the final analysis is foolishness. In fact, the wisdom of the book of Proverbs stands absolutely opposite to the devilish and sensual "wisdom" of this world. Proverbs gives us true, heavenly, spiritual wisdom.

In the course of our study of Proverbs we have noted a number of subjects that appear over and over again in this book. The mere fact of the constant repetition of these subjects ought to give us great reason for pause. One of these subjects is warning against the great evil of covetousness and materialism.

The book of Proverbs is full of contrasts. One of the most power-

ful devices used in the book is that of contrasting or antithetic parallelism. The contrast in the passages before us is between the evil and foolishness of the love of money, and the great value and blessedness of the fear of the Lord and contentment therewith.

I have borrowed the title for this article, "The Maker and Breaker of a Family's Peace," as well as the particular collection of verses, from a chapter in William Arnot's commentary. The verses are taken from Proverbs 15:16, 17, 27; 17:1. "Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith." "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live." "Better is a dry morsel, and

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quietness therewith, than a house of sacrifices with strife." There are more, similar proverbs that could be added to this collection.

These proverbs speak to the covenant home, to the family. Two contrasting pictures are presented to us. On the one hand there is a picture of the humble cottage of a family where earthly provisions are meager. The meal in this home is of herbs. The family cannot afford to buy provision for a meal of meat and rich delicacy. This is a very poor home. All that there is to eat is a dry morsel. But this home is characterized by the fear of the Lord. The fruit of the fear of the Lord in this home is that love reigns there among the members of the family, the love of God in Christ Jesus. This love brings peace and true lasting joy and happiness.

The contrasting picture is that of a home where there is great riches. This home is a luxurious palace. The meals are rich, the table lavishly spread with abundance of food. But there is no fear of God in this home. In this home there is envy, jealousy, and all the attendant evils. The strife of this family finally destroys this home.

This contrast is real. It is seen in the world when one visits the home of the truly God-fearing, and the home where its members have forsaken the fear of the Lord. Another feature of the proverbs is that they are so strikingly, obviously, and undeniably true. So it is with the proverbs mentioned above. Yet the proverbs usually present an element that is contrary to the expectation of foolish men. Foolish sinful man imagines that the more that he has the more he will insure happiness and peace in his own life and in the life of his family. On the other hand he forgets that the fear of the Lord is essential to true happiness.

We must understand the contrast presented in Proverbs in the right way. It is not true that every poverty-stricken home will be one that has peace and unity and love. In fact, in the world we see that of-

ten the highest degree of strife, crime, and violence are found among the poor. The world does its studies and presents its statistics which show that poverty is one of the chief causes of juvenile delinquency, crime, and violence in our streets. The reasoning is that people who grow up in poverty become bitter and angry, and this drives them to crime. There is no doubt truth in the belief that a life of poverty in the world stirs up evil resentment and bitterness. The solution, according to the world, is welfare, raising the economic standards of the poor, or, more nobly, giving everyone equal opportunity to get a job to support himself. But the history of our own country proves that none of these ideas have worked. Poverty without the fear of God brings strife and wickedness. But riches without the fear of God also brings strife and wickedness.

The teaching of the above quoted proverbs is that where the fear of God is, God's people can and do live in peace and love even when there is little of this world's goods.

On the other hand, it is also true that not every home where there is wealth, good food, and expensive decor is devoid of the fear of the Lord. Generally the rule of the Lord in calling His people is that: "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and the things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and the things which are not, to bring to nought the things which are: that no flesh should glory in His presence" (I Cor. 1:27-29 — striking passage of God's Word!). Nevertheless there are some exceptions, as this passage itself indicates. Sometimes God also gives material riches to His people on earth. And some who

have these material riches continue in the fear of the Lord and enjoy the love and peace of God in their families.

But the above-mentioned proverbs are given to us to warn us. Striving after riches can lead to disastrous consequences when this is done at the expense of the fear of the Lord. There is in our sinful nature a strong desire to accumulate the wealth, the luxury of the world and the glory that is associated with it. We are tempted by the ungodly world in this, especially in our modern day through the power of the media and advertising. We easily imagine that we must have as much as or more than our ungodly neighbor.

The more riches that we obtain, the greater the temptations of sin become. This is true in the first

place because the lust for riches cannot be satisfied.

*... the lust  
for riches  
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be satisfied.*

Though we might imagine that if we could only attain to this or that standard of earthly wealth or be able to

purchase this or that new-fangled luxury then we would be happy, this will never happen. It will not happen with respect to those who are driven by covetousness and the love of money. Secondly, the greater wealth that we have, the more potential we have to sin. The possession of great wealth by the ungodly in this world is often accompanied by a very evil life-style. When a child of God attains to such wealth in the world, there is a great temptation to follow this life-style simply because he has enough money to do so. There is even the subtle temptation of the devil that says to a man that, because he has gained a certain wealth through his own hard labor, he has an inherent right to the life-style he can afford, without seriously thinking about his moral responsibility and calling before God first of all. In our drive to get more and more, how easy it is to neglect the fear of God and to compromise our calling to be a holy and separate people unto the Lord.

It is easy to begin to lose the right perspective in life, and to begin to live in such a way that we put the emphasis more and more on gaining wealth and less and less on growing in the fear of God. Going in that direction will lead to imagining that there is greater value in riches than there is in the reward of knowing the fearing God. This is of course a tragic mistake, for all the riches and glory in this world cannot begin to compare with the riches that belong to those who fear the Lord. Above all, the reason why the fear of the Lord is better than all the riches of this world is that God gives an eternal reward of glory and blessing to those who fear Him.

The people of the Lord are called to fear Him. This must be the main characteristic of the life of God's people in the world. The fear of God is knowing Him as the sovereign and holy God and walking humbly before Him, seeking in all things to do His commandments, to please Him, and to glorify Him. Those who fear God know how awful His holy displeasure and judgment are and how exceedingly blessed are His favor and lovingkindness. The Lord God Himself sovereignly works this fear in the hearts of His people through His Word and Spirit, and He calls them to continue in that fear. The fruit of walking in that fear is that His love is shed abroad in our hearts and we have peace with God. Having peace with God and the love of God in our hearts we can also live in peace and love with one another.

The reference of the proverbs quoted above is, as we said, especially to the covenant home. What can compare to the love and peace and joy of the home of the God-fearing? In this home parents teach their children the fear of the Lord, and children by the grace and Holy Spirit of God grow up in that fear. Such children will walk in obedience and love for their parents, and will themselves also learn the great benefit of the fear of the Lord. There is no greater joy for godly parents than to

see their children walking in the fear of the Lord. Of this truth the book of Proverbs also speaks over and over. There is no greater reward than this upon the faithful labors of parents with their children.

Proverbs 15:27 warns, however, that "he that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house." This is a word especially to fathers and the heads of families. This word is so contrary to the imagination of men. For the man of this world imagines that the more wealth he has the happier he will be. Often he is driven by this imagination also for his children. He will make his children happy by showering them with presents, all the latest sports equipment, electronic gadgetry, cars, and whatever else the rich of the world have. In father's busyness to do this he neglects to teach his children the fear of the Lord. With the absence of the fear of the Lord in the hearts of his children, material abundance only feeds every sinful passion born within his children. Contrary to this father's imagination, he only breeds into his children greed and lust and selfishness which soon are manifest in envy and strife and confusion in the home. In this way the father described above, rather than bringing happiness to his home, has greatly troubled his home. In many instances, children in the homes of fathers who are always lavishing presents on them grow up to despise their fathers and to live lives of unbridled lust, selfishness, and sin. You often see examples of this in the world.

The same course of action is followed by many women and mothers in our day, and, sad to say, too often even in our own churches. God gives them children and has given to them the special responsibility to be keepers of the home, to raise their children in the fear of the Lord. Instead they forsake their homes and God-given calling to pursue a career

in the world. They justify themselves by contending that their motivation is to be able to afford a more affluent life-style for their children. But by such a course of action these mothers will most certainly in the end trouble their own house. God's Word says this.

One of the greatest dangers for modern-day Christian homes is that parents become troublemakers of their own house because of a desire for material wealth. For most of us there is little danger that our children will not have enough to get them through life in this world. There is a far greater danger that they have too much and that they are not taught to use the material abundance of our age in the fear of the Lord.

One of the greatest spiritual lessons we should teach our children is that of contentment with what the Lord gives them, even if that be little. How hard it is in our age of material abundance to teach our children the grace of contentment.

Listen to the clear and powerful words of the above proverbs. "Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure with trouble therewith." "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife."

There is one other reason for the great urgency of listening to these proverbs. God's people in this world are called to make great sacrifices because of the principles of the fear of the Lord. Often they will need to suffer financial loss because they refuse in their business practices to compromise the law of God in any way in their life. Times will come for many that they will have to pass up lucrative job opportunities because taking these would require moving away from the true church or compromising the truth of God in another way. The temptations at that time will be very great. We are going to be faced with

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these kinds of scenarios more and more as the end approaches. We are living in the days of the rise of the Antichrist and in the time when those who refuse the mark of the beast will not be able to buy or sell anymore. We need to prepare our children for these times. Our children will have to be satisfied with less than the neighbors' children because mom and dad need to pay the

high cost of Christian school tuition and supporting the church budget. By doing this we as parents will be a concrete example to our children of the fear of God. Even if our families are reduced to only a dry morsel of bread (and that is really low), as long as we continue in the fear of the Lord we shall have greater riches than all the world. Financial sacri-

fices made out of the motive of the fear of God will not breed bitterness in our covenant children. We need not be afraid of that. Rather, by the grace and Spirit of God it will instill in our children the great benefit of the fear of God and the right evaluation of the things of this world. It will yield the Lord's blessing of peace and love in our homes. □

*Bring the Parchments*

*Prof. David Engelsma*

## Music in the Church\*

*"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."*

Colossians 3:16

Music has always been an important part of the worship of the church. Its place in the worship of the early church after the apostles comes out in the earliest description that we have of a Christian worship service. Speaking of the Christians, a contemporary observer wrote, "they are accustomed to come together on a fixed day, before dawn, and to speak with themselves mutually in a song to Christ, as it were to God." This dates from the reign of the Emperor Trajan, who ruled Rome from A.D. 98 to 117.

Nothing needs to be said to those familiar with the Old Testament about the place of music in Old Testament worship.

The book of Revelation teaches that the congregation of the redeemed will sing in the new world: "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne..." (Rev. 14:3).

Colossians 3:16 makes clear that music is to have a vital place in the worship of the church now, on earth. The reference is to the congregation of saints and their gatherings for worship. Verse 15 has reminded us that we are called to the peace of God "in one body." This body, this church, has its life, and it is vital that the Word of Christ dwell richly in the body. "You" is plural in the Greek, not singular — the reference is to all the members as they make up the congregation. "In you" means "among you." In keeping with this reference to the church, the apostle speaks of our teaching and admonishing each other. The singing, therefore, is the united singing of all the members, from their hearts (note again the plural) as a church. The Holy Spirit teaches and exhorts us as to music in the church.

### What We Are to Sing

It might seem that the text, as well as the similar Scripture in Ephesians 5:19, overthrows one of our cherished positions as Protestant Reformed Churches regarding music in the church, namely, that only Psalms be sung, to the exclusion of hymns. Does not the apostle mention Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs? Our position is expressed in

Article 69 of the Church Order of Dordt: "In the churches only the 150 Psalms of David, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Twelve Articles of Faith, and Songs of Mary, Zacharias, and Simeon, the Morning and Evening Hymns, and the Hymn of Prayer before the sermon shall be sung." Our stand today is the historic, traditional Reformed position — that of Calvin; of the Synod of Dordt; and of the Reformed churches generally, until recently, when the Reformed churches have been amusing themselves by abandoning the Reformed tradition wholesale. The exceptions to the Psalms mentioned in Article 69 (some of which are quite unknown to most of us) find their place there through curious, historical circumstances: the popular Dutch songbook of the time of the Synod of Dordt contained also these hymns; rather than to disturb the people, Dordt made allowance for these hymns. But the spirit and principle of Article 69 is: "In the churches only the 150 Psalms of David shall be sung." Period!

This stand on Psalm-singing

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\* reprinted from *Beacon Lights*, Feb., March, and April, 1983.

does not depend only on a few New Testament texts about singing, the interpretation of which is disputed; but it is based also on an important biblical truth about the worship of God, namely, that we may not worship God as we see fit ("will-worship"), but only in the manner which He prescribes in His Word. This is called "the regulative principle of worship." It is laid down in the second commandment of the Law, as the Heidelberg Catechism explains in Q. 96: "What doth God require in the second commandment? That we in no wise represent God by images, nor worship him in any other way than he has commanded in his word." Apart now from the "hymn question," this regulative principle of worship — obedience to the second commandment! — is well-nigh lost sight of in Reformed churches today. The ruling question for worship is not, "Does God command this particular aspect of worship in the Scriptures?" But the controlling question is, "Do we think that this would be a nice liturgical innovation? Does this or that move us emotionally (for a month or two)? Will this be popular to draw our unspiritual young people to the evening service?" Altogether apart from the preaching of false doctrine, or the absence of preaching, as becomes more and more common in the second service, blasphemy is regularly done in the worship of the churches. Strange fire is offered up to the Holy Father on the altar of the worship of the church.

God will be worshiped as He prescribes in His Word, and no otherwise. This extends to our music. The music with which we praise God at church must be His Word. Just as we preach His Word and pray His Word, so are we to sing His Word. Now God has given the church one, inspired songbook: the Psalms.

But even if the issue of exclusive Psalm-singing versus the singing also of hymns were to be decided on the basis of Colossians 3:16 alone, the churches would sing only the Psalms. "Psalms and hymns and

spiritual songs" are not three different kinds of songs: the inspired Psalms of David; uninspired hymns based on the New Testament; and uninspired spiritual songs treating of various religious themes. Rather, they are all the inspired Psalms of the Old Testament. The inspired Psalms are of two different kinds: hymns and spiritual songs. "Hymns" are the Psalms that explicitly praise God, e.g., Psalm 150 ("Hallelujah! Hallelujah! In His temple God be praised"). "Spiritual songs" are the Psalms which deal with other aspects of the believer's life and experience, e.g., repentance (Psalm 51: "God be merciful to me") and the duty to obey God's Law (Psalm 119: "How I love Thy law, O Lord!").

The proof of this, namely, that "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" in Colossians 3:16 are all Psalms, is immediately plain to all: the church of Paul's day, specifically the congregation at Colosse, Asia Minor, had no other songs than the Psalms! She had no "hymns" in the sense in which we are accustomed to speak of hymns today, referring to such songs as "Glory be to the Father," or "Rock of Ages." Besides, the meaning of the Greek word "hymn" is "song of praise to God." Elsewhere in the New Testament, the word "hymn" is clearly used to refer to a Psalm which consists of the praise of God. Such an instance is Matthew 26:30: "And when they had sung an hymn, they went into the mount of Olives." The reference is certainly to the Psalms; undoubtedly the reference is to Psalms 113-118, the "Great Hallel" (Song of Praise to Jehovah), which the Israelites customarily sang on the occasion of the Passover. In addition, in the Greek Old Testament used by the apostles, the Septuagint, the Psalms were exactly labeled, "Psalms and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs."

When we sing the Psalms, the

Word of Christ is dwelling among us in our music. The Word of Christ is the Word *about* Christ — His Godhead; His humiliation; His redemption; His salvation; His glory. It is also the Word that Christ Himself speaks. This Word, and this Word only, is to dwell in the church, for she is the body of which He is the Head.

The Psalms are this Word of Christ. They are inspired; they are part of the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament that was "breathed forth of God" (II Tim. 3:16). The Holy Spirit spoke them; David and the other writers were only instruments (Acts 1:16). Remember, they are the inspired Word of Christ, expressly for the purpose of being the songs of the church.

Also, they are *about* Christ. All of the Psalms are "Messianic." This is Jesus' own analysis of them in Luke 24:44: "... all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."

This is questioned by some.

The alleged lack of references in the Psalms to Christ and His saving works is one of the main reasons why some suppose that we should also have hymns in our song books of worship.

They find *The Psalter* deficient especially for the Christian holidays, Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost. This is a mistake.

We may take Christmas as an example. We may truthfully assert that the Psalms are *rich* with the gospel of the Coming of the Christ — His Coming from God; His Coming as man; His Coming in lowliness; His Coming for the redemption of sinners; and the like. We may assert further that many of the popular Christmas hymns not only lack the solid, biblical truth about the birth of Christ that characterizes *The Psalter*, but also are empty and even frivolous. "Silent Night, Holy Night" (which I would not classify

*When we sing  
the Psalms,  
the Word  
of Christ  
is dwelling  
among us  
in our music.*

as frivolous, or empty) certainly cannot stand comparison with numbers 3 and 4 in *The Psalter* (based on Psalm 2), or with number 243 (based on Psalm 89).

It is exactly the worth of the Psalms that they are Christ's own Word about Himself. They are not a religious man's words about man's religious feelings, problems, and aspirations, but they are Christ's Word about Christ. Since Christ is the revelation of Jehovah God, the Psalms are God-centered and God-glorifying. Just for this reason they do justice to the hopes and fears, the struggles and victories, the sins and salvation, the shame and glory of the man, or woman, of God. There is a depth, a profundity, a reality about the Psalms that is commonly missing from even the better hymns. This, not only when the Psalms are talking about Jehovah, but also when they are talking about *man*. As you sing them, you say to yourself, "Yes, *this* is my sin; *this* is my fear and doubt; *this* is my feeling; *this* is my only salvation; *this* is my hope," and the like. For the Psalms know man in relationship to God, whether in covenant friendship or in covenant-violating rebellion, and this is really man.

Today there is a noticeable conversion to the singing of the Psalms by those whose tradition was not that of Psalms-singing or whose tradition has moved away from the singing of Psalms. They recognize the unique worth of the Psalms in the singing of the church, as well as the weakening of the church by many hymns. *The Biblical Educator* of January, 1980 points to the worth of the Psalms:

The reason Christian kids so often go for "rock" music is that their musical taste is completely unformed. The violence in today's music is but the reverse side of the sentimental, goopy, syrupy, popular music of a previous generation. "Champagne music" leads to "marijuana music." Too many gospel songs are nothing but sentimental goop, and children brought up

on these are starved for music with some real meat in it. They find such "strong" music in "rock." It would be better if they had been brought up on strong Christian music, such as the psalms.

Writing in *The Banner of Truth*, October, 1982, J.R. deWitt states:

I have an idea that the superficiality of much evangelical Christianity in our day may be traceable to a long neglect of the Psalter as an instrument in public praise. When one lives with the Psalms, those wonderful worship poems of Scripture, with all their marvelous variegation, displaying as they do the whole range of the emotions, aspirations, and wrestlings of faith, tend to become formative for one's experience of spiritual reality. On the other hand, when one turns from the Psalms to merely human expressions of religious sentiment, one immediately runs the danger of descending to another level of religious feeling, a level not nearly so much shaped by the Word of God itself.

We ought to appreciate our heritage. We ought to know and understand it, first of all, but then we should appreciate it. We should not be embarrassed by our liturgy, particularly our singing Psalms at church; we should not grumble about it. We should be thankful for it and exploit it. We carry on a long and honorable tradition; we represent the historic Reformed position here. But above all, our heritage and worship are biblical.

### Our Singing

"Singing," the Holy Spirit says, with reference to our teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The body of Christ is to be a singing body in her assemblies for worship. The gift of song has unique power, not only to move the people of God but also to serve as the vehicle to ex-

press most fervently our love, thanks, and praise to God our Savior. Accordingly, singing has a vital place in the worship of the congregation. God wills congregational singing.

Our exclusion of choirs and soloists ("special music") from the worship services is based on the revealed will of God that in His worship the congregation — all the members as one body — is to sing His praise. It is not His will that most of the congregation be entertained, or even edified, by a few, but that the whole church praise Him in song. Inevitably, choirs and special numbers in the services not only infringe on the preaching, but also weaken congregational singing. The musical power and beauty of a church choir, but good congregational singing.

Like the exclusive singing of Psalms in the worship services, the excluding of choirs and special music from the service for divine worship is the historic, traditional Reformed stand. John Calvin banned choirs from the Reformed, biblically-based worship. He was disgusted with the entertainment that cluttered up the services of Roman Catholicism:

Similarly in these days, in the popedom, the organs are piping on one side, and there is chanting in four parts on the other side, and there is such a lot of foolery, that the simple people are ravished by it, but never a whit edified (*Sermons on Ephesians*).

We should not hang our heads in shame when visitors to our services exclaim in amazement, "You have no choir!" We have every right spiritedly to defend this exclusion of a choir and to point to our emphasis on congregational singing as Reformed and biblical.

A contemporary Presbyterian

student of liturgy (the form of worship) has noted that the introduction of choirs tends to "suppress congregational participation":

Even in churches with no tendency to sacerdotalism, the use of robed choirs in chancels (the part of the church building containing seats for the clergy and the choir — DJE) tends to approximate the worship service to a concert of sacred music, and works against congregational worship. Perhaps the most unfortunate legacy of the Anglo-Catholic movement to the Reformed churches generally has been this epidemic of chancels and theatrical choirs (James Hastings Nichols, *Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition*).

The call to sing is not limited to the worship services, but extends to other areas of the life of the saints. We do well to sing at our society meetings for the study of Holy Scripture. We should sing more often than we do when we come together for Christian fellowship — our Sunday evening visits. We ought to sing in our homes, as part of our family-worship. Parents must teach their children the Psalms and the great, good hymns of the New Testament church in this way. Our Christian

schools, likewise, must be full of music, especially the praise of God in song. We owe our schools a great debt that they teach *The Psalter* to our children. They may also teach them good hymns, although even in the schools the Psalms should have pride of place. We certainly must not have bad hymns in the schools, i.e., hymns that are doctrinally erroneous and spiritually misleading, much less "gospel-rock" and the like corruption.

Singing is to be part of our personal life. "Is any merry?" asks James; "let him sing psalms" (Jam. 5:13). In your home, as you travel, on the job (if permitted), it should not be an unheard-of thing, that you break out in song — not turn the radio on, but yourself sing; not sing the latest "hit-song," but sing Psalms. If now some young person sneers at this, or raises his eyes heavenward in exasperation at such piety, let him ask himself whether he has any of the merriment of eternal life, worked in his heart by the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ the Lord, at all!

As part of the broader life of a congregation than its services for divine worship, a choral society (or choir) has its rightful, valuable place.

Those specially gifted musically can exercise their gift. The rest of the saints can be edified by the singing of the choral society. That God forbids this as part of the worship service does not imply that there is no place for this at all. We are not always singing ourselves; there are times when we take pleasure in listening to the singing of others.

What better way is there to spend an hour or so a week than singing, with a view to giving an edifying, pleasing program for others! What more worthwhile, enjoyable way to spend an evening once in awhile than hearing a good program of music! It is especially beneficial that the young people participate in the choral society. We warn them against bad music. Sharp and frequent as our warning is, it is not sharp and frequent enough. The temptation is strong. The bad music is rotten. They are still listening to it. But with the warning, we should give them opportunity and encouragement to fill the strong need for music with good music. The choirs and bands at school and the choral society of the church do this.

Let there be music in the church!



## Apples of Gold

### Do I Live For Him?

Do I begin each day anew  
In prayer to God above?  
To seek His guidance through the day,  
To praise Him for His love?

Do I awake with songs of joy  
For having such a Friend;  
Who, though all others may forsake,  
Will keep me to the end?

Do I arise and go about  
My daily tasks to do  
Content to know that I am His  
And He will see me through?

Oh, may I live so close to Him  
And trust His tender care;  
That each new day may bring me joy  
In knowing He is there.

My task will be a lighter one  
My path a brighter way,  
Till life's long journey ended  
Then dawns Eternal Day.

Annetta Jansen  
Dorr, Michigan

# A Timely Warning

Very plainly we are approaching the end of this present world. Our God informs us of this fact through the apostle John. For in I John 2:18 we read: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last time."

We do well, in the first place, to take note of the fact that the name Antichrist literally means "against Christ." Very clearly we are in the day when, in the church world, there is much teaching and defense of the lie concerning what Scripture teaches us in regard to Christ Jesus, our Savior. And the sad thing today is that, in the church world, there are false doctrines and practices that separate churches and lead church members away from the truth concerning Christ and what actually is Christianity.

Today we are in the last part of that period of time of which the apostle John wrote. In II Thessalonians 2:1-4 the work of the coming Antichrist is clearly revealed in false doctrines and evil practices which we are by the Antichrist called to defend and maintain.

In that passage we read: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as

that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

Take note then of the fact that antichrists were there already, and that the way was certainly being prepared for the coming of the worldwide Antichrist, who would make life very miserable for us, the children of God.

In Revelation 13:7 we read of the Antichrist making war with the saints, and of overwhelming them, that is, overcoming them physically. What is more, the final Antichrist will come and have power over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. He will be *the Antichrist*. And we have a timely warning that his day is coming, and that physical torment will be upon us, upon all the elect children of God who are living on earth in that day.

But the comfort for us is that what lies ahead is what God promises us, as the work of His grace in Christ. He will keep us faithful, and cause us to refuse to serve that Antichrist, who will rule over all the nations of this world. In Matthew 27:1 we read that "the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death." And in that passage of Revelation 13 we find the Antichrist "doing great wonders" and deceiving "them that dwell on the earth, by means of the miracles." We read in the verses following that the Anti-

christ will prevent both small and great, rich men and poor "to buy and sell" if they receive not his mark on their right hand or forehead. A very, very rough time lies ahead for the believers. How soon this will happen we do not know. But by God's grace we do believe His Word, and are sure that our calling is to heed His timely warning.

We are not there yet; the true church does not have that cruel treatment upon it. But we must be careful, lest we begin to look for what Satan wants, rather than for what God calls us to do. We do well to consider that glorious truth of our God that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8:28). We must take God's warning with the confidence that His promise to His elect will be fulfilled in every small detail, on the basis of what His Son did for us, through His cross and death. He is our Savior, and He is working for our complete salvation from Satan and sin.

How appealing it is, for our sinful flesh, not to be Christians, but to be antichristians. Satan has turned us away from God, and from His love which sent Christ to us as His Son, to save us from the guilt of our sin. But what counts is what God gives us, not what friends and relatives give us. We read in Psalm 139:14: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." Similarly, we read in Psalm 23:1 "The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want." This is so because He restoreth our souls, leading us beside the still waters, thereby restoring our souls, leading us on the paths

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of righteousness, for His name's sake. God leads us on the paths of righteousness, and causes goodness and mercy to follow us all the days of our lives.

It will be a long time before we again come to what we call Christmas. But we do well to hold on tightly to the truth of Scripture wherein we are in God's mercy and grace warned of the coming of that universal antichrist. We have a calling to walk and work as Christians, and to look forward to the next Christmas from a spiritual point of view, in order to enjoy the work of God's grace upon us. He gave us a blessed Savior, and causes us to begin to walk in love towards Him, as our God and Savior.

Let us remember that Christ's birth and His cross really count. They give us divinely promised blessings. Therefore, in His grace our God warns us of Satan and his lies, which are presented in all the

antichristian doctrines that are in the world today. Just look up Genesis 3:1-5. Satan does this today through the doctrine of Arminianism, which presents the lie that man has power to let God save him, and that God is disappointed and kept from what He wants, when man does not do His will.

Look up Romans 9:16, where we read: "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy." God does not depend upon our will; and, being born spiritually dead, we cannot want salvation until God has begun it in us. God does not depend upon man for natural things. Nor does He depend on man for spiritual activities. We do not make Him our Savior. He causes us to want salvation. And He gives it to us. God decided eternally whom He will save.

God warns us, not in order to get us to decide whether we will do

what He wants. He warns us in order to cause us to want salvation. "All that I am I owe to Thee, Thy wisdom, Lord, hath fashioned me." This is based on Psalm 139:14. There we read this important truth: "I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well."

We want salvation because God has already begun it in us. An important part of our salvation is that we want it; and that is God's gift to us. As God said to Satan in Genesis 3:15, He will put enmity in His elect against Satan and sin. And let us, by God's grace, take hold of that important truth, and heed His warning to us day after day, and time after time. He saves us. We do not save Him from leaving us in sin. God saves us from our love of sin, and causes us to be thankful for His salvation. □

*Things Which Must Shortly Come to Pass*

*Prof. David Engelsma*

## 7. The Beast from the Sea

Of what does the Antichrist actually consist? How will the antichristian power be realized at the end? What concretely must the church expect and what will she be confronted with, in Antichrist, in the future?

For the answer to these questions, we turn to Revelation 13:1-10. Because space is limited and because I will be quoting parts of the passage as I go along, I will not quote the passage here. The reader is asked to read the entire 13th chapter of Revelation carefully, as well as the closely related 12th chapter.

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The 13th chapter of Revelation must be viewed in the light of chapter 12. Chapter 12 tells of a great red dragon, identified in verse 9 as "the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." According to verses 4, 5, the dragon desired to devour the man child of a certain woman. The woman is the Old Testament people of God, regarded as the *church* in the old dispensation, and her man child is Jesus the Christ. This describes the Devil's purpose and activity throughout the old dispensation.

When that child ascends to God (v. 5), the Devil is cast out of heaven into the earth (vv. 7-9). He is enraged because of the victory of the child (v. 12). He knows that he has

only a short time before the child's victory is perfected and before he is totally destroyed. In his great wrath, he persecutes the woman, the church, and makes war with the remnant of her seed, "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (vv. 13-17). That is, he hates and tries to destroy the church and the saints.

In this connection, chapter 13 records the appearance of a beast rising up out of the sea. This beast is the product of the dragon of chapter 12, the culmination of the dragon's wrathful campaign against the church, the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Out of the sea arises a beast, a wild animal. Its appearance is that of a leopard, or panther, with the exception that its feet are those of a bear, and its mouth, the mouth of a lion. The beast, therefore, is a fearful monster, savage and threatening in the extreme. It combines the cunning and agility of the leopard with the tearing, powerful paws of the bear and the devouring mouth and fangs of the lion.

The beast has seven heads and ten horns. Immediately, this reminds us of the red dragon himself, who in chapter 12, verse 3, appears as having seven heads and ten horns. This is the *Devil's* creature! The heads of the beast are full of names of blasphemy. One of the heads is peculiar in that it shows that it was once dealt a death-blow, which, however, has been healed.

Having risen, the beast is worshiped by the whole world. It utters blasphemies against God, and it makes war with the saints and overcomes them.

The same beast is referred to also in Revelation 17. There it is described as scarlet in color and as carrying a woman who is called the great whore. Verse 8 says that the *origin* of the beast is the abyss and that the *end* of it is perdition, i.e., it comes out of hell and goes into hell.

#### The Beasts of Daniel 7

John's vision of the beast is similar to the vision of the prophet Daniel in Daniel 7. The apostle's vision in Revelation 13 is based on the prophet's vision. Both of them concern the same truth of the Antichrist in the last days. In Daniel 7, the prophet saw *four* beasts arising from the sea, one after the other. The first was like a lion; the second was like a bear; the third was like a panther; and the fourth was so terrible and dreadful that no known animal could represent it. It becomes clear that the beast of John's vision is a composite of the four beasts of Daniel, i.e., the beast of John is nothing other than all four beasts of Daniel rolled into one.

Especially the fourth beast receives attention in Daniel 7. It is most terrible, strong, and destructive. It has ten horns. Among the ten horns, there grows up an eleventh horn. This little horn has a man's eyes and a mouth speaking great, boastful things. After it grows up, the little horn makes war with the saints and prevails; speaks against God; and exalts itself to such an extent that it attempts to dethrone God, endeavoring to change times and laws.

There are definite, unmistakable similarities between the fourth beast of Daniel 7, especially as it expresses itself in the little horn, and John's beast out of the sea. Both have ten horns. Both fight against and overcome the saints and blaspheme God. There is even distinct similarity as regards the time during which they make war with the saints. Daniel 7:25 says that the saints are given into the hand of the little horn "until a time and times and the dividing of time," i.e., one time, two times, and one half of one time. Revelation 13:5 states that power was given (to the beast) to continue 42 months. Forty-two months is three and a half years, i.e., as to the idea, not necessarily the actual time, one year, two years, and a half a year, corresponding to the time, times, and half a time of Daniel.

The explanation of these similarities is simply that the beast of Revelation 13 is the fourth beast of Daniel 7, particularly as the fourth beast develops itself finally in the little horn.

#### Antichrist, a World-Power

But what does that little horn of the fourth beast represent? What is the beast out of the sea?

It is Antichrist. In Daniel 7 and Revelation 13, God reveals that Antichrist will be a political entity, a world-government. The origin of the beast is the sea. In Scripture, the tossing, restless sea represents the nations of the world, always in turmoil. In the end, the result of centuries of global tensions and con-

flicts will be a world-government. That the beast is a political reality, a kingdom, is evident in his appearance. He has horns and crowns. Horns in Scripture represent ruling power, and crowns are tokens of authority, of kingship. The ten horns and crowns indicate a fullness of political power. In addition Revelation 13:2 expressly says that the beast has power and a throne and great authority. In fact, verse 7 states that he has power over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. He exercises this power also, for the last part of the chapter informs us that the beast controls everything — trade and labor; art, religion, and education; the life and death of every man. If any question remains, the fact that Daniel 7 calls the four beasts four kings and the fact that Revelation 17 identifies the beast from the sea as a king settle it. The beast is a great kingdom under a mighty king.

It is an absolutely *universal* world-power. All the world wondered after the beast, we read in verse 3. It has power over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, according to verse 7. Verse 8 says that all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, i.e., all those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. Every nation is under the sway of the beast. The dream of many of a one-world government is going to be realized in the future.

A striking feature of the beast is that it does not subjugate the nations of the world by sheer force, but that the peoples of the world willingly submit to it and ally themselves with it. It differs in this respect from other world-powers that have preceded it in history. There have been other nations that dominated almost all the world and established world-empires, e.g., the Greco-Macedonian empire under Alexander the Great and the Roman empire, but they advanced by conquest. It is different with the beast from the sea. It is true that it possesses and shows tremendous power, for all the world asks, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to

make war with him?" But apart from this power, military power, if you will, he manifests a certain innate authority, a wonderful charisma, which is freely acknowledged by all nations. All the world *wonders* at the beast, stands in awe of it. All the world worships the beast. Because of the marvelous intrinsic authority of the beast, all the nations willingly align themselves with the beast and submit to it.

Revelation speaks of this more fully. It teaches that, in the end, a mighty nation with a powerful leader will arise. Then, ten other kingdoms, represented in Revelation 13 by the ten horns on the beast's head, will with one mind give their power and strength to the beast, so that the beast will stand astride the earth like a colossus.

### Culmination of Attempts of World-Dominion

Another significant aspect of this coming world-power is that it embodies the other great world-powers that have preceded it in history. This is brought out in two ways. First, the beast of Revelation 13 has the characteristics of a leopard, a bear, and a lion, i.e., as we noted before, although the beast of Revelation 13 is the final development of the fourth beast of Daniel's vision, it somehow also incorporates the other three beasts of Daniel 7. The four beasts of Daniel 7 are four great world-kingdoms: in order, the Babylonian empire (headed by Nebuchadnezzar), the kingdom of the Medes and Persians (of which Cyrus was the outstanding ruler), the kingdom of the Greeks and Macedonians (under Alexander the Great), and the Roman empire, the fourth beast. The beast of Revelation 13 is the final development of the old Roman empire yet in the future, but it definitely takes up into itself the other great kingdoms.

This is also the meaning of the

*Terrible times  
are ahead  
for those  
who bow  
their knee  
to the living God  
and pray,  
"Thine is  
the kingdom  
and the power  
and the glory  
forever."*

seven heads of the beast. Revelation 17 explains these heads as seven kings, i.e., kingdoms, five of which had already fallen at the time of the writing of the book of Revelation (about A.D. 95), one of which was then existing, and the last of which had still to come. The great kingdom that existed at the time of the writing of Revelation was the Roman empire. It was this kingdom, in fact, which was persecuting the church at that time and which had exiled the apostle John to the island of Patmos. The kingdom that was yet to come, the seventh head of the beast, was the kingdom of Antichrist itself. The five kingdoms that had already fallen by the time of the apostles were, going back in order from the time of the apostles, the kingdom of the Greeks and Macedonians; the kingdom of the Medes and Persians; the Babylonian kingdom; the Assyrian kingdom; and the kingdom of Babel, headed by Nimrod at the time of the building of the tower of Babel. All these were great kingdoms that attempted world-dominion and that were more or less successful. They are all heads of the beast. The Spirit teaches us by this that the great kingdom of Antichrist, when it comes, stands related to all these former empires, that it is the goal that they all strove for, that it is the fruition of their efforts, and that, in it, the essence of them all is still to be found. Always through history, the kingdom of Antichrist has been coming (see "The Coming of Antichrist," in the February 1 issue of the SB).

### The Wounded Head

It is in this connection that we must consider the statement in Revelation 13:3 that one of the heads of the beast was "wounded to death," but "his deadly wound was healed." If each head is taken as a manifestation of the beast in history, as an

attempt to establish the kingdom of Antichrist, it is not difficult to understand this. The healed death wound must refer to the division of peoples by God at Babel, as recorded in Genesis 11. Soon after the flood, under the mighty Nimrod, there was an attempt at a world-kingdom. But God frustrated the effort by confounding their language. At that time, God divided the human race into the different nations by giving the different groups their own peculiar language and, no doubt, their own color and other racial, national characteristics. Thus God scattered the peoples and separated them. Down through history, that tremendous blow to man's aspiration for a one-world government has stymied all efforts to realize the kingdom of Antichrist. But at the end, the death-blow will be healed. The nations will again be able to communicate with each other, will seek each other, and will actually unite under the headship of Antichrist.

### Beast

We are seeing this take place today. The nations are talking to each other, and they are talking peace. The sea of the nations of the world is swept by winds of economic interdependence, mutual fear of war, and, not least, a common hatred for God and His Christ and a common love of man.

Out of it will come the beast. And it will be a *beast!* Not, of course, in the opinion of the ungodly world which will acclaim it as utopia, as heaven on earth, but in the judgment of the people of God, who see it as it really is. For it will have the spiritual character of the dragon. It is the dragon that gives it its power and throne and authority, according to verse 2. It is a beast in its relation to God. It is full of pride and full of hatred for God. It demands to be worshiped as God. It hates God and raves against him. Verse 1 tells us that it has names of blasphemy on its heads. These names show what the beast essentially is: nothing but a monstrous

blasphemy. As it is, so does it behave: it blasphemes God, His Name (i.e., Jesus Christ), and His tabernacle (v. 6). It is, therefore, also a beast in its relation to the church. It makes war with the saints and overcomes them. As we will see later, the antichristian world-power inaugurates the great tribulation.

The beast is the kingdom of Satan in the world. Satan is its builder and maker, its power, and its spiritual head. Throughout history, Satan has worked at this: against the kingdom of God, to rear up his kingdom. Time and again, he failed. In the end, he will be successful. There will be an empire that manifests Satan's life and principles, that redounds to Satan's praise, and that fulfills his lust for an absolute reign

over mankind and over God's creation. For a little while Satan will crow, "I am God; I rule all; mine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." Indeed, for a time, times, and half a time, it seems so, also to the people of God.

This is the earthly future. Terrible times are ahead for those who bow their knee to the living God and pray, "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever."

Since the kingdom of the beast is essentially spiritual, the Devil's "No" to the kingdom of God, we citizens of God's kingdom must oppose it in a spiritual manner. We do not try to prevent it or overthrow it by political shenanigans or by force of arms. We resist it, as the saints

have ever done, by faith in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Out of this faith comes patience, patience to endure the fearful things that are seen, while we look at the things which are not seen.

Nor are we afraid. Our names are written in the book of life (Rev. 13:8). The saints will do valiantly (Dan. 11:32). The martyrs at once live and reign with Christ (Rev. 20:4, 6). To suffer for Christ is a precious gift to us (Phil. 1:29). And the beast is ordained to defeat and destruction: he must be killed and shall go into everlasting captivity (Rev. 13:10).

The Ancient of Days has given the kingdom to Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is Lord. □

## Book Reviews

*The Guilt, Folly, and Sources of Suicide*, by Samuel Miller. Dallas, Texas: Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1994. 56pp. \$3.50 (paper). [Reviewed by the Editor.]

This reprint of two published sermons on the subject of suicide by the Presbyterian theologian Samuel Miller is timely. Not only is our country presently moving toward societal approval and legal sanction of suicide, but also preachers fail to warn sharply against the sin of suicide. Some exert themselves to find excuses for the suicide and go out of their way to offer false comfort to grieving relatives. The serious effect is that those, particularly the young people in the congregation, who may be struggling with this temptation to kill themselves, do not hear the Word of God forbidding this way of escape from misery. Indeed, they are left with the impression that this way is a possibility as far as the church is concerned. Such preachers may well ask themselves whether the blood of the suicide will not be required at their hands, as God warned the prophet-watchman in Ezekiel 3:16ff.

Miller was of a different stamp.

He was of a different stamp because he was determined to speak biblically on the wickedness of self-murder. From Scripture he pointed out that suicide is sin against God and sin against the neighbor. Suicide is "generally prompted by the most sordid and unworthy selfishness" (p. 18).

The despicable motives of suicide are uncovered. Among them are drunkenness and gambling.

Intriguing is Miller's admonition to the state to discountenance and discourage suicide by appropriate penalties (pp. 52, 53).

Miller's answer to the question, "Can we entertain no hope of the final salvation of one who destroys his own life?" although reasoned, is not hopeful:

It is possible that a child of God may be so far under the power of mental derangement, as to rush unbidden into the presence of his Father. . . . But it may be questioned, on very solid ground, whether a real Christian, in the exercise of his reason, ever became his own executioner (p. 27).

We are told that it is especially the youth who commit suicide.

Miller addressed these published sermons "to the young persons under the author's pastoral care." He concluded the publication with the exhortation, "My young friends! this subject is entitled to your particular regard."

This is a booklet that parents should put in the hands of their teenage children. Our young people's societies could profitably make it their study.

The conclusion is positive:

Take refuge, then, in the grace of the gospel.... Instead of flying to the hateful instruments of death, on the approach of calamity, you will have a covenant God and Father, to whose gracious throne you may repair with boldness and affectionate confidence" (p. 55). □

## CORRECTION:

In the March 15th issue of the *Standard Bearer* the "News" reported that the Young People's ski outing overnighter was held in Faith Christian School's gymnasium. This was incorrect. Faith Christian School does not have a gym. The overnighter was held in a local gymnasium in Randolph, not Faith School.

—BW

### School Activities

Do your vacation plans this summer include spending some time in Colorado? If they do, you could help the Loveland PR Christian School and your wallet at the same time. It just so happens that that school's fund-raisers are sponsoring a Bed and Breakfast project. For \$30.00 you will receive a comfortable bed, fellowship with other Christians, and breakfast the next morning. A \$2.00 additional donation is requested for each child. If you are visiting Loveland over Sunday, a noon meal can also be arranged. If you would like to make a reservation or if you have more questions, simply contact Mrs. Clara VanBaren, 709 E. 57th St., Loveland, CO 80538, phone (303) 667-1347, or Mrs. Gina Solanyk (303) 669-9005.

At the March Parent/Teacher Conferences held at our Adams St. Chr. School in Grand Rapids, MI, there was yet another unique fundraiser for Adams. Parents, grandparents, and other supporters were asked to be part of a test drive. Representatives from Chrysler Corp. were at school with mini-vans and were paying \$5 per adult and \$10 per couple for them simply to drive around the block and tell the representatives what they thought. It was promised that there would be no sales pitch.

### Evangelism Activities

This being the first week in April, my mind wanders south to the warm state of Texas and our Trinity PRC in Houston, who will this week (April 3, 4, 5) be hosting a Spring Conference on Reformed Evangelism. Trinity has worked long and hard on this conference and we all hope and pray that nothing but good will come from it.

In the last bulletin I received from Trinity it was noted that on the Lord's Day, April 2, the sanctuary at Trinity would host four worship services. The four speakers for the conference were each scheduled to preach at one of these services. Rev. Mahtani, pastor at Trinity, at 9:30 A.M.; Rev. Haak, from Bethel PRC, Elk Grove Village, IL, at 11:30 A.M.; Rev. VanOverloop, pastor at Georgetown PRC in Bauer, MI, at 4:00 P.M.; and Prof. Engelsma from our seminary, at 6:00 P.M.

At last count Trinity was expecting 170 registered guests, with about 140 of those staying at the J Bar J Ranch and 30 at homes or in motels. They also expected another dozen or more visitors to come mostly for the evening lectures. We certainly echo the prayers of Trinity when we say, may God's Name be praised and His people richly blessed through this conference.

The Evangelism Societies of the Byron Center and Hudsonville, MI PRCs joined together to sponsor a lecture held in the auditorium of the Jamestown CRC on March 23. Rev. B. Gritters, Hudsonville's pastor, spoke on the subject, "Imitators of Jesus Christ."

Those gathered together that night heard Pastor Gritters ask and answer the all-important questions, "What did Jesus Christ do when He lived, that Christians are to imitate? And if Jesus were to examine the conduct of churches and Christians today, would He find them behaving as He behaved?"

### Congregational Activities

The Council of the Bethel PRC in Elk Grove Village, IL decided back in February to investigate the details involved in holding worship services at the Holiday Inn, 680 Irving Park Road, Itasca, IL, a location about five miles from their former meeting place in the Children's World Learning Center in Elk Grove Village.

Bethel was finding it more and more difficult to move the massive amounts of day-care center equipment every Sunday, as well as every time the center was used for Bible study or catechism. Besides that, every use of the center meant having to move more than 100 chairs in and out of a shed outside, in all kinds of weather, and the room was just getting too small.

For these and other reasons the congregation decided to approve the recommended move and, beginning April 2, all divine worship services, catechism classes, and Bible study meetings will be held there.

On Saturday, March 18, the men of the Peace PRC in Lynwood, IL began doing the groundwork for their new church building.

### Minister Activities

The Byron Center, MI PRC will call a pastor on Sunday, April 23, from a trio of the Revs. denHartog, Key, and Koole.

The Edgerton, MN PRC has extended a call to Rev. C. Terpstra, pastor of the South Holland, IL PRC.

Rev. M. Joostens, pastor of the First PRC in Grand Rapids, MI, has accepted the call he was extended from the Lynden, WA PRC.

Rev. and Mrs. M. DeVries, with their family, received permission to enter Canada to reside there as pastor of the First PRC in Edmonton, AB, Canada. Rev. DeVries preached his farewell in Edgerton, MN on Sunday, March 19 and moved that week, arriving in Edmonton on Friday, the 24th. Installation was scheduled for the 27th, and we assume Rev. DeVries preached his first sermon, as First's third pastor, the following Sunday. We also learned that Rev. and Mrs. DeVries are in Canada without their four children. The children stayed in Minnesota because of work and a desire to finish the school year there.

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ATTENTION!

Bethel Protestant Reformed Church has changed the location of its worship services to the Holiday Inn, 680 Irving Park Rd., Itasca, IL. All visitors, friends, and Protestant Reformed brethren, please take note! Take Exit 290 west on Thorndale Rd. Take Rohling Rd. south to Irving Park. Turn east and go 1/4 mile to the Holiday Inn.

"For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deuteronomy 32:9).

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mary-Martha Society of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Redlands expresses sincere Christian sympathy to fellow members Winnie VanUffelen, Donna Bruinsma, JoAnn Pastoor, and Laura VanVoorthuysen and families, in the loss of their dear husband and father, and to Anna Mae Meelker and family, in the loss of her brother,

#### MR. DICK VAN UFFELEN.

May the Lord's rich grace and mercy sustain them in their sorrow, and may they be comforted in the words of Scripture in Revelation 21:3, 4: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Rev. A. denHartog, President  
Jeanne Karsemeyer, Secretary

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, CA expresses its heartfelt sympathy to its elder Doug Pastoor and to Mrs. Winnie VanUffelen and their families in the death of

#### MR. DICK VAN UFFELEN.

Mr. Dick VanUffelen served faithfully for many years as a deacon of our church. May his widow and all the family members take comfort in the promise of the eternal reward which the Lord gives to His faithful servants.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (II Timothy 4:8).

Pastor Arie denHartog, President  
Elder Otto Gaastra, Vice-President

### NOTICE!!

#### Young People's Scholarship Committee:

Prospective teachers and ministers seeking scholarship money, please call Sarah Ondersma at (616) 669-0966 for an application and essay topic. Applications must be in by June 15.

### CASSETTE TAPE!!

"The Church: A Spiritual Institution"  
by Prof. Herman Hanko,

professor of N.T. Studies in the Seminary  
of the Protestant  
Reformed Churches  
Grand Rapids, MI

Send \$3.00 to:

Tape Distribution  
Protestant Reformed Church  
315 N. Park St.  
Lynden, WA 98264

### TEACHER NEEDED

The Free Christian School of Edgerton, MN is in need of a teacher for grades K-4. Please contact Allen Hendriks at (507) 442-5221 or Dennis Bleyenburgh at (507) 442-7551 or write to the school, Free Christian School, P.O. Box 431, Edgerton, MN 56128.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

The Lord willing, on May 1, 1995, our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents,

#### MR. and MRS. JOHN C. LUBBERS,

celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary. We thank our heavenly Father for giving us God-fearing parents, for the many years they have shared together, and for the Christian love, instruction, and guidance they have given us through these years. May God keep them in His care in the years that lie ahead.

"A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children..." (Proverbs 13:22a).

- ✿ Ed and Lorraine Miedema
- ✿ Don and Correne VanOverloop
- ✿ Gary and Carol Lubbers
- ✿ John and Joan Bouma
- 20 grand children
- 38 great grand children

Hudsonville, MI

### CALL TO SYNOD!!

Synod 1994 appointed Hull Protestant Reformed Church, Hull, IA the calling church for the 1995 Synod.

The Consistory hereby notifies our churches that the 1995 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America will convene, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, June 13, 1995 at 9:00 A.M. in the Hull Protestant Reformed Church, Hull, IA.

The Pre-Synodical Service will be held on Monday evening, June 12, at 7:30 p.m. Rev. R VanOverloop, president of the 1994 Synod, will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the Consistory before the service.

Delegates in need of lodging should contact Mr. Egbert Gritters. Phone: (712) 439-2194.

Consistory of  
Hull Protestant Reformed Church  
Egbert Gritters, Clerk.