



The Standard Bearer

***A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine***

*What shall I render
unto the Lord
for all his benefits
toward me?
I will take the cup
of salvation,
and call upon
the name of the Lord.*

Psalm 116:12, 13

See "Meditation" — p. 99

***Vol. 73, No. 5
December 1, 1996***



EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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

DEPARTMENT EDITORS

Rev. W. Bruinsma, Rev. A. Brummel, Rev. R. Cammenga,
Prof. R. Decker, Rev. A. den Hartog, Rev. M. Dick, Prof. H.
Hanko, Rev. R. Hanko, Rev. S. Key, Rev. K. Koole, Rev. J.
Kortering, Rev. D. H. Kuiper, Mr. J. Lanting, Mrs. M. Lubbers,
Rev. T. Miersma, Mr. G. Schipper, Rev. G. VanBaren, Rev. R.
VanOverloop, Mr. B. Wigger, Rev. B. Woudenberg.

EDITORIAL OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
4949 Ivanrest
Grandville, MI 49418

CHURCH NEWS EDITOR

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

BUSINESS OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
Don Doezeema
P.O. Box 603
Grandville, MI
49468-0603

NEW ZEALAND OFFICE

Mr. Ben Wigger
c/o B. VanHerk
66 Fraser St.
Wainuiomata, New Zealand

PH: (616) 531-1490
(616) 538-1778
FAX: (616) 531-3033

UNITED KINGDOM OFFICE

c/o Mr. Jonathan McAuley
164 Church Rd., Glenwherry
Ballymena, Co. Antrim BT42 3EL
Northern Ireland

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

REPRINT POLICY

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

SUBSCRIPTION POLICY

Subscription price: \$17.00 per year in the U.S., US\$20.00
elsewhere. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is
received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the
subscription to continue, and he will be billed for renewal. If you
have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as
early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of
interrupted delivery. Include your Zip or Postal Code.

ADVERTISING POLICY

The *Standard Bearer* does not accept commercial advertising
of any kind. Announcements of church and school events,
anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be
placed for a \$10.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business
Office and should be accompanied by the \$10.00 fee. Deadline
for announcements is at least one month prior to publication
date.

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.

Meditation — Rev. Cornelius Hanko	
What Shall I Render...?	99
Editorial — Prof. David J. Engelsma	
A Defense of (Reformed) Amillennialism	
12. The Victory of Christ in History	101
Letters	103
Taking Heed to the Doctrine — Rev. Steven R. Key	
The Development of Sin	103
Cloud of Witnesses — Prof. Herman C. Hanko	
John Calvin: Father of Calvinism (2)	106
Search the Scriptures — Rev. Mitchell Dick	
Jesus and the Woman Taken in Adultery	108
Annual Report — Mr. Henry Kamps	
Annual RFPFA Meeting, Secretary's Report	110
Address at Annual RFPFA Meeting — Rev. Charles J. Terpstra	
The RFPFA, Stimulator of Sound Knowledge	
in an Age of Ignorance	112
Contending for the Faith — Rev. Bernard Woudenberg	
"A hole in the dike"?	116
News From Our Churches — Mr. Benjamin Wigger	119

In This Issue ...

The *Standard Bearer* comments on the *Standard Bearer*.

We print the annual report of the Reformed Free Publishing Association (RFPFA), publisher of the *SB*, by the retiring secretary, Henry Kamps. This is the report given by Mr. Kamps at the annual meeting of the RFPFA this past September. The report gives interesting, important information concerning the implementation of an earlier decision bringing the publishing of the *SB* and the publishing of books under one board. It also discloses plans for the publishing of new books. Read "Annual RFPFA Meeting: Secretary's Report."

One product of the newly created "M.I.E. Committee" (what is the "M.I.E. Committee"? read the article to find out) is "an entirely new, full-color catalog" of all the books published by the RFPFA. For a free copy of this catalog, write the RFPFA, 4949 Ivanrest Ave., Grandville, MI 49418-9709.

At the annual meeting, the speaker was the Rev. Charles Terpstra. He affirmed the important calling of the RFPFA in our day. He gave specific suggestions as to this calling. He raised the question whether it is responsible to publish at all in our "video-crazed society." He challenged the members of the Protestant Reformed Churches themselves to read, in the interest of sound knowledge. Read the stimulating "The RFPFA, Stimulator of Sound Knowledge in an Age of Ignorance."

— DJE

What Shall I Render...?

What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

Psalm 116:12, 13

I love the Lord.

That is the keynote of this familiar, cherished Psalm that has thrilled the hearts of the saints throughout the ages.

Because it is messianic, I like to think that Christ sang this Psalm, sometimes with His disciples, sometimes when He spent the night in quiet meditation and prayer.

He certainly could cry out even in anticipation of the sufferings that awaited Him at the close of His earthly ministry, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pangs of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow." Who could say that better than He who bore the wrath of God all His life for the sake of those given to Him of the Father?

He also could say, "Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul." We can hear Him cry from the deep darkness and isolation of hell, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

How true it is that God heard His voice and His supplication, inclined His ear unto Him, and delivered Him, exalting Him to high-

est position of power at His own right hand in the heavens!

Only because our Lord willingly surrendered Himself to the curse to deliver us from the bondage of sin and death can we echo this same song of praise: I love the Lord for all the benefits He bestows on me!

It is interesting to note that we find in this Psalm the three parts of our one and only comfort for body and soul in life and in death: I know the depth of my misery, the wonder of my deliverance, and true gratitude to God for my deliverance. (We meet them more often in Scripture, especially in the Psalms, but also in our Baptism Form and Communion Form, as well as in the Heidelberg Catechism.)

By the grace of God I know my misery. I echo the words of the fathers in our confession: I cannot keep a single one of God's commandments, but, on the contrary, I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor. I am wicked and perverse, my nature is depraved. In one word, I am so corrupt that I am wholly incapable of any good and inclined to all evil. My God caused the sorrows of death to compass me, and the pangs of hell to take hold of me; I learned to know my sin, my guilt, my hopelessly lost condition, my misery as the chief of sinners.

By that same grace I cried unto the Lord, not once, but repeatedly, even many, many times: "O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul." He hears my cry; He delivers me

from destruction's pit and from the miry clay, setting my feet upon the solid Rock, Christ Jesus.

Added to all that, He gives a song of thankfulness in my heart. I love the Lord, only because He first loved me, and planted His love whereby He loves me in my heart, that I may sing His praises!

◆◆◆ ◆◆◆ ◆◆◆

My soul is overwhelmed with holy perplexity.

What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits? I stand, as it were, with my arms laden with benefits, blessings, more than I can hold, more than I can tell, yes, more than I realize myself. My God bestows upon me every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus both for time and for eternity. I can best sum it all up by saying, "I am not my own, but now and eternally belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ through whom I receive grace for grace."

Let me not forget that I deserve none of these blessings, but rather His just and eternal condemnation. Suppose that someone should kill my child, shamefully dishonor me, and claim all my possessions. Suppose also that this man was brought to trial and was condemned to die by hanging. Would I be willing to step forward and offer myself in his stead?

What I do to my God is far worse than anyone could do to me, yet what He did for such a wretch as I am far exceeds any sacrifice that I could possibly make.

What shall I render to Thee, O Lord, Thou great Jehovah?

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

If I were to add a drop of water to a huge reservoir that is already full, what would that drop amount to? If I were to hold a candle in the light of the sun, how much would that add to the sun's brightness? Our God is infinite! Who can add to infinity?

Besides, the cattle on a thousand hills belong to Him, and every forest beast is His. In Him we live and move and have our being. Can a child in his father's arms lighten the burden of father by carrying a package in his hand? What can I render to the Lord but that which is already His?

Or put the question this way: What shall I render to the Lord?

I am a mere speck of dust, less than a drop of the bucket or a particle of dust in the balance. I am like a beggar who would offer a penny to a multimillionaire.

Still worse, I am a dependent creature, who receives my life and breath from my God every second of my existence. He causes my heart to beat. He gives me strength and ability to breathe. He makes it possible for me to lift my finger, even to think and to will. Without Him I can do nothing.

Add to this, that I am an unprofitable servant. If I have done all that is required of me I still have done nothing more than my duty.

What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?

◆◆◆ ◆◆◆ ◆◆◆

I will take the cup of salvation. David speaks of that cup saying, "My cup runneth over." The Lord is his Shepherd. He knows no want. He is like a contented sheep led into green pastures and beside still waters. His soul is restored and he is led in paths of righteousness. True, he still walks through this valley of the shadow of death, but the Lord is with him and His rod and staff comfort him. The Lord sets a table before him in the presence of his enemies. Indeed, his cup is full, even to overflowing!

When we lift up the cup of salvation we are reminded of all God's blessings from moment to moment, from day to day, from month to month, from year to year, all the days of our earthly pilgrimage. We think of this one great gift of the Spirit of Christ who dwells in us and blesses us with every spiritual blessing in the Beloved. He renews us, brings us to daily repentance, gives and strengthens faith, assures us of our righteousness in Christ and preserves us in the way of sanctification, even unto our eternal destiny.

We are reminded of His mercies, His kindnesses, His patience with us, His unchanging faithfulness that is renewed every morning. We cannot fail to note His gifts of food and drink, shelter and clothing, and so much more. We think of His sustaining hand that gives us strength for the day, duties to perform, a place in our families, in our congregation, and in the midst of this world. We have a purpose in life, a goal, so that we do not live in vain. All that for the sole purpose that I may live in covenant fellowship with Him in the house of the Lord now and forever; even death is gain. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. Indeed, my cup runneth over!

With thankful hearts we praise Him and feast on His bounties. This comes to expression specifically in our public worship and the celebration of the sacraments (Ps. 103:1-13).

But to be indeed meaningful, thanksgiving is more than a mere utterance, it manifests itself in our lives. According to our Catechism, true thankfulness consists in a daily sorrow for sin and repentance, a constant crucifying of the old man, and a putting on of the new man. It includes striving daily to keep all God's commandments. And last, but not least, it includes prayer. Our lives become lives of prayer, praying without ceasing, since we dare not venture

forth at any time without the approval, blessing, and presence of the Lord. Only when He accompanies us can we go forth upon our way.

I will lift up the cup of salvation!

◆◆◆ ◆◆◆ ◆◆◆

Besides that, I will also call upon the name of Jehovah.

He is the almighty, unchangeable, ever faithful God who keeps covenant with His people forever.

"For that his name is near his wondrous works declare" (Ps. 75:1). That name is the glorious revelation of all the eternal perfections of the God of our salvation in all the works of His hands. God's marvelous handwriting, inscribed with His autograph, appears in the lofty mountain peaks, but also in the tiny snowflake. We see it in the splendor of the sunset, but also in the delicate beauty of the rose. His voice is heard in the rolling of the thunder, but also in the song of the tiny wren. How glorious, O Lord, is Thy Name in all the earth!

We can call upon that name in prayer, for prayer is the direct line of communication in Christ Jesus between us and the living God. It is through prayer that in this life we come closest to heaven.

We can make all our need known in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Yes, prayer itself is a form of thanksgiving.

It thrills a mother's heart when her hungry little son comes rushing into the house with a "Mom, may I have something to eat? I'm starved." He knows exactly where he will be well received. He does not come begging, or questioning, but he comes in full confidence that he will be heard.

What better can we do than to seek the ever-giving God, who never objects that we come too often or ask too much (James 1:5)? He is the overflowing Fountain of every good and perfect gift, who withholds no good thing from those who fear Him.

We have received so much from our heavenly Father, yet we need so much more. We constantly extend empty, expectant hands to heaven with the cry for more, always still more.

And the Lord hears us, supplying all our needs out of His fullness with far more than we can ask or think.

That applies to this life, but also to the life to come. For eter-

nity will be necessary for us to be filled with all the blessings of the greatness of the glory of our God. To Him be the praise.

In humble worship we declare, "I love the Lord." Amen. □

Editorial

A Defense of (Reformed) Amillennialism

12. The Victory of Christ in History

Jesus Christ is victor.

He is victor already now. He is victor in this world.

We do not see this yet. But we believe it as the clear testimony of the Bible.

In His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, He has become the Lord. He sits now at God's right hand. He wields the power of providence, upholding and governing all things (Eph. 1:19-23; Heb. 1:3; Rev. 5).

Jesus Christ is victor as Mediator of the covenant and Head of the church. By His atoning death and bodily resurrection, He has conquered sin, Satan, death, and the ungodly world and has become the sovereign, almighty, life-giving Lord on behalf of His church.

He is victor, not only personally on high in heaven but also as He is present in His church down here in the world by His Spirit and Word.

His gospel goes out into all the world with conquering power (Rev. 6:1,2).

His church on earth is a victorious institution. She is indestructible. She cannot be defeated by her foes. "I will build my church," said the Christ, the Son of the liv-

ing God, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

She accomplishes her ecclesiastical calling and labor with unique, awesome power, and without fail. "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:19).

The church of Christ has been victorious in history, as regards her mature, New Testament form, since the day of Pentecost.

Not only is the church victorious but also each member of the church is victorious by the indwelling, empowering Christ. Here and now. Indeed, he is not merely a conqueror. He is more than a conqueror (Rom. 8:37). His many enemies are made in the end to work his good. The assurance of this is the strength and zeal of the Christian life.

Jesus Christ is victor in history.

His body and its members share in this victory.

This is what the church is celebrating when she confesses, "Jesus Christ our Lord."

The victory of Jesus Christ in

history is the main concern of postmillennialism, especially the Christian Reconstructionist form of postmillennialism. Its dream of the future conversion of a majority of mankind, the "Christianizing" of the world, the dominion over the nations by the church, and a "golden age" of peace and prosperity, before the return of Christ, represents the victory of Christ in history. Postmillennialism is optimistic about the future of history. It is an "eschatology of victory."

Amillennialism's sober forecast of increasing lawlessness, great apostasy, and persecution of the church by Antichrist is judged to be a denial of the victory of King Jesus in history. Reformed amillennialism is scorned as defeatist and pessimistic.

Christian Reconstructionist postmillennialist Greg L. Bahnsen saw the victory of Jesus in history as the main issue between postmillennialism and amillennialism:

What is really at stake is the question of the *future prospects on earth* for the *already established* kingdom. Shall it, prior to Christ's return, bring all nations under its sway, thereby

generating a period of spiritual blessing, international peace, and visible prosperity? Shall the church, which has been promised the continual presence of Him who has been given all power in heaven and earth, be successful in making disciples of all nations as He commanded? On this basic and substantive issue — one which succeeds in separating out the three millennial schools — it becomes apparent that the *essential distinctive* of postmillennialism is its scripturally derived, sure expectation of gospel prosperity for the church during the *present age*. . . . In short, postmillennialism is set apart from the other two schools of thought by its essential *optimism* for the kingdom in the *present age*. This confident attitude in the power of Christ's kingdom, the power of its gospel, the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit, the power of prayer, and the progress of the great commission, sets postmillennialism apart from the essential pessimism of amillennialism and premillennialism.... In the final analysis, what is characteristic of postmillennialism is not a uniform answer to any one particular exegetical question ... but rather a commitment to the gospel as the power of God which, in the agency of the Holy Spirit, shall convert the vast majority of the world to Christ and bring widespread obedience to His kingdom rule ("The *Prima Facie* Acceptability of Postmillennialism," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction: Symposium on the Millennium* 3, no. 2, Winter, 1976-77, pp. 66-68; the emphasis is Bahnsen's).

Gary North sprinkles the charge that Reformed amillennialism is "defeatist" liberally throughout his writings. He

misses few opportunities to jeer at Reformed amillennialists as "pessimillennialists." The amillennial doctrine of the last things, says North, makes "God ... a loser in history" (*Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory*, Institute for Christian Economics, 1988, p. 167). This is a damning indictment of a doctrine.

Nor is it only the Christian Reconstructionists who present the controversy between amillennialism and postmillennialism as centering on the victory of Christ in history. The Presbyterian J. Marcellus Kik did the same. The coming "glorious age of the church upon earth" in which "all nations (become) Christian and (live) in peace," he called "the triumph of Christianity throughout the earth." He accused amillennialists of being "pessimists and defeatists":

To say that the defeat of Satan will only come through a cataclysmic act at the second coming of Christ is ridiculous in the light of these passages. To think that the church must grow weaker and weaker and the kingdom of Satan stronger and stronger is to deny that Christ came to destroy the works of the devil; it is to dishonor Christ; it is to disbelieve His Word. We do not glorify God nor His prophetic word by being pessimists and defeatists. With sufficient faith in Christ we could crush Satan under our feet shortly. Or else these passages have no significance to the church of Christ (*An Eschatology of Victory*, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971, pp. 4,19,20).

The dubious honor, however, of the fiercest, and most wicked, attack on amillennialism belongs to the father of Christian Reconstructionism, Rousas J. Rushdoony. Lumping amillennialism with premillennialism (and we will see about this in a forthcoming article),

Rushdoony has dared to write:

Amillennialism ... (is) in retreat from the world and blasphemously surrender(s) it to the devil. By its very premise ... that the world will only get worse ... it cuts the nerve of Christian action.... If we hold that the world can only get worse ... what impetus is left for applying the word of God to the problems of this world? The result is an inevitable one: ... amillennial believers who profess faith in the whole word of God ... are also the most impotent segment of American society, with the least impact on American life. To turn the world-conquering word of the sovereign, omnipotent, and triune God into a symbol of impotence is not a mark of faith. It is blasphemy ("Postmillennialism versus Impotent Religion," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, pp. 126, 127).

According to Rushdoony and his disciples, amillennialism denies the victory of Christ in history. Thus, it makes God and His Word impotent. To make God impotent is blasphemous. Amillennialism, therefore, is blasphemy.

In light of these savage assaults upon amillennialism and us amillennialists, it is surprising that some postmillennialists have objected to my tempered criticism of Christian Reconstructionism. I have been restrained.

In light of this constant barrage of violent condemnation of amillennialism from within the Presbyterian and Reformed community, it is nothing less than astounding that there is no spirited defense of amillennialism in those circles in which the Christian Reconstructionists move.

In light of postmillennialism's own sharp, radical distinguishing of itself from amillennialism in terms of nothing less than the victory or defeat of Christ in history,

it is incomprehensible that some who do speak out, weakly, in favor of amillennialism still attempt to align amillennialism with postmillennialism as two acceptable eschatologies in the Reformed churches.

Reformed amillennialism repu-

diates postmillennialism's "victory of Jesus Christ in history," root and branch. That is, the *kind* of victory desired and dreamed by postmillennialism, we renounce.

But Reformed amillennialism takes a back seat to no one, includ-

ing the most fervent Christian Reconstructionist, in believing, confessing, preaching, teaching, and defending the victory of Jesus Christ in history.

Christ has dominion.

Now. □

— DJE

Letters

Not Appropriate

As well-meaning as MaryBeth Lubbers' article was on her fond memories of Miss Reitsma ("The Reformed Family: Teachers," *Standard Bearer*, 9/15/96), my wife and I were offended at the lack of personal purity that some parts of the article endorsed.

Mrs. Lubbers made it a point to mention Miss Reitsma's shapeliness and fashionable clothing, going even further to say that "she was a head-turner." No mention is made that any heads that turned were turned in wickedness, as is made very clear in Matthew 5:28: "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to

lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Instead, this is put in a positive and even humorous light.

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" (I Tim. 2:9).

She showed a secular movie in class, knowing that there was a bedroom scene, yet Mrs. Lubbers praised her for being so charismatic that none of the parents objected to it. And as she held her hands over the lens of the projector, "her eyes danced with mischief as we kids called out our protests." Were these protests sinful? Why were her eyes dancing with mischief?

Is it any wonder why many children of Reformed parents are acting and thinking just like the world? Is it any wonder why they are reading the lust-filled novels (even the so-called Christian ones) and are engaging in the worldly practice of dating? Is it any wonder why they are placing so much emphasis on their looks?

Many people in Reformed circles have gotten away from an emphasis on personal holiness, whereas the truth of Scripture is that sovereign grace and personal purity are both of utmost importance. My wife and I believe that this article was not appropriate for such an otherwise excellent, godly magazine.

Marc D. Carpenter
Castleton, VT

Taking Heed to the Doctrine

Rev. Steven Key

The Development of Sin

When we consider the truth concerning man's sin and the total depravity of the human nature, we must also recognize that there is progression, an ongoing development

in sin's manifestation among men. The corruption of the human race continues to become manifest in ever-increasing measure.

We make a statement here that clearly touches on our view of the last times. We cannot develop that doctrine of the last things now. In this rubric, "Taking Heed to Doctrine," we want to continue in an orderly progression through the whole sum of doctrine. Our bibli-

cal consideration of eschatology, therefore, is far down the road. For now we refer you to the recent and ongoing editorials of Prof. Engelsma, as he has been treating the Reformed and biblical doctrine of the last things. But Scripture teaches that sin develops in such a way that at the end of the ages the sinfulness of man will reach its greatest manifestation, and the cup of iniquity will be filled.

Rev. Key is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Randolph, Wisconsin.

That belongs to the very nature of sin.

All the sins of the whole human race are sins that develop from the evil root of Adam's sin.

From the time of the fall even to the end of history the world develops the sin of our first parents. As mankind develops, so is there the development of sin in all its manifestation. This is the organic development of sin. Not that sin is an organism. But sin stands in connection with the organism of the human race.

The relationship is this: As the tree of the generations of Adam grows and develops, so sin grows and develops. Because of the total depravity of the whole human race, sin develops organically along with the organic development of the human race. Sin develops in such a way that principally at the cross and ultimately with the Antichrist at the end of the ages there is the full revelation of what was involved with that root sin of Adam.

In this connection there are a few things that we must keep in mind.

In the first place, when we speak about the development of sin we do not mean to suggest that, from one generation to the next, each individual is more wicked than those who were before him. We have seen that all men are conceived and born in sin. All men by nature are *dead* in trespasses and sins. Death is death!

This corruption is complete and total in all alike. From that point of view, Judas Iscariot's human nature was no more dead or corrupt than was that of Adam immediately after the fall. Neither will the human nature of Antichrist be essentially worse.

But at the same time it is obvious that not only is there development in the sin of the human race, but there is a wide difference in the actual sins committed by various individuals.

Let's look at this a little more

closely, first from the viewpoint of the historical development and increase of sin, and then from the viewpoint of the individual differences among sinners.

Historical Development

Looking at the historical development of Scripture's revelation, you will find that development of sin throughout Bible history.

Though there was an ever-increasing revelation of the promise of Christ in the Old Testament, and though the wonder of grace was revealed with increasing clarity throughout that history, yet at the same time the wickedness even in Israel continually developed.

That line of development can be followed all the way through the Old Testament, until, when Christ was born, it was hardly possible to find a people of God on the earth. The church institute, which was Israel according to the flesh, was made up predominately of a self-righteous lot of men who knew not the promise and who would reject the Christ.

When Jesus preached, He pointed to that historical development of wickedness. Sodom and Gomorrah, He reminded the unbelieving and impenitent in Israel, committed such great wickedness that God destroyed them. Yet, Jesus said, Sodom and Gomorrah, together with Tyre and Sidon, shall rise to testify against Capernaum and the cities of Judah in the judgment day. Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, are ripe for judgment, inexcusable in their wickedness. But they did not reject the Lord of glory and nail Him to the cross.

The wicked nation of Babylon in the days of Daniel did not wallow in the iniquity that characterizes the spiritual Babylon of the New Testament and of our day, which apostate Babylon is to be destroyed at Christ's return.

Individual Development

Even as this organic develop-

ment of sin takes place historically in conjunction with the development of the human race, so it is also with regard to the various individuals who live at any given moment throughout history.

All are corrupt, dead in sin and misery.

But not all commit the same sins.

Adam did not and could not commit all the actual sins that Cain committed. Adam could not commit fratricide, the murder of one's brother. He did not have a brother. Adam could not take another woman in an act of adultery, when Eve was the only woman.

All are corrupt; but not all commit the outward act of murder. Not all commit the outward act of adultery or fornication. Not all become sodomites, homosexuals. Not everyone steals by robbing a bank.

There is a difference among individuals. Not every branch of the corrupt organism of the human race bears all the fruit of the corrupt tree that grows from the root sin of Adam.

But each individual bears that fruit that is in harmony with his or her place in the organism, in harmony with the means and gifts and talents that he or she has, as well as in connection with his or her place in history.

That is the tremendous horror of sin!

Though we don't always perform *every* evil, we *always* perform evil. By virtue of our birth into the human race we have a corrupt nature. We have the inclination to commit every evil, if only we are given the opportunity.

And so the time will come that the measure of iniquity shall be full for the entire human race, and all shall be judged righteously. Every son of Adam shall receive according to what he did in the flesh.

The case of man is hopeless — except for one thing. The only thing that changes this is regen-

eration, spiritual rebirth, the work of the Holy Spirit. And that work takes place, not in the hearts of men in general, but only in the elect race. Meanwhile, in the human race as an organism, the cup of iniquity continues to be filled.

But there is another truth that we must not forget in this connection.

God's Sovereign Control

The development of sin takes place according to God's sovereign purpose. Sin does not develop outside God's control.

God is sovereign, also over sin.

For one thing, sin serves God's purpose with respect to Christ. The fall was no mistake. God's eternal purpose, though far beyond our human comprehension, was to glorify Himself by saving a people in the deep, dark way of sin and grace.

But God also governs sin in such a way that it develops as the revelation of His righteous judgment and the expression of His infinite wrath over against the sinner.

The development of sin is itself one of the chief ways in which God punishes the sinner. He gives the sinner over to continued sin.

We often forget that such continued sin and development of sin is a clear indication of God's wrath.

That is the teaching of Romans 1:18ff.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (v. 18).

How is it that they hold the truth in unrighteousness? They *know* the truth, i.e., the truth that God is and that He must be glorified as God. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them" (v. 19).

In other words, no man is an

atheist. God doesn't allow it! A man may claim to be. A man may insist that he doesn't believe in the existence of God. He may *say*, "There is no God." There are those who say that. We read about them in the Bible, in Psalm 14 and Psalm 53. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." He tells himself that. But he knows better. He cannot escape the testimony of God.

God has inscribed on the heart of every sinner this sentence: "I am God. Love Me." That is what it says in Romans 1:20-21. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

Notice that! God causes the sinner to heap sin upon sin! Sinners are *given over*!

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves" (vv. 22-24).

And so the passage continues.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters,

inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (vv. 28-32).

Do you wonder sometimes at the rapid development of sin in the world, in our country?

Do you stand amazed at the rapid advance of apostasy in the church?

Are you dumbfounded over the continued walk in sin of one who claims to be a Christian?

Then understand this: The punishment of God rests heavily upon the sinner. That is the explanation, the only explanation. God gives men over to their sin. I say, we rarely think about sin's development in those terms. But that is exactly what is happening. God is executing His righteous judgment, His wrath and indignation.

And man is filling the cup of iniquity.

Inescapable is the sinner's punishment at the hands of the just God. There is only one way out. His name is Jesus, the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. In Him alone there is salvation.

That is why we maintain this biblical truth concerning sin, humbling as it is. That is why we emphasize with the Scriptures that we are wholly incapable of doing any good and inclined to all wickedness.

And that is why, when we preach and teach that truth, you who are the children of God by adoption and who have the Spirit in your hearts confess, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)" (Eph. 2:4,5). □

John Calvin: Father of Calvinism (2)

Calvin in Strassburg

After a brief stay in Basel, Calvin went to Strassburg, a city in southern Germany where the Swiss reformation had already taken root. The three years he spent in this city were probably the happiest years of his life. He had no need to fight a Council, no need to oppose a stubborn people at every turn of the way, no need to do battle with enemies on every side. He had peace and quiet, time for study and writing, opportunity to do work in the fields of liturgy and church polity.

Calvin was appointed to the faculty of the University in the city and was called to be pastor of a church of French refugees. He had occasion to meet with Lutheran theologians and sharpen his own theological views. He worked on revisions of his *Institutes* and developed his views on church polity, the basic principles of which are incorporated in our own "Church Order of Dordrecht." He developed a liturgy for the church which included an order of worship (much like the order of worship we still use), liturgical forms, and versions of Psalms.

These were productive years. Calvin engaged in voluminous correspondence with all the leading figures of Europe. He wrote a

number of his important works, one of which was his letter to Sadolet. Sadolet was a Roman Catholic cardinal who wrote a letter to the people of Geneva in an effort to win them back to Rome. It was, from a certain human point of view, a masterful and persuasive piece of work. Calvin's response was without any bitterness or rancor against the Genevans, but was instead the clearest and most helpful defense of the reformation which could be found anywhere. It is "must" reading for anyone who wishes to know why reformation in the 16th century was necessary.

Calvin even married during his stay in Strassburg. His wife was Idelette de Bure, the widow of a prominent Anabaptist whom Calvin had converted to the true faith and who had died in the pestilence. She was the mother of several children, but poor and in feeble health. Calvin took responsibility for her children as well as for her, but lived with her only nine years. Calvin remained single the rest of his life. With Idelette Calvin had one son who died in infancy, a loss which Calvin bore the remainder of his life.

Second Stay In Geneva

But the happy years in Strassburg were soon to come to an end. The situation in Geneva steadily deteriorated. Three parties were vying for power and the city was sinking into anarchy.

In 1541 Calvin was formally

asked to return. Strassburg was reluctant to let him go. Calvin was even more reluctant to leave his happy life in Strassburg and take on the horrors of Geneva. But, compelled by God, he returned to the whirlpool (Calvin's word) of struggle and controversy where he stayed until death took him to the church triumphant.

One evidence of the stature of the man was his conduct upon his return. The first Sunday he entered the pulpit of Saint Pierre before a huge crowd gathered partly to hear him again, but partly to listen to him lambast his opponents and smugly proclaim "I told you so." But in a letter to Farel, Calvin tells what he did. "After a preface, I took up the exposition where I had left off — by which I indicated that I had interrupted my office of preaching for the time rather than that I had given it up entirely." Nothing could have been more prosaic and yet more effective. It was as if Calvin resumed his ministry with the words: "As I was saying...."

The struggles with the Council continued for a very long time, and the efforts to subdue the city so that Christ's rule was present did not cease until many who opposed Calvin left for other places. His enemies were hateful and not afraid to show it. People called their dogs by Calvin's name, openly reviled him in the streets, sometimes threatened his life, disturbed him in his studies, and vowed to do harm to his family.

Prof. Hanko is professor of Church History and New Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

Through it all Calvin endured, preaching, teaching, writing, bearing the yoke of Christ's suffering for the cause of the gospel.

Money and pleasure meant nothing to him. He repeatedly refused more money offered him by the Council. He lived sparingly and without luxury. He was willing even to sell his beloved books when it became necessary. The pope himself was so impressed with Calvin's total lack of covetousness that he expressed his firm conviction that if he had in his retinue only a dozen men like Calvin, he could conquer the world.

Calvin preached regularly in the church in Geneva, sometimes as often as five times a week; his sermons were taken down in long-hand, and many have been published. They make for some very fine reading. He established the famous Academy in Geneva which became a center of learning for students from all over Europe who, having received their education in Geneva, returned to their own lands to spread the gospel of the Reformation to their own people. John Knox studied in Geneva, and it was he who remarked that the most perfect school of Christ which could be found on earth since the days of the apostles was the city of Geneva. In the Academy he lectured, and his commentaries, still some of the best, were the results of these lectures. I rarely, if ever, prepare a sermon without checking what Calvin had to say on a given text.

Calvin's Controversies

Within the city itself Calvin's struggles were with a party called Patriots. They were the descendants of the original citizens of the city, dyed-in-the-wool Roman Catholics when Calvin came, and much given to riotous living. As refugees streamed into Geneva from all over Europe to escape persecution, the Patriots resented the fact that the control of the city was passing into foreign hands. They

hated Calvin and did all in their power to destroy him. When the church was able finally to excommunicate the leaders for their licentiousness, and the Council approved, these men fled.

But Calvin's theological controversies were the most important. Calvin wrote against the papacy to show its evils and demonstrate how far it had departed from the doctrines of Christ. He had to fight to defend the truths of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ against many who attacked these doctrines, not the least of whom was Servetus, burned at the stake in Geneva for blasphemy.

But his controversies swirled especially around his defense of the truths of sovereign and particular grace in the work of salvation. And, as is usually the case, the most vicious attacks were concentrated against the doctrine of sovereign predestination. Many hated this doctrine and sought to destroy it. Perhaps the most interesting controversy over this doctrine was with the heretic Bolsec. Bolsec once interrupted the preaching of one of Geneva's pastors, getting up in the middle of the sermon and making a speech against the truth of predestination. What Bolsec did not know was that Calvin had entered the sanctuary and was listening to Bolsec's tirade. After Bolsec finished, Calvin mounted the pulpit and, in a masterful sermon, extemporaneous but an hour long, explained the doctrine and proved it from Scripture.

But Bolsec was not deterred. He continued to fight against this truth publicly in Geneva. He was arrested for his opposition to the church and Council and was tried for heresy and public defamation of the ministers. The advice of the other Swiss reformers and churches was sought before Bolsec was condemned. To Calvin's bitter disappointment, not one church or reformer, with the exception of Farel, could be found to back

Calvin's position completely and without compromise. Their caution or disagreement was concerning Calvin's doctrine of predestination.

Nevertheless, Calvin persevered, and Bolsec was condemned and banished from the city. From the controversy emerged one of Calvin's most important works, "A Treatise on the Eternal Predestination of God," a work which, along with another work on Providence, has been published in the book, *Calvin's Calvinism*.

Calvin's Death and Importance

Calvin departed to be with his Lord on May 27, 1564. He had suffered many infirmities prior to his death, so many in fact that one wonders how he could surmount them all. One student of church history claims that Calvin had no fewer than 12 major illnesses at the end of his life, many of which involved excruciating pain.

On May 19 Calvin summoned the pastors of Geneva and spoke his farewell to them. From that time he remained in bed, although he continued to dictate to a secretary. Farel, now 80 years old, came to see his old friend, although Calvin urged him not to come. He spent his last days in almost continual prayer, and his prayers were mostly quotations from the Psalms. Although his voice was broken by asthma, his eyes and mind remained strong. He saw all who wished to come, but asked that they rather pray for him. As the sun was going down around 8:00 he fell into a calm sleep from which he did not awake until he awoke in glory. He had lived 54 years, 10 months, 17 days.

Calvin is the proof that God uses men according to His own good pleasure. Weak and shy by nature, Calvin was cast into the center of the maelstrom of the Reformation. It was a role he never wanted, and which he called his daily cross. But he knew, as few men know, that discipleship is ex-

actly characterized by denying oneself, taking up one's cross, and following the Lord.

And so God used him as the key figure in the Reformation and in subsequent church history. Although, with the exception of the doctrine of the sacraments, Luther and Calvin agreed on all points of doctrine, Luther was ordained by God to smash the imposing and seemingly indestructible citadel of Roman Catholicism. Calvin was divinely appointed to build on the ruins a new house, a glorious temple, the church where God makes His dwelling.

Calvin was a man of iron will. Almost his entire stay in Geneva he was ill. Yet he surmounted all his ailments and never permitted sickness and pain to interfere with his work. He worked incessantly with little or no sleep, until even his wife in exasperation asked for a bit of time to see him.

Calvin was above all a preacher and expositor of Holy

Scripture. His preaching was his strength, and it remains of unparalleled influence to the present. His theology was rooted in exegesis, because God's Word was the standard for him of all truth and right. His commentaries are still the very best available, and modern "scholarly" commentaries, so many of which are really sellouts to higher criticism, seem scarcely worthy of notice in comparison.

Calvin's influence spread throughout Europe and ultimately throughout the world. That influence was not only his theology, but also his liturgy, his church polity, and his piety. The heritage of Calvin is also, let it never be forgotten, the heritage of genuinely Reformed piety. It would be well if a book were written only on that aspect of Calvin's life.

Calvin was not the dramatic personality which was Luther. Nor did Calvin "wear his heart on his sleeve," as Luther did. Especially in his old age, Luther became

something of a crab and spoke far too vehemently in his opposition to those who did not agree with him on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. But Calvin always respected Luther for the great work Luther did in the work of reformation. He told others, not so generous towards Luther, that even if Luther would call him a devil, he would still honor him as God's chosen vessel.

Calvin could appreciate Luther for what Luther did because Calvin's life was consumed by the glory of God. His enemies called him a God-intoxicated man — drunk with God! What more wonderful thing could be said of a man? The deepest principle of his theology was God's glory, and the real essence of all he wrote was this great truth. But it was also Calvin's life. He lived and died with God's glory his deepest desire. He is one in this cloud of witnesses whose voice shouts to us down the corridors of time. □

Search the Scriptures

Rev. Mitchell Dick

Jesus and the Woman Taken in Adultery

John 8:1-11

Jesus is in the temple, teaching (John 8:2). He had come early in the morning. And all the people had come unto Him.

Beautiful picture here of true worship! People worshipping God in Jesus. No brass bands. No need of liturgical dancing. They worship through hearing His Word.

And all come. There is no distinction. One and all who believe on Him, and who will learn of Him and His gospel — all these come. They come "early in the morning" — first thing. Worship is their priority in life! In Him who is the way, the truth, and the life!

Look who else come. They are the scribes and Pharisees. They are the doctors of the law. They are the intelligentsia and the recognized leaders in things religious.

They hate Jesus!

They come to tempt and to discredit Jesus!

They say they look for Messiah. But they do not see him in Jesus. They want a man with form and comeliness. But Jesus has none of that earthly beauty that we should desire Him. They want a king to deliver from Caesar and other nations' oppression. They want not the Lamb of God who delivers from sins. They hope in a kingdom to which they have a right by virtue of their noble lin-

Rev. Dick is pastor of Grace Protestant Reformed Church in Standale, Michigan.

eage and punctilious obedience. But Jesus establishes a realm of grace. They want a Solomon, and the wealth and prestige of this world which the Jews enjoyed under him. Spiritual blessings in heavenly places? In Christ Jesus?! For such precious and heavenly things they have no appreciation.

Other people are worshipping God in and through faith in this Jesus. They have come with the burdens of their sins. They are learning from Him who is meek and lowly in heart. They are finding rest in this Jesus, rest for their weary souls....

But watch out! Here comes a wave of the restless sea! The wicked scribes and Pharisees crash unbidden into the worship service Jesus is leading. They will not worship at Jesus' feet. Rather, they seek to prove Him to be an imposter. Him whom they will crucify when they get the opportunity they now seek to pierce on the horns of a dilemma. They drag an adulterous woman into the service and set her in the midst. They pose a hard question to Jesus. With every venomous word they show their rejection of God and His Christ and His law called love....

Can you not see? Here are devils in the temple — roaring, raging, reviling the Christ of God!

Jesus? Is He nonplused? Does this wave of wickedness knock Him over? Does He need some time to figure out how to answer the Jews? Is that why He says nothing at first but simply draws with His finger on the ground?

Jesus?! See Him now, the consummate Teacher! He will teach of sin and grace! He will show true righteousness and divine mercy!

Thoughts and Questions for Study, Meditation, and Discussion

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God!

☞ One of the qualifications of Messiah was that He have "the spirit of wisdom and understanding" (Is. 11:2). Certainly Jesus needed that now! For the scribes and Pharisees come tempting Jesus by asking His judgment on a very difficult matter. They bring to Jesus a woman who has been caught in the act, the very act, of adultery (v. 4). They ask Jesus what He thinks of this, what justice requires be done to her? They remind Him that Moses' law required that adulterers and adulteresses be stoned (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22-24). But Jesus faces a problem here. Roman law at this time forbade anyone but the Roman government to execute criminals. If Jesus then would say that the woman ought to be stoned, He would by this pronouncement be promoting rebellion against the Roman law. At the same time, Jesus would probably incur the wrath of the common people, whose champion He was, if He would demand that the woman be stoned. On the other hand, if He would say that mercy ought to be

shown to the woman, then would He not be going against the law of Moses?

☞ Jesus needed the spirit of wisdom and understanding! Prove from Scripture that Jesus, in fact, is the wisdom of God? How did Jesus show wisdom in answering this question of the Jewish leaders?

☞ At issue here were both the righteousness and the mercy of Jesus. If Jesus would advocate disregarding the law of Moses, He would be sinning, He would be unrighteous. If He would not show mercy to the adulteress, this would seem to contradict Jesus' ministry of mercy in calling sinners to salvation in Himself. The question is, therefore: how are righteousness and mercy to "meet," to harmonize in Jesus? How will the Savior act in this situation to show He is both perfectly righteous, and wonderfully merciful? These questions have to do, of course, with the broader question: How can God in righteousness and mercy justify the ungodly? Certainly the question

of the ages! Ask and answer this question for yourselves, considering, among others, the following passages: Ps. 85:10; Matt. 5:17, 18; John 1:17; Rom. 3:21-26. (Note too, the Heidelberg Catechism, LD 4.)

☞ Many have been the suggestions as to what Jesus wrote on the ground (vv. 6, 8). Some, for example, say that Jesus wrote the names and sins of the men who brought the woman to Him; others, that Jesus was at a loss for what to say, and so merely scribbled in the sand. One commentator suggests that Jesus here by this symbolic act was ratifying the law which He Himself had written with His own finger. Exactly what and why Jesus wrote on the ground we do not know. But the fact that He did not say anything right away is, I believe, significant. Implied in the silence was holy revulsion at sin — not first of all at the sin of the woman taken in adultery, but at the murderous self-righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, and at their seeking to tempt Him and to thwart His mission to seek and save that which was lost. Com-

ment, in this connection, on Jesus' words in John 12:47, that He came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

☞ Jesus is the forgiving Messiah. This is the truth front and center in this passage. His gospel of forgiveness is expressed in His words to the woman: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (v. 11). Explain how we have, in these words, the truth of justification and sanctification. Be able to define these doctrines. Show from Scripture the relationship between the two. Answer the slander of the doctrine of free justification that it gives people the freedom to sin that grace may abound.

☞ Jesus is the merciful Messiah. Did He show mercy to the scribes and Pharisees at this time? Explain how Jesus' showing mercy to the woman is an example of His mercy towards all His own.

That Ye Might Believe!

☞ The scribes and Pharisees are the very opposite of what true disciples of Jesus are. They show this in their attitude towards Jesus. They pretend to want to learn from Him, but instead seek to tempt Him that they might have to accuse Him (v. 6). They show this also in their treatment of the adul-

terous woman. Reflect upon the injustice of these leaders who claim to be advocates of strict justice. Think on the several ways these church leaders show disdain rather than love for this woman. In a very real way the devil was in those scribes and Pharisees, tempting the Holy One, and accusing one of God's elect! Show from Scripture the character of the devil reflected in these Jewish leaders. In this connection consider the meaning of the text: "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (I Pet. 4:8). How do we show love and righteousness in dealing with fellow sinners?

☞ The Jewish leaders, upon hearing the soul-searching words of Jesus, are convicted of their own sins. Is there any evidence that they were sorry for these sins? Is there any evidence of unrepentance? What are fruits of repentance in our lives? Did you ever think of *yourself* as an adulterer or adulteress?

☞ Worldlings love to quote Scripture and twist it for their own ends. Quoting Scripture gives such people an air of authority, and at the same time an opportunity which they so cherish to mock the Word of God. That is why many quote Jesus' words, "He that is without sin among you, let him

first cast a stone..." in order to prevent justice from being done. So Matthew 7:1 is often (mis)quoted in the faces of God's people when they rebuke sin. Explain how these verses do not prohibit brotherly admonition and church discipline.

Having Life Through His Name

☞ The adulterous woman was an elect child of God. She had to be. For Jesus forgave her. This must mean He would lay down His life for her on the cross, and pay for all her sins, establishing the ground for her forgiveness. This pronouncement of Jesus absolving the woman of guilt certainly must have changed her life. How? What part of her life did it change? Was this forgiving act of Jesus the very *beginning* of her life? In other words, did *regeneration* occur at this time?

☞ Meditate on and discuss the blessings of God's free justification in Christ. Quote Scriptures which speak of the joy and security believers have knowing the mercy and forgiveness of the Savior. How in your life do you *experience* that you are forgiven? What is your response to this? Do you consider it a privilege, having been forgiven, to "go, and sin no more"? □

Annual Report

Mr. Henry Kamps

Annual RFPA Meeting

Secretary's Report

Mr. Kamps is the retiring secretary of the RFPA.

Dear RFPA Members and Friends,
Greetings on behalf of the RFPA board. Once again, having a long-standing tradition spanning more than 70 years, we meet tonight as the Reformed Free Publishing Associa-

tion in order to review the decisions and accomplishments of the past year, and to carry on the affairs of this association.

At our last annual meeting, the decision was made to merge the PCPPRL book publishing arm with

the RFPA organization so that we would be one board publishing both the *Standard Bearer* and book publications. This report will give an overview of our activities in regard to the merger, and a perspective of our work in both publishing areas.

The merger challenged the board to begin charting a new course for the RFPA. Our work has concentrated in building a new structure designed to serve effectively for the future *Standard Bearer* and book publishing endeavor. Involved was a complete change in the way our organization functions through its board, committees, business manager, and assistants. We happily report that significant progress has been made this past year, and our restructuring should serve well for the future publishing endeavors of the RFPA.

Our board functions through three standing committees. The Membership/Information/Education Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Publication and Book Committee.

The *M.I.E. Committee* is now responsible for the promotion, marketing, and distribution of all the RFPA publications. This committee oversees orders, mailing, and the storage of our publications.

The *Finance Committee* is now responsible for the financial aspects of both the *Standard Bearer* and book publishing operations. This involves subscription rates, book pricing, discounts, inventory, cash flow, employee compensation, new equipment purchasing, printing rates, and accounting.

The *Publication and Book Committee* is now responsible for new and reprint book publishing. This involves meeting with writers, exploring new book possibilities, evaluating manuscripts, developing design, recommending layout, binding, and other details regarding the publishing of books.

Our Business Manager, Don

Doezema, now oversees the day-to-day operations of both the *Standard Bearer* and books. This has presented new challenges, and increased the area of responsibility and workload for Don. This is due to the merger creating changes in our day-to-day operations, office functions, and staff as well. We appreciate the vision and input Don has given to the board in helping consolidate many of the office functions so that we can achieve greater efficiency and harmony for both the *Standard Bearer* and book operations.

The board has decided to hire an additional assistant for our Business Manager, giving us a total of two assistants, Judi Doezeema and Evelyn Langerak. Judi is responsible for the *Standard Bearer* typesetting, layout, subscriptions, and accounting. Evelyn is responsible for tasks associated with book publishing such as filling orders, mailing, invoicing, book promotion, inventory, and the many details involved with bringing a book to print. We want to thank our capable business manager, Don, and our assistants, Judi and Evelyn, for their fine work and efforts this past year. We thank them, too, for their helpful suggestions, input, and cooperation.

The board also thanks our editor-in-chief, Prof. Engelsma, for his capable leadership, and for distinct, sound, edifying editorials. We also thank our other writers and contributors who have faithfully labored in supplying material for various rubrics in behalf of God's truth, making our magazine worthy of its name.

The board purchased more computer equipment to be used for updating the *SB* index, a data base for *Standard Bearer* and book customers, book inventory control, and improved efficiency in mailing, invoicing, and shipping of our *SB* and book publications.

At the suggestion of our editor-in-chief, the board applied for a registered trademark with the

proper government agencies for the "Standard Bearer" name. This has now been granted both by the State of Michigan and the Federal government, protecting the name of our magazine from infringement by others who would entertain using the *SB* name for their own periodical.

We have begun advertising our book publications in the *SB*. This is a benefit resulting from our merger, and with the new volume year you will see regular advertisements for RFPA book publications in your *Standard Bearer*.

Currently, the board is also working on a project with our publications designer, Jeff Steenholdt, to enhance the looks and readability of the *Standard Bearer*. Recommendations are being prepared that will include new layout, design, and cover for our magazine.

The *SB* continues to receive good financial support through church collections and gifts from our faithful readers and supporters. Gifts again this year helped pay just under 50% of the costs involved in producing the *Standard Bearer*. We take this opportunity to say thanks to our subscribers and friends for their generous and hearty support of our magazine.

We are actively pursuing the promotion of our books. In this connection we designed an entirely new, full-color catalog that features each book, presenting them all attractively to our customers and readers. This catalog was sent to many schools, libraries, seminaries, bookstores, and customers around the globe.

The board is working on several exciting book publishing ventures as well. In various stages of progress are three reprints and several new books. First in the reprinting category is *Reformed Education*, by Prof. Engelsma. This book is being extensively revised by the author and will receive a completely redesigned cover. Also being reprinted is *Believers and*

Their Seed, by H. Hoeksema. This book will include an interesting new preface written by Prof. Engelsma, and also a newly designed cover. Also being republished is *Marriage, the Mystery of Christ and His Church*, by Prof. Engelsma. This republication will include the book's original material on the doctrine of marriage, and, in addition, a very scholarly new section examining the history of marriage in the New Testament church and the Reformation period.

We also have several new book projects in various stages of progress. Our first will be a series of sermons on the book of Romans preached by the late Herman Hoeksema, which were originally taken down word for word as they were preached. This wonderful series of sermons is the possession of Mr. James Swart, and we thank him for making this treasure available for our publishing. Another new book scheduled is by Prof. Engelsma on the doctrine of eschatology. This book originated as a series of lectures given over the past two years by the author in the Grand Rapids area. We also have several new books from the

pen of Prof. Hanko in progress. The first is a work on the doctrine of prayer, entitled *When Ye Pray*, which originated from a post-confession class taught by the author over the past several years. In addition, Prof. Hanko is completing a work called *Lest We Forget*. This book will include a doctrinal history of the PRC, and a catechism teaching the doctrinal controversies of 1924 and 1953. Finally, also by Prof. Hanko, there is a work entitled *Heroes of Faith*. This book is a collection of biographical portraits of various significant figures in the history of the church of the new dispensation.

We continually receive correspondence from various places and individuals telling us of their fond appreciation and gratitude for our publications. We cannot quote from these letters now due to the length of this report, but the evidence that our publications continue to be of great spiritual benefit to many is overwhelming. This would indicate our calling to persevere energetically in the important work of publishing more works that proclaim the pure gospel of grace. Happily, the RFPA is re-structured, and is determined to publish new works on a regu-

lar, consistent basis. Our concern therefore is that our ministers, teachers, and professors give careful consideration to their calling to prepare and write new, good, Reformed material for our publishing.

The RFPA board will continually need energetic, talented men to serve as board members to carry out the work. Board members must be nominated from the RFPA membership. The work engaged in by the RFPA is worthwhile, and worthy of the best talents. If you are living in the Grand Rapids area, and are not a member of the RFPA, we ask you, Will you join us? We encourage you to come to our next annual meeting in September and become a RFPA member.

In conclusion, we thankfully acknowledge God's goodness in prospering and blessing the work of the RFPA. May God grant us continued faithfulness in promoting the gospel of grace in the fearful, present apostasy. God grant us steadfastness, as board, publishing society, and writers to the further establishment of His Kingdom, and the glory of His blessed name. □

Address at Annual RFPA Meeting

Rev. Charles Terpstra

The RFPA, Stimulator of Sound Knowledge in an Age of Ignorance

Rev. Terpstra is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois.

I express my thanks to the Board of the RFPA for the invitation to speak at your annual meeting. I have a deep appreciation for the labors of the Association and for the literature which the RFPA produces. I want you to know that I am an avid reader and promoter

of the *Standard Bearer* and of the books which the RFPA publishes. And as you may know, South Holland PRC is a loyal supporter of this ministry as well, both through the congregation and through its Evangelism Committee.

I rejoice in the merger of last

year, bringing the book ministry and the *Standard Bearer* together under one Board. My prayer is that this may serve the health of both publishing efforts and work to spread the Reformed faith far and wide.

The topic which I chose for this evening speaks to what I believe is the role and responsibility of the RFPA at the present time. That is to serve as an instrument of God for the stimulation of the knowledge of the Reformed faith as we distinctively and faithfully represent it. To stimulate is to arouse to activity, to serve as a stimulus or goad and spur someone to action — in this case we say to the knowledge of the Reformed faith. I say that the RFPA's calling is to serve as *an instrument of God* deliberately, since only God can arouse people to know His truth and to give them the spiritual knowledge of the Reformed faith. But He uses means, and that is where the RFPA comes in. Through its sound literature the RFPA can be used of God to stimulate people to know the truth.

This role and responsibility is heightened by the fact that we are living in an age of spiritual ignorance. It is again a time like that in Israel during the ministry of Hosea. Then God's people were being destroyed for lack of knowledge; they had forgotten and forsaken the law of God. The priests were not teaching it and the people did not want it. And that rejection of knowledge was destroying them. It was killing them spiritually (cf. Hosea 4:1-6).

So it is now in the church on earth. Knowledge of the truth is despised and rejected by both pulpit and pew, by clergy and Christian. And the people are being destroyed for this lack. It is this ignorance of true doctrine and true godliness which calls the RFPA to serve as a stimulator of sound knowledge. As we look at this further, I ask you to notice three things with me: 1. Why this stimu-

lation is needed; 2. How this stimulation of knowledge is to take place; and 3. What attitude this stimulation requires.

Why this Stimulation of Knowledge is Needed

There can be no doubt that the RFPA is needed for the stimulation of sound knowledge precisely because we are living in an age of ignorance. We are not talking in general when we say this. I am referring to the fact that people in the churches are ignorant of the *Reformed faith*, of the solid truths of God's Word, of historic Protestant Christianity; there is a dearth of such sound knowledge in the church world. What dominates the church world is not sound knowledge but unsound knowledge. Church members do not desire to receive solid doctrine and grow deep in the truth; instead they desire to be entertained, to be made happy, to feel good about themselves and their lives. What fills the churches' pulpits and classrooms is the teaching of Arminianism and Pelagianism, Pentecostalism and subjectivism, liberalism and the social gospel, pop psychology and humanism. Interest in the solid doctrines and practices of the Scriptures and of the historic Reformed faith, let alone the basics of the Christian faith, is for the most part lacking.

The publications of the churches demonstrate this too. The magazines and books being produced today are slick in their appearance, but filled with doctrinal and practical mush and error on the inside. Try to find something solid and sound. Where are periodicals and books which promote true knowledge, and that set forth the Reformed faith and historic Christianity?!

The sad thing is that this ignorance of the Reformed faith also prevails in the Reformed church

world. We know why this is: the knowledge of the truth has been rejected, just as in Israel's day; it is again a time of apostasy. The people do not want the truth, do not want doctrine, do not want the narrow path of biblical Christianity. They are seeking a generic brand of Christianity, a non-distinctive evangelicalism. And the so-called Reformed theologians, church leaders, and preachers are given over to falsehood, to heresy in doctrine and practice. They are doing all they can to undermine the historic Reformed-biblical faith. They too have rejected sound knowledge.

But there are also true people of God in these apostatizing churches who need to hear the clear sound of the truth, who need to be called back to the true faith, who need to be awakened and aroused to sound knowledge once again.

While we are talking about the ignorance that characterizes the Reformed churches about us, we must not neglect to evaluate ourselves. How well do our own people know the truth? How much are we reading the *Standard Bearer* and RFPA books? How much are we influenced by the trends about us? The threat to our own faith is always present and always great. We need to ensure that sound knowledge is constantly being held before our people, so that we may remain strong in faith and in godliness.

And let us not forget another group of people living in ignorance — the unbelieving world! They don't know the Reformed faith because they are living in the darkness of their unbelief. They don't know the good news of the gospel of sovereign grace because their hearts and minds are blinded. And if they do hear anything about Christianity, it is the watered-down version or the false gospel of the false church. Indeed, we

What dominates the church world is not sound knowledge but unsound knowledge.

ought not lose sight of the mission/evangelism calling we have toward those in such ignorance. Our publications ought not just be for our own people, or even for other Christians. We have a calling even to the world of spiritual ignorance. The ministry of the RFPA is needed for this too.

But now the need of the RFPA may be considered from another perspective, and we may raise an important question. I have in mind the fact that the printed page has fallen on hard times; we are not only living in an age of ignorance, we are also living in an age of illiteracy. People are not reading as in times past. All publishers are feeling the effects of this and are bemoaning the loss of readership. Newspaper, periodical, and book reading are all in decline. Much of this has to do with the influence of our video-crazed society. TV, VCR's, Game Boy, Nintendo, and computers have all taken away the time and the desire to read. MaryBeth Lubbers, referring to the book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, by Neil Postman, recently had an excellent article on the effects of television on our society and on our Christian homes.

On the one hand, then, we are living in the information age, when access to news and information has never been greater; and yet, on the other hand, people are not getting their information from the printed page. This fact raises the serious question, Is literature still an effective way to reach people with the Reformed faith? Is the RFPA as a publishing ministry needed any longer as a stimulator of sound knowledge? If people not only do not want anything solid anymore, but also are not reading any longer, why continue to produce a periodical and books? Should we abandon this work and put our resources to work in other ways?

I want to go on record as being convinced that the publishing work of the RFPA is still needed. I firmly believe that the printed

page is still an important and effective way to communicate the truth and to stimulate sound knowledge of the Reformed faith to our people, to the church world, and to the world. People do still read and we need to promote reading. God's people do take the time to read and do have an interest in receiving knowledge of the truth through the printed page. God sees to that, I believe. He always has. After all, He communicated His Word to us in written form and He has seen to the publication of this Word throughout the world! In addition, the church has always been involved in using the means of the printed page to make known the truth, and we ought not stop now. The Reformation, for example, was among other things a grand publishing venture to get out the message of the recovered gospel, and we need to continue this. South Holland PRC has been convinced of this means of literature and has used it effectively in its evangelism work from the very beginning.

Besides, we need to remember that the false church and the unbelieving world are still producing and promoting their lies through literature. They have not stopped using the printed page to advance error and evil. For this reason too we ought not quit our publishing efforts. The ministry of literature is still needed. The RFPA must continue to promote the Reformed faith by printing the *Standard Bearer* and solid books. She must still serve as a stimulator of sound knowledge by means of the printed page.

How this Stimulation is to Take Place

How then can and must the RFPA serve as a stimulator of sound knowledge in this age of ignorance in which we find ourselves? First of all, let it be clear that we stimulate sound knowledge only with the *truth*, the truth of God's Word, the truth of the

Reformed faith. We must not hide the truth or cover it up with a sugar-coated presentation. We must not compromise the truth and accommodate ourselves to the spirit of the age in order to make the *Standard Bearer* and the RFPA books more appealing and palatable. We must not avoid the truth and shrink from letting it expose errors and evils in the world and in the church world. We do not need to resort to slick packaging and marketing techniques to try to "sell" the gospel we are presenting, hoping that glossy pages and glitzy pictures will at least grab people's eye and increase subscriptions.

I do not mean we have to be sloppy or drab in our presentation and in the appearance of our literature. The point is that it is not appearance and technique that stimulate sound knowledge! They may catch one's attention for a time; they may appeal to a greater number of people. But they will not arouse one to true knowledge of God and grace. Only the truth will stimulate sound knowledge in people! It is the truth of God's Word — the entire, uncompromising truth of Scripture, the full-orbed gospel of the Reformed faith, which goads God's people to the knowledge of God and His sovereign grace. That is God's means to stimulate sound knowledge. Not the lie, not a perverted gospel, not a compromised gospel, but the whole truth of God. That is what He is pleased to use. That is what He blesses.

And we have that truth in our Protestant Reformed Churches. That is our heritage. That is what has been preserved and developed in our midst. And that is what we need to put out there in our literature — the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth! It is the solid content of the truth of Scripture that counts in our publications! Solid biblical exposition, the clear presentation of the historic Reformed doctrine and prac-

tice, the faithful description of God's work in the church throughout history, uncompromising commentary on current trends. These are what make our literature distinctive and unique. It is the truth which must be set forth, for that alone serves to stimulate God's people to true knowledge in this ignorant age. Let us be encouraged to continue to do that in the *Standard Bearer* and the RFPA books.

Allow me to make a few points as to how we can continue to do this and do this better. Most of these will not be new, but can be mentioned for your encouragement.

I believe we need to develop more literature in all areas of Reformed teaching. We need more material that sets forth Reformed doctrine. I realize that this is and has been the strength of our literature; it must continue to be. There is such a woeful ignorance of true Reformed doctrine in the church world. Much of what passes for Reformed teaching is not at all Reformed, and people are confused as to what is really Reformed. We need to continue to give a clear and pure testimony to what Reformed doctrine is. For example, more can be set forth with regard to Scripture, covenant theology, the doctrines of grace, predestination, the church, and eschatology. The area of the history of doctrine and the history of the church needs to be addressed too. That is another realm of ignorance for many people. And what we need are *popular* presentations of these precious doctrines. I mean literature that is written for the people, for the common man and woman, that reaches them at their level and at the same time brings them up to a higher level of understanding. There are others in the Reformed community who do this well; we ought to learn from them.

We also need to develop more materials that set forth Reformed practice, i.e., the biblical definition

of true Christian living. The *Standard Bearer* does address this and we do have some excellent books on practical subjects, such as marriage and the role of women. But we need more. More on marriage and home life, more on what it means to live antithetically as a Reformed Christian in this world, more on moral issues we face in this modern age. Practical matters in the area of worship also come to mind. This whole subject of true worship needs to be addressed. Bible study aids also come to mind; our people find these helpful and useful for personal devotions and for society life in the church.

The RFPA is stimulating our Protestant Reformed ministers to submit material or suggest material for publication; this is good. But there are others in our midst who are qualified to write too. We need to encourage our teachers and elders and members who are gifted and interested in writing to do so in the areas mentioned above. There is so much to do! The more the RFPA can produce, the more she can be used to stimulate sound knowledge! And by all means promote the materials we have! Be aggressive in seeking new subscribers and new book club members! Keep up the work and keep finding work!

What Attitude this Stimulation Requires

Finally, I want to say a word about the attitude which is required for this stimulation of sound knowledge. I am not referring to the attitude of those who read our literature. Certainly they must have an attitude of humility and love of the truth if they are going to obtain sound knowledge through our literature. Without this our literature will not profit them at all. And, as we said, only God can give this. The spiritual stimulation is of His grace alone.

But I am concerned about our own attitude toward the truth, our

own spiritual mindset toward the sound knowledge of the Reformed faith which we have. My concern is this, do we love the truth? Do we know our faith and heritage, and do we seek to grow in the sound knowledge of it? You see, only this godly attitude toward the truth will keep us faithful to stimulate others to sound knowledge. Only when we are first of all stimulated by the truth will be able to arouse others to its knowledge. If we do not care about the Reformed faith; if we do not love God's truth given us; if we do not delight in the glorious faith of our fathers; and if we are not seeking to develop the truth and to grow in our knowledge of the truth, then we will lose our desire and our ability to promote the truth through our literature. We will stop writing and producing sound literature that serves as a stimulus for others.

O, we may continue to publish for a while. The past efforts of the RFPA will carry us along for a time. But carelessness with and complacency toward the truth will eventually kill the labors of the RFPA. If we reject the knowledge of God and His Word and truth, then we will be destroyed for lack of knowledge; and along with that our publishing work will be destroyed too.

We have then a solemn calling. We must maintain our love for the truth of the Reformed faith as our churches hold it. We must continue to be stimulated to sound knowledge ourselves, so that we may keep our fervor and commitment to producing solid literature that stimulates others. Are you reading the *Standard Bearer* and the RFPA books? Are you excited by the truth?

May God continue to goad us to the love of His truth, to the desire of sound knowledge, so that, aroused by that great faith ourselves, we may serve to awaken and arouse others to its greatness and glory. □

"A hole in the dike"?

In the July issue of *Christian Renewal* there appeared two letters each in its own way accusing the Protestant Reformed Churches of following "human logic." But really, what grounds are there for that?

Let's first, however, see the letters:

Apparent Contradiction

Please allow me to enter the fray once more. Rev. Woudenberg, in his response to Tim Gallant (May 27), says that "Tuininga is driven to claim that to be Reformed is to be neither a consistent Calvinist or an Arminian, but both." The reason Woudenberg comes to that strange conclusion (one that I deny) is that according to him my position is not "logically airtight." The point is that a consistent Calvinist believes what the Bible says, even if it contradicts human logic. According to Woudenberg, the teachings of Scripture must fit with human logic, and otherwise we can't accept them. Luther called reason a "whore" and I'm ready to say the same thing about logic if it gets in the way of biblical teaching. Van Til accused Gordon Clark of subjecting God to the logical rule of non-contradiction. God was subject to human logic. But Van Til rightly took issue with this, saying that God stands above the law of noncontradiction. He is not subject to human logic. I greatly fear that Woudenberg (and the PRs) are

falling into the same trap as Clark.

The Arminian says, Give me man even if I lose God. Hoeksema says: Give me God, even if I lose man. A plague on both houses. Neither Arminianism nor hyper-Calvinism is really Reformed. Each takes one horn of the "logical" dilemma. But the Bible teaches both. You can't lose any one of these and still be Reformed. God is 100% sovereign in our salvation, and man is 100% responsible for his salvation. If I'm saved, God gets all the credit; if I'm lost, I get all the blame. That may seem logically inconsistent, but that matters not. The Bible clearly teaches both, and that's why I believe it. Logic is not the criterion of truth. We call this a paradox, an apparent contradiction.

C. Van Til is right when he says, "When Hoeksema says or assumes that God's revelation in Scripture may be expected to reveal nothing which will be apparently self-contradictory, we demur." And A.C. DeJong is also right when he says, "Consequently with our logic we may have to make various predications which seem to be contradictory for us, although in reality these predications are not contradictory. God's actions and attitudes, being unique always elude exhaustive logical analysis."

Jelle Tuininga
Lethbridge, AB

And then immediately following that appeared this letter:

Consistent Logic or Dependent Logic?

It is no small irony that Ber-

nard Woudenberg (May 27) states that I am "caught on the horns of a dilemma" because I have brought up biblical issues which all of us have difficulty relating to one another. He writes of me, "these tensions to him I am sure are very real, as his logic demands they be." What logic is that? Well, it is a "rejection of consistent logic." He writes further that "proper logic recognizes" the limitations imposed by Scripture, "and is satisfied to stay within [them], without having to struggle with their contradictions, as Mr. Gallant seems pressed to try." Apparently, my "faith is seen as a leap into the incomprehensible darkness of enigmas and dilemmas."

Why is this so ironic? Well, it is simply that Mr. Woudenberg has misread me almost entirely. My whole point was to show that the effort that the Protestant Reformed make to resolve everything into their symmetrical paradigm of election is a violation of the very limitations of which Woudenberg speaks (I am grateful to him for writing so eloquently in defending the very point I was making: our logic is limited, by both our finitude as creatures, and our fallenness as sons of Adam). The PRs come upon the truth of election and the truth of the free offer of the Gospel, and being unable to reconcile them neatly, simply reject one of them. They create the dilemma through rationalism, and then are forced to undo it by denying truth. The Protestant Reformed approach, if applied in these other areas which I used as examples, would force them into clearly unbiblical theology in those

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

instances as well. That is the heart of my point: rationalism of this variety is a faulty approach to hermeneutics (interpretation).

Am I "pressed to try" to struggle with so-called contradictions? Is it true that I "think I must" accept contradictions, and therefore answer every question that could be brought up concerning the Scripture? Nothing could be farther from the truth. To the contrary, it is the PRs who are bent on answering everything to avoid even the appearance of contradiction.

Moreover, I most emphatically do not believe (and never implied) that the Scripture contradicts itself. What I do say, however, is that although contradictions are nonexistent, nonetheless, because of our limitations, we are often forced to humbly admit that we cannot organize all the biblical data into neat, little corners of whatever system we have formulated. As I wrote earlier, the textured richness of God's Word simply will not always fit into the limited envelopes of our reason; it transcends our capabilities to draw lines between every fact with which it confronts us. I am in Mr. Woudenberg's debt for reinforcing my argument, particularly in the latter half of his letter, and thus undermining his own.

The issue is not whether or not I believe in logical consistency: I affirm that as strongly as does Mr. Woudenberg. The issue is dependent logic. Reason is not an independent agent. We must submit it to the rich revelation of God. We must realize that when we come to the end of our reasoning ability, we do not thereby come to the boundaries of truth. Rather, we are again reminded of the transcendent majesty of an infinite God, and are moved to adoring praise. This, I contend, is the proper response to mystery, rather than denial.

Finally, Mr. Woudenberg begins by suggesting that I and oth-

ers have attacked a straw man — that PRs do not believe and teach what is ascribed to them. Yet in a (lengthy) article he never once comes close to demonstrating the nature of the supposed slander. Why? Had I misrepresented Protestant Reformed thinking, should that not have been corrected?

I must suggest that the problem is not misrepresentation. What is so offensive is that I see Protestant Reformed rationalism in the light in which I believe Scripture demands me to see it. And in that light, I must cast down the vain imaginations of those who would compartmentalize an incomprehensible, transcendent God. We may, in a limited way, understand God, but we can never comprehend Him. God may be unveiled, but He will never be naked in our sight, unlike our position before Him.

In the last analysis, we must decide whether we will appeal to human reason as the arbiter of Scripture, or to Scripture as the judge of reason. This is the great question in hermeneutics, and it is precisely here that we must stand firmly on the authority of Scripture. Contrary to Woudenberg, orthodoxy's fate depends, not on the foundation of the PR's thinly-disguised rationalism, but, by grace, on a wholesale commitment to the Word of God.

Tim Gallant
Sexsmith, AB

To these letters I replied as follows:

Dear Mr. VanDyk,

I appreciate your willingness to allow this discussion on logic and Christianity to continue. At times it may seem rather slow and repetitious; but, through it all, I believe, some very basic realities are being brought to the fore.

With the letter of Rev. Jelle Tuininga, in your July issue, I can be brief, and sadly so. For, continuing as he does in his rejection of logic, he becomes himself a

prime illustration of the danger this holds, as when he concludes, "God is 100% sovereign in our salvation, and man is 100% responsible for his salvation." This is shocking. That God is sovereign in salvation, of course, goes without saying, for God is sovereign in all things. But when he proposes that man is "100% responsible for his salvation," he strikes at the heart of the gospel. If there is one thing Scripture brings out, it is that, if man is responsible for his salvation, all is lost; for it is a responsibility which can never be met [Gal 3:11,12]. And so the good news is precisely that God has taken the responsibility for salvation and placed it on his Son, so that all who believe in him — through the gift of faith [Eph. 2:8] — may be saved. To deny or ignore this is to take grace away.

And, if Rev. Tuininga would still reject logic nonetheless, may I refer him to the articles by Dr. Carl W. Bogue in the May and June issues of *Outlook*, entitled *G. C. Berkouwer: A Hole in the Dike?* Dr. Bogue, having studied and written his dissertation under Berkouwer, provides a perceptive analysis of the development of his theology, only in the end to find "the hole in the dike" to be: "Given the increasing commitment to faith versus logic, or correlation versus systematics, it is not hard to detect why Berkouwer has been increasingly at odds with classical Reformed orthodoxy" (emphasis Bogue's). The dike has been opened and apostasy, as we know, now engulfs the GKN, and the fatherland we love, while we can only plead with brother Tuininga not to continue riding that tide.

More intriguing, however, is the contribution of Mr. Tim Gallant which follows. Apparently he does not share, at least outrightly, Tuininga's rejection of logic, and even somewhat agrees with our description of logic as to its ability to determine some doctrines with certainly, and others not. But

one thing he, as Tuininga, will not surrender, his insistence that the Protestant Reformed are given over to "human logic."

Now there is, of course, what may be called "human logic." Aristotle had his Strict or Scientific Logic, even as the Medieval philosophers had their Topical Logic, and the Renaissance its Rhetorical Logic, each in its own way claiming to be able to begin with experience and through human reason arrive at ultimate truth, including the reality of God — and even at times to be able to replicate the thinking of God. But who have ever been more adamant in denying these to be the product of God's grace, or even pleasing to him, than the PRs? And, if Mr. Gallant can point out for me a responsible PR teacher who has ever based his teachings on any of these, I certainly would like to know when it was, and where.

That, however, is not to deny that there is a good and proper logic, found in the Bible, used by it, and rooted in such biblical principles as these:

1. Knowledge of the reality which underlies all things, and by which only they can be fully understood, comes to us only from God through Jesus Christ, His Son [John 1:18], who not only brings us this truth, but also provides the new life by which only it may be perceived [John 3:3].

2. This truth is provided for us in the Bible by means of the miracle of inspiration [2 Tim. 3:16], so that in the end it is God's Word and not man's [1 Pet. 1:19, 20] by which we can come to true wisdom and understanding [Prov. 1:1ff.].

3. In this revelation God, being one God [Deut. 6:4], cannot and will not contradict Himself [Num. 23:19]. He does not reveal to us everything [Ex. 33:20], but what He does will continue to be so forevermore [Is. 40:8], while the opposite is to be condemned [Gal. 1:8,9].

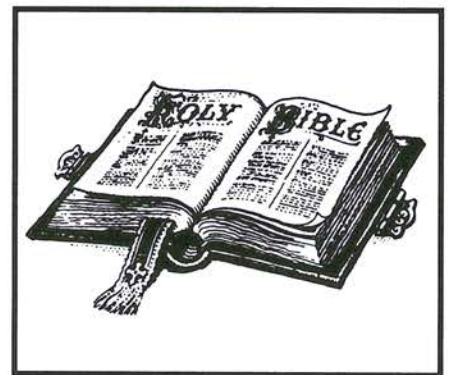
4. Because of this, and following the practice of the Bible itself [Acts 17:11], we can by comparing Scripture with Scriptures [John 5:39] seek out those current truths which run consistently through the whole, and so determine which doctrines may be believed (as we have in our Reformed creeds), while recognizing those which are only possibly or probably so.

5. When these doctrines are received by a true faith, they will produce sanctification [John 15:3], i.e., a desire and will to live that Christian life which is implicit within them, not as a condition to receiving salvation or certain covenant benefits, but as a response of love and gratitude for all God has done [1 John 5:2; HC:Q 86]; for, if this is not so, the faith claimed is not real, inasmuch as *faith without works is dead* [Jas. 2:17].

These were the principles with which Herman Hoeksema developed his theology (known to be an exegetical theology throughout); it was in these he and Prof. Ophoff schooled those of us who studied under them; and, as far as I know, they have been followed by all who have taught among us since.

But in the end Gallant too would join in calling this "human logic." One might be inclined to take this personally, as a means of avoiding the substance of our theology by the use of disparaging labels, except for the fact that Dr. Bogue brings out how much deeper it goes than that. This is simply neo-orthodoxy's method for defending irrationality. Time honored terms (such as, logic, reason, consistency, systematics, orthodoxy, etc.) are disparaged by being set in antagonistic juxtaposition over against the mainstay terms of Christianity (as faith, praise, doxology, etc.) so as to justify its use of terms which have always before been looked at askance (contradiction, dilemma, mystery, enigma, paradox, etc.).

And now in his most recent article (July-August issue) Bogue brings out the purpose behind it all, namely, "denying the orthodox doctrine of election" by changing the idea of "pre-determination" to "pre-desire" so that the "offer of grace" may be for all. No wonder Berkouwer so vehemently rejected "consistent views like Hoeksema's" — which tide Tuininga and Gallant, as VanTil and DeJong before them, are now quite willing to ride, into what Bogue demonstrates to be essentially Kantian *noumenal* philosophy (the real "human logic" perhaps?). But remember, the price is there to be paid — as a man sitting next to me on the plane from Amsterdam to Budapest last month brought out as, with a shrug, he sought to explain why only a handful show up for worship anymore at the great old Oude Kerk on a Sunday morn, "I was raised Gereformeerde," he said, "but we in the Netherlands don't go to church much anymore." And why should they? If one thing can be true, and its opposite too, the difference between right and wrong is gone; and what is left? And what can we do, but pray to be kept from being swept along through that same "hole in the dike" out into the troubled sea [Is. 57:20] of modern irrationality. □



Congregational Activities

As some of you may know, our First PRC in Holland, MI purchased seven acres of land back in 1995 for a future building site. Plans called for First to begin a building project sometime in the near future. Well, the future for First appears to have arrived sooner than they may have anticipated. On September 27 they finalized the sale of their church (minus parsonage) to the Lord of Life Lutheran Church of Holland. This gave First only 30 days to find a new temporary church home, and beginning on Sunday, November 3, they began meeting at Pine Creek Elementary School at 1184 136th Ave. For our west Michigan congregations, this is north of Holland, between Riley and Quincy streets, north of West Ottawa High School. Services are still held at the regular time, 9:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

In mid-October, the Bethel PRC in Itasca, IL met to discuss a proposal for building a sanctuary on their Prat Boulevard property. Opportunity was given to discuss this proposal and ask any questions. And after a week of consideration, the congregation voted on October 21 to go ahead with plans to erect a sanctuary for the worship of our Lord.

The Bethel congregation was asked to supply a picture of their church building for the Loveland, CO PRC's homepage on the Internet. Since they presently have no building, they decided to send a group picture of their congregation instead.



Rev. and Mrs. Gise VanBaren

On the evening of October 20, the congregation in Loveland, CO met to commemorate and celebrate the 40 years of service to our churches by their pastor, Rev. G. VanBaren. Various societies presented special numbers; an octet sang a number; and a poem was read by Laura VandenTop, written by a former member, Sherry Koole. Letters were also read from Rev. VanBaren's four prior congregations, offering congratulations and some highlights of his ministry. A plaque marking the event was also presented to the VanBarens.

We also add here our congratulations and thanks to Rev. VanBaren for the past 40 years, asking for God's continued blessing upon him in his ministry in our churches.

Evangelism Activities

The Evangelism Committees of many of our churches were busy this past Reformation Day sponsoring lectures and conferences which continued to serve as a strong witness to others of the continued importance of the Reformation started October 31, 1517. By my count, our congregations sponsored 14 different events on and around October 31st. Space doesn't allow us to list them all

here, but let me include just a couple.

First, the Evangelism Committee of the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA sponsored two Reformation Day celebrations this year, one in Redlands, with Rev. G. VanBaren of the Loveland, CO PRC speaking on "Satan — and the Mother of All Battles," the other at Victorville, CA. Hope has had an ongoing evangelism work for some time now in Victorville, and, at the occasion of Reformation Day, Rev. Arie denHartog, pastor at Hope, spoke there on the theme, "The Reformation of the Church."

To save costs, arrangements were made between Redlands and Loveland basically to exchange pastors for a week, with Rev. VanBaren going to Hope at the same time as classical church visitation and Rev. denHartog giving the same speech, "The Reformation of the Church," in Loveland in conjunction with church visitation there.

The Evangelism Committee of the Southwest PRC in Grandville, MI was able to sponsor a Reformation Conference on November 1 and 2 this year entitled "The Reformation's Controversy with Rome." Prof. R. Dykstra spoke Friday night on the theme, "The Cataclysmic Conflict." This was followed on Saturday morning by two speeches. The first one, entitled "Is the Pope Antichrist?" presented by Seminarian James Laning, was followed by "Evangelicals and Catholics Together," given by Rev. R. Cammenga.

The Evangelism Committee of the Hudsonville, MI PRC is planning to host a slide presentation by Rev. J. Mahtani, pastor of the Trinity PRC in Houston, TX, on December 3 entitled, "Reaching the Nations with the Gospel of Grace."

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

This meeting is scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m., with refreshments and fellowship both before and after the slides.

Rev. W. Bruinsma presented a speech entitled "The Role of the Church in Society" on October 24 at Muskegon Community College. Muskegon is a city on Lake Michigan, about one hour north of Holland and Grand Rapids, MI. A question and answer period followed the speech, and refreshments were served. The program

was sponsored by our Faith PRC in Jenison and our First PRC in Holland.

Minister Activities

Our Hull, IA PRC has called Rev. W. Bekkering to serve as our churches' missionary to Ghana, West Africa.

Rev. C. Terpstra has accepted the call he received to serve as pastor of the First PRC in Holland, MI.

Rev. W. Bruinsma preached his

farewell in First in Holland on October 13, and two weeks later he was installed as the eighth pastor of the Kalamazoo, MI PRC.

Food For Thought

"Conversion is not the smooth easy-going process some men seem to think it, otherwise man's heart would never have been compared to fallow ground and God's Word to a plough."

— J. Bunyan □

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On December 3, 1996, the Lord willing, **MR. and MRS. ART BLEYENBERG, JR.**, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren, rejoice with them in this momentous occasion. We thank the Lord for His covenant faithfulness to them, and pray that our heavenly Father will bless them in the remaining days of their pilgrimage together on this earth.

"For the Lord is good; his truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

- ❖ Harold and Ethel Steenstra
- ❖ Arvin and Rose Bleyenbergh
- ❖ Arnold and Charlotte Bleyenbergh
- ❖ Bill and Jeanette Bleyenbergh
- ❖ Alvin and Betty Bleyenbergh
- ❖ Larry and Carla Kane
- ❖ James and Gloria Bleyenbergh
- ❖ Bob and Gaylene Bleyenbergh
- ❖ Art, Jr. and Mary Bleyenbergh
- ❖ Eugene and Elaine Bleyenbergh
- ❖ Gary and Jackie Bleyenbergh

67 grandchildren

35 great grandchildren

Edgerton, Minnesota

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The faculty, students, and support staff of the Protestant Reformed Theological School express their sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Don Doezema on the death of Mr. Doezema's mother,

NELLIE DOEZEMA.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (I Thessalonians 4:14).

Prof. David J. Engelsma, Rector

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church expresses its Christian sympathy to our fellow officebearer, Mr. Don Doezema, and his wife Judi in the death of his mother,

MRS. NELLIE DOEZEMA.

May the bereaved family find comfort in the assurance of God's Word, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).

Rev. Ron Cammenga, Pres.

Mr. Clare Kuiper, Clerk

NOTICE!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, January 8, 1997, at the First Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, MI.

Jon J. Huiskens

Stated Clerk

Please make note in your

1996 Yearbook

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

2034 Skyline Drive

Kalamazoo, MI 49006

Home Phone: (616) 349-5202

Study Phone: (616) 349-5364

Please also note that
Rev. Kortering's correct
phone/fax number is:
65-481-9441.

From the Protestant Reformed Seminary:

**New Translation
Offered For Sale!**

A translation of Rev. Herman Hoeksema's book *A Power of God Unto Salvation: or, Grace No Offer* (*Een Kracht Gods Tot Zaligheid: of, Genade Geen Aanbod*) has been completed. The translation was begun by Prof. Homer Hoeksema and appeared in the *Journal*. It was finished by Rev. C. Hanko. The Seminary is making it available in syllabus form with plastic-binding. It will be ready for distribution shortly after the first of the year. The cost will be \$5.00. Those who wish to have the book in translation are urged to order it from the Seminary as soon as possible. The number of orders will determine how many are printed. This is an important document in the history of our Protestant Reformed Churches, first published in the Dutch in 1932; all those who are interested in the history of our churches will want a copy.

4949 Ivanrest Ave.
Grandville, MI 49418
(616) 531-1490