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The Blessed Persecuted

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Matthew 5:10-12

For some time now we have been working our way through the first part of Christ's sermon on the mount as recorded in Matthew 5-7. In verses 3-9 of chapter 5 we have seen the seven characteristics of the citizen of the kingdom of heaven, characteristics which we call beatitudes. It would appear that here in verses 10-12 we have yet an eighth beatitude, a special blessedness identified together with the object of that blessedness.

However, we have here not an eighth beatitude, but a conclusion to the seven beatitudes. The text does not speak of a characteristic of

the Christian, but of the result of the characteristics which are seen in him: he is going to be persecuted for righteousness' sake. This is something that the child of God can expect, for the Word of God throughout shows that this is true. Always, the citizens of the kingdom of heaven can expect persecution for righteousness' sake.

That being said, we must not look upon persecution as a cause for sorrow, discouragement, or despair. On the contrary, strange as it may seem, persecution is reason for comfort and encouragement. There is comfort because one sees in persecution an indication that he is a pilgrim here below with no abiding place on the earth. And there is encouragement because he knows that he is persecuted because of his tie to Jesus Christ. The persecuted for righteousness' sake are happy or blessed exactly because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Persecution. Certainly not a very pleasant thing to contemplate. Nevertheless, the persecution of the righteous is simply a historical fact. We see this on the very first pages of Holy Writ. Even our smallest children know the account of Cain killing his brother Abel. Abel was right-

teous; Cain was not. Cain, whose works were evil, slew Abel because his works were righteous (I John 3:12). It was no different for Enoch, for the people of God in bondage in Egypt, for the saints in Babylon, and for the faithful remnant during the four hundred years between Malachi and Matthew. Always they suffered for righteousness' sake.

That was in the old dispensation. It was no different in New Testament times. Immediately after Christ's resurrection and ascension, persecution began to take place. God's people were thrown to the lions, burned at the stake, boiled in oil. We read that at the time of Stephen's stoning "there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem.... As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison" (Acts 8:1, 3). Think also of the persecution during and after the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. And even though we may not today be personally suffering from persecution of this kind in the country in which we live, there are countries in the world that forbid the worship of the true God and perse-

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cute those who do not bow to this demand.

To persecute others is to pursue after or chase them in order to destroy those who fear God or to force them to renounce their faith in Christ. In this way the wicked seek to remove from the face of this earth all such who worship God in sincerity and truth. Ultimately, this is Satan's attempt to destroy the seed of the woman, the church.

This we can expect. Christ said so: the wicked "shall revile and persecute you." It may begin in a relatively mild way. We will be scorned and poked fun of because of our convictions about God, His Word, and His work of saving His people through Christ. Society will have none of the Christian because darkness hates the light. When these methods do not succeed, the wicked will try to extinguish the light through open persecution.

All of this is bad enough, but the wicked in his sin knows no bounds. In addition, he "shall say all manner of evil against you falsely." This is not something waiting to happen; it is happening already. If you do not join them in their social organizations, then you are not "socially concerned." If you insist, rightly so, on sending your children to the Christian school, then you are a segregationist, one that does not mix with society. If we in our churches preach against certain sins such as homosexuality, abortion, and the like, then we discriminate and are denying those who practice such sins their "rights." The end result will be that those who live and teach the life of Christ will be considered unacceptable in society and will be dealt with accordingly. You may have already been denied a job because you will not work on Sunday or will not join the labor union. Yes, you may have "freedom of religion" as long as you freely cooperate with the world. However, oppose that world and you will suffer the consequences.

The question now is, why?

Christ says that the child of God will be persecuted for righteousness' sake. That righteousness consists of two things: justification and sanctification. The citizen of the kingdom of heaven is justified because his sins have been washed away by the precious blood of Jesus Christ on the basis of which he is declared righteous before God. Though the believer was no more deserving, no more righteous in himself than any other, he nevertheless is now judged by the holy God to be perfect and righteous for Jesus' sake.

Following from this is the fact that the Holy Spirit through the Word of God leads the child of God in a holy, righteous walk. God graciously brings this elect child to repentance. God, through the preached Word, leads him to confession of sin and acknowledgment that he belongs to God. God leads him in a godly walk in this world. The citizen of the kingdom of heaven now recognizes the awfulness of sin and refuses to participate in the godlessness of this world. He finds no pleasure in its terribly evil entertainments. He wants no part in its evils of gambling and of killing. He desires no fellowship and communion with those of this world. On the contrary, the child of God condemns the works and the workers of iniquity. He rightly insists that the wicked must turn from his evil way and that he must repent in humility before God and walk in righteousness.

Therefore the citizen of the kingdom is persecuted. The wicked cannot really bear exposure. The evil world does not want any warning or condemnation. As mentioned earlier, the wicked are darkness and they hate light. When Jesus who is *the* Light comes into the world, the darkness of the world received Him not. When Christ's light shines in and through His people, the darkness hates this and seeks to quench that light. That is why Cain killed his brother Abel. He killed his own brother to remove the testimony of righteous

Abel against his own evil action.

The same remains true today. The wicked have their heart set on earthly things: evil pleasures, material goods, etc. And this world cannot bear to have the righteous testify through word and action that the works of this world are evil. The world cannot bear to see the righteousness of the saints. Therefore, there will always be the attempt through persecution to silence the citizens of the kingdom of God. Of this we need not be surprised, for Christ foretold that this would happen.

Contrary to all that one might think, those who so suffer are blessed. Imprisonment? Loss of possessions and/or life? Blessed? Strange as it may seem, Christ clearly states that such a one is blessed. There are several reasons why persecution is a blessing for the church of Christ. The Lord uses such means to purge His church of those who are Christian in name only. However they became members in the first place, they leave under persecution because they do not love Jesus Christ. Their leaving is good for the church.


Furthermore, persecution teaches the members of the church that they are utterly dependent upon God. When all goes well, we are all too inclined to think of ourselves as self-sufficient. Then we become careless. In times of persecution the citizens of the kingdom of God realize that God must keep them in the faith. God must give them the grace and wisdom to walk in a way of righteousness – even if this brings upon them the wrath of the wicked. It is blessing to know and experience that God preserves and provides for His people.

We are further blessed under persecution because it is for Jesus' sake. One is persecuted because he belongs to Christ. Persecution, then, serves as confirming evidence that we belong to our Savior. The prophets of old were persecuted for righteousness' sake. We read that they were imprisoned, beaten,

stoned, put to death. In that light the citizens of the kingdom who are persecuted for righteousness' sake are in good company: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elijah, and many others. The apostles also suffered, being thrown into prison and beaten, and even were killed. Of them we read that they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus' sake.

Finally, the citizens of the king-

dom are blessed in that they are brought into the kingdom of heaven. God has prepared for them a place eternal in the heavens. There they shall enjoy fellowship and communion with God through Jesus Christ the Lord and Head. This blessedness of heaven is not earned by those who are persecuted, but it is merited for them through Jesus Christ. Christ makes them righteous. Christ preserves

His righteous ones in the midst of a world that persecutes such. And Christ finally brings them to heavenly glory. Truly, persecuted ones are blessed. Children of God never need be ashamed of revealing those spiritual characteristics of heaven's citizens. They need never fear persecution on this earth. Their Lord protects them here, and finally glorifies them hereafter in heaven. To God be all the honor and glory. 

Editorial

Synod of the PRC, 2002

Missions

Missions will again be a major part of the agenda of the 2002 synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America (PRC). Synod will consider the detailed reports of the missionaries, calling churches, and domestic and foreign mission committees.

The Domestic Mission Committee (DMC) is recommending that synod approve the calling of another home missionary. He is to work mainly with a core group of some four families in Fayetteville, NC. The DMC also proposes a change in an earlier synodical decision regarding confession of faith on the mission field. The change would authorize confession of faith on the mission field "when the preaching and teaching of the missionary is fruitful and there are proper candidates (and their households) who are Reformed in doctrine and walk, Acts 16:14, 15, 30-34."

The Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) reports that Rev. Wayne Bekkering accepted the call as missionary to Ghana, West Africa and is working on the field. Rev. Rich-

ard Moore has requested emeritation effective July 31, 2002. In view of Rev. Moore's emeritation, the FMC is recommending that synod approve the calling of another missionary to Ghana.

In a report of the work in Ghana that mentions large numbers at the worship services and other meetings, the FMC includes two matters that require synod's careful consideration. One concerns marriage. Synod began the work in Ghana in 1996 on the ground that "the institution of marriage is honored" by the Ghanaians. In its recommendation to the 1996 synod that a missionary be called to work in Ghana, the FMC stated as one of its grounds:

The Ghanaians' lives are not inimical to the covenant. The family is considered, even by pagans, the most important structure of society. The churches we visited had an abundance of young men and women. Also, the institution of marriage is honored. The truth of the covenant can well be taught and understood — in contrast with our work in Jamaica where there were not many families (husband, wife, and children) and

very few young people in the church ("Acts of Synod and Yearbook 1996," p. 165).

Now the FMC informs synod that the earlier report about honoring marriage "was not entirely true," even as regards those with whom the PRC are working. The report to synod of the council of Hull PRC, Hull, Iowa, calling church for Ghana, is explicit concerning the marital sins of members of the fellowship. Based on visits made to the people of the fellowship by a delegation from the Hull council and the FMC in November/December, 2001, the council of Hull informs synod that

the marriage and family structure was disappointing, with only a few completed marriages as far as the delegates could determine. Some could be made good marriages if they confess their sin, pay their dowry, and complete their marriages. This is not likely to happen, because they do not have the money. This dowry is owed to the girl's parents. Others are single adults who were never married. Some are divorced and living single lives. Some are divorced, remarried, and living in sin.

The FMC is recommending that synod approve "guidelines" for the missionaries "in their pastoral work among these unmarried couples and with those married by custom." The first guideline proposed by the FMC is:

That we recognize lifelong, monogamous marriages by custom of one man to one woman as proper. Grounds: a) Such marriages by custom are recognized by the Ghanaian government as proper. b) The full payment of the dowry to the wife's father and the obtaining of the permission to marry from the respective parents fulfill the civil aspect of marriage. c) The solemnization of the marriage by custom is publicly witnessed by witnesses and family who then hold the couple accountable to maintaining faithfulness to their spouses. d) Marriage by custom is similar to the manner in which marriages in the time of the Old Testament patriarchs were established (Genesis 24:50-67; Genesis 29:18-30).

The FMC distinguishes "marriage by custom" from "marriage by ordinance" in Ghana.

The other matter concerns benevolence. The FMC reports that "the benevolent labors of the missionaries are a significant part of their weekly labors." One of the missionaries reports to synod that "our fellowship of believers continues to be composed mainly of the very poor in this land. This has caused me to be very busy with consideration of the true benevolent needs of the people." Again, Hull council is explicit:

Most of the men of the fellowship did not have steady work, often working a few days or weeks and then they are out of work again. Many do building or mason work and would work on a house until the owner was out of money and then that job would stop. Many asked for financial help because of the poverty. Some wanted help to start a business or a farm. They were instructed that the PRC came

to bring the gospel and that their benevolent needs must be brought to Rev. Moore and Rev. Bekkering.

This part of the report on the Ghana mission too points up an apparent discrepancy between the information given to the synod of 1996 by the FMC and the actual condition of the field. In its proposal to the synod of 1996 that the PRC begin mission work in Ghana, the FMC noted the importance of the mission's being self-supporting. This requires men who "must have jobs which earn for them enough money to support the church." The FMC then assured the synod that "most of the contacts we have in the city [of Accra] are educated and self-supporting. To begin our work among these people would place us a step ahead of the work we performed in Jamaica" ("Acts of Synod and Yearbook 1996," p. 166).

The danger in our immediate, apparently significant giving of money on the Ghana field is twofold: that benevolence distracts the missionaries from their labor in the Word and doctrine, and that the mission work produces what experienced missionaries to poor Asian countries call "rice Christians."

The FMC also reports that Rev. Audred Spriensma has accepted the call to be missionary to the Philippines and plans to take up the work there in late June of this year.

Contact Committee

The Committee for Contact with Other Churches (CC) reports on work done by the missionary-on-loan to the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore (ERCS), Rev. Jason Kortering. The committee informs synod that Rev. Arie denHartog accepted the call to take Rev. Kortering's place as missionary-on-loan to the ERCS and that Rev. denHartog has been working in Singapore since January of this year. Rev. Kortering is requesting emeritation effective August 1, 2002.

The CC reports on two meetings with the United Reformed Churches. A meeting with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was to have taken place in April 2002. The CC is sending a delegation to Australia this summer for a conference and discussions with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia.

Theological School Committee

The Theological School Committee (TSC) reports concerning the activities of the seminary this past year. Two senior seminarians will be examined before synod, Mr. Rodney Kleyn and Mr. David Overway. The TSC reports that there were five other full-time students in the seminary this past year, one of whom is being trained for the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore. Having examined them, the TSC is recommending the admission of two men to the seminary this fall as diploma pre-licentiate students (both aspire to the ministry in the PRC).

In a "proposal for Prof. R. Decker's replacement and emeritation," the TSC informs synod that it has approved the request of Prof. Robert Decker that the synod of 2003 appoint a replacement for him at the seminary. The TSC is proposing this to synod.

Various Matters

In addition to the requests for emeritation mentioned above that are in the agenda of synod, Rev. Dale Kuiper has a request for emeritation effective January 1, 2003 coming to the May 2002 meeting of Classis East. This request is to come to the 2002 synod by supplement. These requests for emeritation and the vacancies in the local churches that result, either directly or by replacing the emeriti ministers, must weigh heavily with synod in its consideration of various proposals in the agenda.

A member of the PRC protests the decisions of synod 2001 in Ar-

ticles 27-29 authorizing missionaries to administer the Lord's Supper in instituted churches which are the object of the mission work of the PRC and authorizing missionaries to pronounce the votum, salutation, and benediction on the mission field.

Two members are appealing decisions of a consistory and of a classis that concern discipline.

The Yearbook Committee reports that the denomination grew numerically by some thirty-seven families over the past year.

Synod will meet this year at Southwest PRC in Grandville, Michigan on June 11. The pre-synodical worship service will be held in the auditorium of Southwest PRC on Monday evening, June 10,

at 7:30. Rev. Charles Terpstra, president of the previous synod, will preach.

May Christ, the king of the church, rule this assembly by His Word and Spirit so that it is a blessing to the denomination in all its life and work, as well as to the church catholic.

— DJE 

Letters


Biblical Method of Dating

As a teenager who has been faced with the difficulties of worldly dating, I agree with Rev. Dick on his article "Dating and the Deep Blue Sea ... and the Way of Christ (2)" (*Standard Bearer*, April 15). The world's type of dating is indeed a "voracious" monster that "consumes everything in her path." The heavy pressure on teens to go along with worldly dating has caused many teens to suffer life-long scars, and in order to avoid these scars, our churches need to educate teens in the biblical method of dating.

Many teens suffer these life-long scars because they fail to realize the pitfalls of worldly dating. In my opinion, our churches lack in educating teens on the biblical

method of dating. Instead of instructing teens that they should wait to date until they are spiritually mature, teenagers are encouraged to pair up at convention banquets. The age at which our young people pair off today is astonishing, and yet many parents fail to tell their teens when their dating is contrary to the biblical method of dating. Instead of ignoring or even encouraging worldly dating, our churches should teach the biblical method of dating in Young People's Society and repeatedly preach on the subject. If our churches, parents, and ministers would show teens the biblical method of dating, I strongly believe that many teens would realize the dangers of worldly dating and change their ways.

It is only when teens are shown the error of worldly dating, that they will see the beauty of biblical dating. Instead of pairing off at such a young age, teens should be encouraged to remain single until they have grown in their walk with the Lord and even made a public profession of faith. Although this might entail waiting until they are 18, 19, or 20 to date, the end result of biblical dating will be entirely worth it. If our teens are shown the dangerous errors of worldly dating, they can be saved from life-long scars and may someday, the Lord willing, have a beautiful marriage that mirrors the marriage of Christ and the church.

Beth DeJong
Lansing, IL 

Things Which Must Shortly Come To Pass

Prof. David Engelsma

Introduction (5)

The Reformed Confessions (concluded)

The last article—Article 37—of the Belgic Confession (1561) is devoted to the doctrine of the last things (the French original and an English

translation are found in Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3, Harper & Row, 1877; because of the length of the article and because copies of the creed are readily available, I do not quote the article in its entirety here). In this article, Reformed believers confess a future corporal

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and visible coming of Jesus Christ as Lord. His main purpose will be to conduct a final judgment of all humans, including the “righteous and elect.” The judgment will be public: “the secrets and hypocrisy of men shall be disclosed and laid open before all.” In order that He may conduct the judgment, Christ will raise all the dead: “For all the dead shall be raised out of the earth, and their souls joined and united with their proper bodies in which they formerly lived.” The outcome of the judgment will be the torment of “everlasting fire” for the wicked and the devils in God’s “terrible vengeance,” but “glory and honor” for the “faithful and elect” as their “gracious reward.” The judging and redeeming work of Christ at His coming will be cosmic: He will burn “this old world with fire and flame to cleanse it.”

Even though Article 37 of the Belgic Confession does not explicitly take up the question of the church’s earthly prospects before Christ’s coming — the issue of the millennium — the article makes clear that throughout the present age, and especially at the very end, the church is, and will be, a persecuted church. Always, and especially just before Christ’s coming, the righteous and elect are “most cruelly persecuted, oppressed, and tormented ... in this world.” As at the time when the Belgic Confession was written, the cause of the true church is always “condemned by many judges and magistrates as heretical and impious.” Christ will not come personally to join in the saints’ joyful celebration of their earthly power, peace, and prosperity, but to wipe all tears from the eyes of those who confess His name in the world.

The Belgic Confession suggests the importance of election for eschatology. What controls the time of the coming of Christ, according to God’s eternal appointment, is that the “number of the elect (is) complete.” Twice, Article 37 deliberately refers to those who

will be delivered and glorified through the final judgment as the “elect.”

Although in a more personal way, the Heidelberg Catechism (1563) confesses the same fundamental truths of eschatology that are taught in Article 37 of the Belgic Confession: Christ’s coming again as judge of all men; the resurrection of the body; the “everlasting condemnation” of Christ’s and the believer’s enemies; and the translation of the chosen church “into heavenly joys and glory.” Like the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism sees the life of the believer as a life of persecution “under the cross” right up to the coming again of Jesus Christ. It too indicates the fundamental importance of election for one’s comfort with regard to the second coming of Christ for judgment. The main eschatological section of the Heidelberg Catechism is Q. and A. 52:

Q. 52. What comfort is it to thee that Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead?

A. That in all my sorrows and persecutions, with uplifted head, I look for the self-same One who has before offered himself for me to the judgment of God, and removed from me all curse, to come again as Judge from heaven; who shall cast all his and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall take me, with all his chosen ones, to himself, into heavenly joy and glory.

The resurrection of the body of the believer is taught in Q. and A. 57: “What comfort does the resurrection of the body afford thee?... That this my body, raised by the power of Christ, shall again be united with my soul, and made like unto the glorious body of Christ.”

The Catechism also makes two important affirmations about the “intermediate state” of believers, that is, the state of believers after death and before the coming of Christ. In answer to the question,

“Since, then, Christ died for us, why must we also die?” the Catechism says, in A. 42: “Our death is not a satisfaction for our sin, but only a dying to sins and entering into eternal life.” More definite is the first part of the answer of the Catechism to Q. 57, quoted above: “That not only my soul, after this life, shall be immediately taken up to Christ its Head,” etc. (Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3, Harper & Row, 1877, pp. 307-355). The Reformed faith confesses the believer’s conscious enjoyment of eternal life with Christ upon death. The believer who dies — *every* believer who dies — has this life *in the soul*, apart from the body (which, of course, is in the grave). It is a confessional matter with Reformed Christians, therefore, to deny both the theory of soul-sleep and the teaching that the death of the believer is total until the resurrection of the body. It is also a confessional matter for one who subscribes to the Heidelberg Catechism to repudiate the Roman Catholic dogma of purgatory.

Of the “Three Forms of Unity,” the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordt (1618, 1619), it might seem that the last has nothing to say about the last things and, therefore, nothing to contribute to a Reformed defense of the truth of eschatology in the face of contemporary errors. The Canons are a defense of the gospel of salvation by the sovereign, particular grace of God in Jesus Christ alone against the false gospel of salvation conditioned by the will of the sinner. In fact, however, the Canons speak decisively against one of the most prominent and powerful eschatological errors of the present day: universalism, that is, the doctrine of the eventual salvation of all humans without exception.

The influential Karl Barth grounded his doctrine of universal salvation in his teaching that Jesus Christ was reprobated by God in the place of all so that all are elect

in Him. Jurgen Moltmann similarly argues that there will be no "double outcome" of the final judgment in an everlasting hell as well as in an everlasting heaven because, in Jesus Christ, who has reconciled all to God, God has elected all unto salvation. Moltmann recognizes that there is one obstacle, biblically, to universalism. This is the "Calvinistic" doctrine of God's predestination of some to salvation (election) and of others to damnation (reprobation). Rejecting predestination as a "terrible doctrine," Moltmann has no further difficulty in asserting the eventual salvation of all humans without exception. Indeed, he confidently promises the salvation even of Satan and all his demons.

Moltmann's defense of universalism exposes the fatal weakness of the position of many evangelical and Reformed theologians. Maintaining that God does indeed love all without exception with a love in Jesus Christ that wants all to be saved, these theologians nevertheless deny that all will be saved. With appeal to John 3:16, a favorite text of evangelical and Reformed theologians who are determined to find a will in God for the salvation of all, Moltmann too takes his starting point in a desire of God for the salvation of all. His argument against those who share his belief of a wish of God that all be saved, but deny universal salvation, is devastating.

The doctrine of universal salvation is the expression of a boundless confidence in God: what God wants to do he can do, and will do. If he wants all human beings to be helped, he will ultimately help all human beings. The doctrine of the double outcome of Judgment [that there will be an everlasting hell, as well as an everlasting heaven — DJE] is the expression of a tremendous self-confidence on the part of human beings: if the decision 'faith or disbelief' has eternal significance, then eternal destiny, salvation or

damnation, lies in the hands of human beings. What will happen to people in eternity really depends on their own behaviour. God's function is reduced to the offer of salvation in the gospel, and to establishing acceptance or rejection at the Judgment. Christ becomes a person's Saviour only when that person has 'accepted' him in faith. So it is the acceptance in faith which makes Christ the Saviour of that man or that woman. But if this is so, do people not really save or damn themselves? The doctrine of the double outcome of Judgment is a relatively modern doctrine compared with the doctrine of universal salvation. It fits the modern age, in which human beings believe that they are the measure of all things, and the centre of the world, and that therefore everything depends on their decision. But what human being does this mean? Can children who die young, for example, decide for faith, or can the severely handicapped? Are they saved or lost? Who makes the decision about the salvation of lost men and women, and where is the decision made? Every Christian theologian is bound to answer: *God* decides for a person and for his or her salvation, for otherwise there is no assurance of salvation at all (Jurgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, Fortress Press, 1996, pp. 235-255).

The threat to the Christian faith of universalism is not limited to the fully-developed, brazen teaching that all will be saved, including even the devil. Many churches are well on the way to outright universalism by their adoption, or tolerance, of the doctrine of a will of God for the salvation of all men without exception. The doctrine of a gracious desire in God for the salvation of all opens a church up to universalism, if it does not inevitably result in universalism. This is true, regardless that these churches may also claim to hold the contradictory doctrine of a will of God for the salvation only of some (election).

The rock upon which all uni-

versalism shatters, not only the fully-developed universalism of a Jurgen Moltmann, but also the incipient universalism of a desire of God for the salvation of all, is the Reformed doctrine of God's eternal, sovereign predestination of some to life and others to damnation. Confession of this biblical truth, and only confession of this biblical truth, will keep a Reformed church from the heresy of universalism in the days ahead. This confession of all truly Reformed churches with its significant implications for sound eschatology is the content of the Canons of Dordt.

Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, he hath, out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will, chosen, from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault, from their primitive state of rectitude, into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, whom he from eternity appointed the Mediator and head of the elect, and the foundation of salvation. This elect number, though by nature neither better nor more deserving than others, but with them involved in one common misery, God hath decreed to give to Christ to be saved by him, and effectually to call and draw them to his communion by his Word and Spirit; to bestow upon them true faith, justification, and sanctification; and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of his Son, finally to glorify them for the demonstration of his mercy, and for the praise of the riches of his glorious grace (Canons, I/7).

What peculiarly tends to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal and unmerited grace of election is the express testimony of sacred Scripture, that not all, but some only, are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree; whom God, out of his sovereign, most just, irreprehensible and unchangeable good pleasure, hath decreed to leave in the common

misery into which they have willfully plunged themselves, and not to bestow upon them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but permitting them in his just judgment to follow their own way; at last, for the declaration of his justice, to condemn and punish them forever, not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins ... (Canons, I/15, in Philip Schaff, *Creeeds of Christendom*, vol. 3, pp. 582, 584).


The eschatology of the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) is substantially the same as that of the "Three Forms of Unity." Chapter 32 teaches one resurrection of all the dead, just and unjust, "at the last day." Chapter 33 follows with a full description of the last judgment, the ultimate purpose of which is said to be "the manifestation of the glory of his [God's] mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect, and of his justice in the

damnation of the reprobate." The outcome of the judgment will be "everlasting life" for the righteous and "everlasting destruction" for the wicked. Chapter 32 also contains a confession of the intermediate state both of the righteous and of the wicked. There is an explicit denial that the souls of men after death either die or sleep.

The Westminster Confession goes beyond the "Three Forms of Unity" in one important eschatological matter. This is its identification of the antichrist of II Thessalonians 2 as the "Pope of Rome." This occurs in Chapter 25, on the church.

There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself

in the church against Christ, and all that is called God (The Westminster Confession of Faith, in *The Subordinate Standards and Other Authoritative Documents of the Free Church of Scotland*, Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1973; in 1997, Old Paths Publications, now at Willow Street, PA, published *The Westminster Standards: An Original Facsimile*, containing the Larger Catechism, the Shorter Catechism, the Confession of Faith, and A Directory for the Public Worship of God).

The teachings of Scripture in these creeds constitute the Reformed faith concerning the fundamental truths of eschatology. In the light of these confessional teachings, and within their guidelines, Reformed churches and theologians are called to develop their understanding of the Bible's doctrine of the last things in these last days. 

In His Fear

Rev. Daniel Kleyn

Godly Contentment

Contentment is a Christian virtue that needs our careful attention. Since it is often mentioned in the Word of God, it ought to occupy a prominent place in our lives.

Contentment is a spiritual virtue that governs the attitude we have toward everything earthly. To be content is to be satisfied within, with regard to all the outward circumstances of one's life. But contentment is more than that.

It is an inner satisfaction with regard to all the outward circumstances of life that is not dependent upon or affected by those outward circumstances.

This is contrary to how we usually think about contentment. We are inclined to say that it is determined by such things as money, health, and family happiness. If we are feeling dissatisfied, we imagine to ourselves that if only certain things were different in our lives, then we could and would be content. But that is not the case. One who is truly content is so regardless of what he has (or does not have) or is experiencing (or not

experiencing). His contentment is not affected by these things. In whatever state he is in, he is satisfied and content.



The opposite of contentment is covetousness.

Covetousness is the sin of wanting what we do not have. Either we want more of the same, or we want something different.

In I Timothy 6:6-10 we learn that those are covetous who "will be rich" — that is, who "want" to be rich. The passage also mentions that the covetous "love money."

This is not to say that riches

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are sinful and that money is evil. Nor does it mean that it is sinful to work hard or to seek a promotion in order to be better able to support our families and the causes of God's kingdom. What it means is that it is sin to seek or to set one's heart upon having more. It is sin to be dissatisfied with what we have. It is sin to want what others have. It is sin to want more.

This is not merely a sin with regard to riches. One can also covet his neighbor's spouse, or children, or job, or happiness. Doing these things, as the tenth commandment clearly states, is also sin.

Covetousness, as with all sins, is a foolish sin. It is foolish because just as we entered this world with nothing, so we will also leave the world the same way — naked and empty handed. One may amass to himself a great abundance, but it is impossible for him to take it along when he dies. His possessions may provide him some momentary joys and pleasures on earth, but they do not and cannot do this in eternity.

It is foolish, therefore, to pursue earthly things as ends in themselves. Those things are given as means to an end, namely, to enable us to serve and glorify God. Whatever we do with whatever we have is to be done to God's glory. However, none of our earthly "stuff" will be of any use once we die and appear before God our Judge.

Covetousness is a serious sin. It is so because it is sin against God. But it is also serious because it is a dangerous sin. Those who are driven by the desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare. They are ensnared by the constant pursuit of more riches. They lust after more wealth. And they imagine that the more they have the happier they will be. They wrongly believe that contentment is proportional to the amount they possess.

But, warns the Scripture, such covetousness is very dangerous. Those who want to be rich and who

love money err from the faith. They pierce themselves through with many sorrows. They are drowned in destruction and perdition (I Tim. 6:9, 10).

Realizing, therefore, that it is sinful, foolish, and dangerous to love money and to want to be rich, the child of God strives not to covet. Instead, he strives to be content.



Contentment applies to two areas of life.

As just indicated, it applies first of all to earthly possessions. One is to be content with his financial situation, with his job, and with his income. He is to be content whether he has a lot or a little. Even if his lot in life is far from ideal, so that he is poor, struggles to pay the bills, and finds he can barely make it through, he is to be content. He may not complain. He may not want more. He may not desire to have what others have. He must be of the opinion that what he has, even if it is very little, is enough.

In connection with this, I Timothy 6:8 states: "Having food and raiment let us be therewith content." Food and raiment are the basic necessities of earthly life. If we have these, we have all that we need to be able to survive. Even if it is only enough for one day, God has answered our request for daily bread. We are to be content with that, content with the bare minimum.

This is to be reflected in our prayers. A farmer does not pray, "Lord, give me a bumper crop!" A businessman does not pray, "Lord, prosper my work so that I can put away extra for retirement!" An employee does not pray, "Lord, may I have a pay increase so that I am able to overcome my debts and enjoy some of life's luxuries!" Such prayers are carnal and show that one is dissatisfied and covetous. The prayer of the contented child of God is, "Lord, be pleased to pro-

vide me this day with my daily bread. Give me simply what I need in order to serve Thee."

Contentment also applies to all the circumstances of life. One is to be content in every affliction, even if it causes much pain and sorrow. He is to be content whether married or single, whether he has many children, a few children, or no children. He is to be content with his looks and physical build. He must be satisfied with regard to every circumstance of life and say, "No matter what state I am in, I am content."



It is difficult to be content. What makes it so is the fact that we have a sinful nature and are very easily dissatisfied with what we have. We are by nature covetous. Even if we are wealthy (which so many of us are today), often the more we have the more we want.

What adds to the struggle with contentment is the kind of world in which we live. The world knows nothing at all about contentment. The ungodly do away with this virtue and are driven by a lust after things. Constantly we are bombarded by this, for the world says: "You need more and bigger and better. You deserve it. Treat yourself to something special. Don't be satisfied with just a little!"

These are strong temptations. And even if we do not give in to them, we are nevertheless affected. What the world thinks and says breeds dissatisfaction in us.



But the child of God is able to be content. The possibility lies in godliness, for "godliness" and "contentment" belong together (I Tim. 6:6).

To be ungodly is to deny God and to go through life ignoring Him. To be godly, however, is to be conscious of God and to think of Him. One who is godly is very much aware of God and of God's involvement in his life and in this

world. He knows that this is God's world in which God is Lord and King.

Godliness is characterized by believing and confessing certain truths concerning God.

First of all, we must confess that God is the God of providence. That truth is beautifully set forth in Lord's Day 10 of the Heidelberg Catechism. The Lord's Day plainly states that God is the one who sends rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, and riches and poverty. All things are in His hands. Absolutely all things come from Him.

Secondly, we must confess that God is our Father. Through the saving work of our Lord Jesus Christ, God has become our Father. On account of the saving work of Christ, we are valuable and precious to God. And remember, God our Father excels all earthly fathers. His fatherly love is perfect. His fatherly care is perfect. His fatherly protection is perfect. What a beautiful and wonderful relationship we have to God!

Thirdly, we must confess that God is a wise and good Father. God provides us with what He knows we need, that is, with what He knows is for our eternal good.

God has planned our lives. He has planned every step of the way we are to walk from birth unto death. As the psalmist states in Psalm 73:24, we are guided by God's counsel in order afterward to be received into glory. This means that God has determined all our circumstances in life. He has determined whether we are rich or poor, healthy or sick, single or married. And He gives what He does with a view to what we need in order to be led to spend eternity with Him.

Believing contentment is tied to such godliness, and confessing these truths concerning God and His work, we are able, by His grace, to be content.

But we also know ourselves to be at times weak in faith and all too often forgetful of these truths. Therefore we pray: "Lord, give me the grace to know and to remember these truths concerning Thee. Help me to confess that Thou art God, my heavenly Father, who is wise and good. May I never forget that whatever I receive (much or little) is from Thy loving hand. It is the portion Thou hast determined for me. It is exactly what I need for my saving good."

The need for us to pray this lies in the fact that contentment is a gift


of grace. We sometimes speak of the "grace of contentment." We need that grace. It is the only possibility of contentment. We can be content only if God works in our hearts by His Spirit to overcome our greed, our covetousness, our love of money, and our desire to be rich. And we need the Spirit to assure us of forgiveness for our failures to be content. We need to pray for grace.



Receiving this, we will be blessed. For godliness with contentment is "great gain" (I Tim. 6:6).

It is great gain in this life. It is gain when we are kept from the sinful, dangerous, and foolish way of covetousness. And it is gain when, regardless of life's way, we are confident it is God's way for us. Then we can be free from worry and at peace.

But there is also great blessing in the life to come. God promises us all the riches of the new creation. In light of that, the earthly does not really matter much. Eternity is what really counts. And God, through all He gives and does, is leading His people there.

Let us be godly and thus content children of God. 

All Thy Works Shall Praise Thee

Rev. James Laning

The Lion: Strongest of the Beasts

What does it mean to be strong? How does a Christian show himself to be a strong believer? To answer questions like these we must turn

to the Scriptures to see what God says is a chief characteristic of one who is strong. There are a number of animals in the Scriptures that illustrate for us the idea of strength from one point of view or another. In this article we consider strength as it is pictured for us in the lion.

God not only mentions the strength of the lion, but points out

that the lion is in fact the strongest of the beasts. We read of this in Proverbs 30:30, which speaks of:

*A lion which is strongest
among beasts,
and turneth not away for any....*

Even unbelieving man is aware of this, as is evident from the fact that the Philistines, who found out

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the answer to Samson's riddle, confessed that there is nothing stronger than the lion (Judges 14:18).

The passage in Proverbs indicates that the strength of the lion is centrally seen, not merely in the size of its muscles, but in the fact that it does not fear the other beasts. It does not turn away from an enemy, when other creatures would. Thus we see that to learn from an animal we must not only consider its exterior characteristics, but also look deeper at what is made known about the interior, the heart of that creature. If we look deep into the lion, the Scriptures say we will find a heart that is, relatively speaking, without fear. Hushai recognized this, and compared David's mightiest men to those who had the heart of a lion (II Sam. 17:10).


There is, of course, a good sense and a bad sense in which one can be fearless. One who is ungodly, and has no fear of God, runs foolishly forward into his own destruc-

tion. But here we are considering the good sense in which one can be strong as a lion. Jesus is referred to as the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5), and we who are in Christ are called to be strong and courageous, fearless as the lion.

A strong believer is one who has not only a deep knowledge of the truth, but also a strong confidence in God, so that he does not fear his enemies. As we read in Psalm 91, he does not fear the traps that his spiritual foes set for him, nor does he fear diseases that may come upon his body, for he knows that in the new man he is perfectly secure, protected by his God.

A strong believer is also one who does not fear to confess the truth distinctively, even though he knows he will be ostracized and persecuted for it. Sometimes a child of God begins to view himself as a strong believer merely because he knows more about the truths of Scripture than perhaps many others. Although we must

not downplay the importance of knowledge of the truth, especially in our day, yet we must also remember that faith is not only knowledge, but also confidence. One who is strong in faith not only knows the truth, but also has a heart like that of a lion, so that he boldly confesses that truth, pointing out and refuting the errors of his day, without fearing what man will do to him.

This is what we are called to do in the strength of the Lord. As we experience being mocked and ridiculed for maintaining the truth, and when we are tempted to confess that truth less distinctively, in order to avoid the persecution, we must remember the lion, that is, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the fearless Lion who dwells in our heart. Then, by faith in our fearless Savior, we will be more bold in our bearing witness to the truth, while confessing from the heart: "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:6). 

When Thou Sittest in Thine House

Abraham Kuyper

It Had Been Evening and Morning

The Day

W

ith us, evening is part of the day, while in the East, as soon as evening comes the day is done.

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You see this with the Jews in our midst, who do not begin their Sabbath on Saturday morning, but on Friday evening. As soon as the sun is set it is Sabbath.

While we say: "Every morning and every evening," the Scripture says: "Every evening and every morning," and so runs the narrative of creation. First: it had been evening, and after that: it had been morning, the first day (Gen. 1:5, Dutch version).

About this difference there need be no dispute. It is because we do not count the night. Morning and evening make for us a long day of sixteen hours, and then come eight hours of the night, of which we make no count. In the East, on the other hand, count is kept with the night and so must begin with the evening.

The Eastern language is therefore more mysterious.

When there is no sun, with us there is no count. Only when the sun rises, there is life, and till the sun sets, it goes on. And what lies in between remains uncertain.

But in the East come first the evening and the night, as those hidden times, in which God works, refreshes us in sleep, and prepares us for the life of a day. And only then comes morning, when this divinely prepared life, this divinely wrought strength, comes out, spreads its glow, and glistens.

But whatever order we follow, it always is, with Westerling and Easterling, that our lifetime is no leak that tick, tack, restlessly drips on; but that the course of time is *divided*, that time is *broken*, that there is a *wave-beat*, which continuously goes up and down, and that by a wise appointment of God the whole earth, and our life in this world, has obtained two sides, two forms, two ways of existence, life by *day* and life by *night*.

Hereby, to your soul's perception, everything there is to you is every time ended, and then begins again anew.

This makes all of life surveyable.

It does not stretch itself out before you as an endless crudeness, but has lines, boundaries, and mileposts. You can calculate it backward and forward. It goes so far, then it goes under, afterward again to begin anew. The day, and then the night, and after that again the new morning, when life is once more granted you, renewed, and once again begun.

A slowly sounding clock-stroke, not from the tower, and not from your mantelpiece, but which rings out toward you from all of nature and finds an echo in your own soul's perception.

Fatigue and weariness at eventide. And at waking again the feeling of strength and freshness, wherewith you meet the new day.



By itself this is nothing but a

phase of your natural life. But is it therefore without spiritual meaning?

That going up and down of the stream of light and life was already there in the creation, when God brought it forth, and no human eye was yet able to close and open itself to the light. Then it had been evening and it had been morning, the first day!

There is a reckoning in that going up and down, and as soon as that reckoning teller enters into your life, he puts an ever and again recurring question to you.

Again a day is done, and what is the portion of your life's task that this day you have brought to a finish? Again a night is passed, in which God once more has filled the empty quiver; what shall be the task to which you will devote the strength received by grace?

A life without division would be endlessly to postpone everything and never to accomplish anything.

But as time is divided, not only into years, into months, and into weeks, but also into days, and that day is divided into an evening and a morning, God the Lord urges and stimulates you to think of your life, to reflect upon it. Why do I live? Why do I exist? God does not give me my life, my time, my day, my morning, and my evening for naught.

During the long hours of night He performs on you the wondrous work of renewing your strength, of refreshing your head, of quieting your heart into peace, and of relieving you of care and anxiety.

In the night He enriches you. Not merely on your land, where He makes the grain to ripen, but also in your own person, in your blood, in your nerves, into which He pours out new strength. And so in your life of thinking and willing, in your inner existence of soul, in your life of grace, He with whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning, also by night when His hiddenness is over your

tent, continues His work *on* you and *in* you.

And now you regain consciousness. You awake. You feel strong again. You are not merely rested, but you are also newly equipped. What now? What shall be the fruit of that long day? And what is the calling, the task, to which you set yourself?

So, when it is again morning the Lord asks of you, and when presently the day is done, that silent inquisitor returns again and examines you and compels you to look back upon the path that you have traveled. Not now: "What *will* you do? But: "What *did* you do?" Is the task to which God called you *done*?



And with what result?

Is it not that, oh, so many must complain that not half of the day has been put to use, and that the other half has been squandered in idle talk and in trifles? That certain things were done for which one was responsible, but more from habit, or because they happened to come along, but without leaving a trace that you understood anything of life, or knew how to put your time to usury, or realized what it is so to number one's days as to apply one's heart unto wisdom.

Alas, so many, when they die, have almost lived for naught. Of what it is to accomplish something in life they have never known the secret. And when at last their thread of life is spun, they remind you of a palm tree in the desert, whose fruit was of no use, because there was no one who has gathered it.

Their life was there, the powers were there, but they were not employed, their life was not applied. It had all been dissipated and wasted.

This is no less than a life's sin. A life that has been sinned away. For in sin everything sinks away that you do not direct to the mark for which God gave it.

And especially God's children might well be on their guard.

The Italian speaks of his *dolce far niente*, i.e., of blessed idleness; but under cooler heavens, where work is so much easier, you need no lantern to look for lovers of that "blessed idleness."

Everything that requires effort and exertion is avoided. If one *must*, one works, but, oh, the relief when it is done, and "blessed idleness" can again be begun.



Do not say that he who does manual labor for his living slaves from morning till night; for let a man who at first had to work hard become more affluent, and at once he is done with work.

Not work for the sake of a *living*, but work for the sake of *God's will* is here in question. Of the perception that God calls you to something, puts a task upon you, wants something of you. Of your *divine* calling, as our fathers named it.

Ask yourself, how few there are who in their morning-and evening-prayer so interpret their life, keep count of it, and pass constant criticism upon it.

Moreover, that one particular work is not all the labor yet to which God called you.

He gave you not merely muscles and muscular strength to dig or handle a hammer, but He also gave you other powers. Or is your *head* empty, is your *heart* a shaken-out bag?

And did God give you those powers of head and heart for naught, without a purpose, to be neglected, not to be disciplined, and so to leave the field of your inner life lie fallow before His face?

Does not this indicate a calling? Does not this speak of a life's task? And is there not all too frequently bitter complaint about lack of thought, about heartlessness and sometimes utter want of inner activity, because that labor of head and heart is not put upon you as a

duty and also gets no *wage*?

Oh, when you walk about in a churchyard, and consider how many dead are there at rest, who came and went without having developed a thought-life in their head, a loving and devoted life in their heart, to what ignoring and destroying of divine power do not these graves bear witness.

Yet God had prepared so wondrously the head for them and the heart.

And it went all for naught.

Power that is wasted, something of divine mightiness in a child of man, but not by him considered.

Is it not that, oh, so many must complain that not half of the day has been put to use, and that the other half has been squandered in idle talk and in trifles? That certain things were done for which one was responsible, but more from habit, or because they happened to come along, but without leaving a trace that you understood anything of life, or knew how to put your time to usury, or realized what it is so to number one's days as to apply one's heart unto wisdom.

So that God received no honor from it.

It had been evening and it had been morning, so it echoes, in still deeper sense, continuously also in your life of grace, if at least you have been privileged to enjoy the lovely reflection of the Sun of righteousness.

A work in divine strength. Even the noblest power of grace. Exertion of strength on the part of the Holy Ghost who is in you, to make you as God's child to grow and wax strong and bear fruit.

This your life of grace is also a matter of time. In the morning you wake up with it, and in the evening you dispose yourself to rest with that grace-life in your heart.

Thus here, too, the question is, whether you understand what your

calling is, whether you see the course which you have to run; whether the "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" ever and again resounds in your soul; and whether you take heed to yourself, to be aware of real advance, whether you gain in holier mindedness and observe that you live not for naught, but that from your grace-life something proceeds, something shines out, something that can refresh the brethren and be an honor to God's name.

Even with this question we are not content.


When after an absence of three or more years you meet again an old acquaintance, you sometimes

receive the comfortless impression that he is still precisely what he was before. No step has he advanced, if only he has not retrogressed, and gone backward in grace.

And therefore this thoughtless gliding along from day to day must have an end.

Every time it is evening and becomes morning again, the account must be straightened out before God on one's knees.

What have I lived for, what shall I live for, live also as child of my Father in heaven?

So only on one's knees can it become seriousness, on one's knees the battle can be fought, and the fruit of that struggle shall be peace, because it rouses you out of your spiritual indolence. 

Temple

A temple is a place where God dwells. Idols such as Dagon, Moloch, and Diana also had their temples. Antichrist himself will sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (II Thess. 2:4). But in Scripture we learn that the only God worthy of the name is the God who dwells in the temple, and that in a way that He is not present elsewhere. The word dwell is very rich; one of the Greek terms for temple has the basic meaning of dwelling, resting, or fellowshiping.

The temple idea has a history in the Bible, a history that continues today and shall continue world without end. First of all, the tabernacle made by Moses in the wilderness to divine specifications was really a portable temple (Ex. 25:9). The heart of the tabernacle was the small square room called the Most Holy Place, which contained the ark of the covenant. The cloud which went before the Israelites as they marched from Egypt to Canaan went into the Most Holy Place whenever Israel made camp. That cloud, the Shekinah, was the cloud of God's glorious presence. God dwelled between the cherubim, above the mercy seat which covered the tables of the Law, all behind the veil. All these things were figures of the true (Heb. 9:24) and patterns of things in the heavens (Heb. 9:23).

Secondly, Solomon built the temple of the Lord in Mt. Zion in Jerusalem (I Kings 6), something that David desired to do but might not because he was a man of war (II Sam. 7). This temple was magnificent. Everything was covered with gold. It was seven years in building. The temple of Solomon was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar about 590 B.C., and the treasures of the temple were carried off to Babylon. About 520 B.C., under the leadership of Zerubbabel, the temple was rebuilt, God having put into the mind of King Cyrus that he should free the Jews and instruct them to re-

turn and rebuild the city and temple (Ezra 1). This temple was finished in 21 years, causing great joy among the people but weeping among the elderly, for it was not nearly so beautiful as Solomon's (Ezra 3:11, 12). This temple contained no ark, and was later defiled with the idolatrous worship of Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15).

Herod the Great rebuilt the temple on a grander scale in 21 B.C. The project took 46 years. This temple was in use at the time of Jesus' birth and earthly sojourn, and had its veil rent from top to bottom at the moment of Jesus' death, which death opened the way into the presence of God for all those given to Christ for redemption (Matt. 27:51). Soon after, all legitimate use of the temple came to an end, and the building itself was destroyed when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman legions under Vespasian in A.D. 70. Jesus prophesied of this destruction of the temple in Matthew 24:1, 2.

The next step in the history of the temple is the fulfillment of all Old Testament types, figures, and ceremonies. After cleansing the temple the first time just after His baptism, Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). The Jews murmured at this, John informs us, "But he spake of the temple of his body." As we said, a temple is the place where God dwells. Through the wonder of the incarnation, God began to dwell in Man; Jesus Christ became Immanuel; human and divine are united inseparably forever. "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).


When Jesus raised up the temple of His body and ascended into heaven, He poured out the Holy Spirit which He had received as His Spirit (Acts 2:33). This Holy Spirit of Christ comes to dwell in every elect child of God at his regeneration (John 3:5-8). The indwelling of the Spirit makes of every believer a temple of God. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. 6:16). After Paul admonishes the believer to flee fornication as a sin against

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one's own body, he writes, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost that is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (I Cor. 6:19).

Old Testament tabernacle and temples. Christ, the temple of God.

Believers as the temples of the Holy Spirit. One more step yet! The holy place made without hands is heaven itself (Heb. 9:24). Heaven is the tabernacle of God with men! Heaven is the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ brought to its perfect, everlasting form (Rev. 21:1-5).

John saw no temple in his vision of heaven, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Rev. 21:22). Our response to Christ's promise to come quickly is "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." 

Dating and the Deep Blue Sea...and the Way of Christ (3)

Dating is the way, the truth, and the life of the ungodly. It is the sought-out Savior of many-a-youth too scared to go through adolescence alone. It is the Silver Cup from which many older lonely and unmarried folk long to drink in order to live a Life they fear has passed them by.

Believe me, dear Grace Life readers! Believe one who has *been* in the land of the pagans, believe a pastor and friend of all who would be the friends of Jesus — Dating is the *Idol* of as many-a-soul as there are Blue Devils in Huntington Public High Schools (my alma mater) across the land. Dating is their Way of solace, of fun, and to paradise. Dating is their something, their someOne giving meaning to life, their Truth setting them free. Dating is their life on Friday, the hope of their Monday.

Last article (cf. the April 15 issue of the *Standard Bearer*) we noted that there is at least one evidence of this heathenish dating thing

amongst us. In allowing covenant youth to pair off in a romantic relationship before they have confessed their faith in Christ, we are, however unwittingly, encouraging them to make Dating their idol, and their relationship with each other the main Thing in their young life. Heathen in dating never confess faith in Christ. Rather, they confess that dating *is* their Christ. We in ours would kiss each other first, and kiss the Son later.

There are other evidences of the Monstrous heathen Dating amongst us — both her ways, and her droppings. There is, for example, the fact that much of our dating is casual — we meet at Burger King, think we have fallen in love, rendezvous next at the block party, and things go strolling and wandering along from there. Like the heathen, much of our dating is marked through and through by, and seems to have as its primary goal, *fun and entertainment*; to be sure, our *stated* goal may be marriage, but fun and entertainment mark many-a-way to many-an-altar. There is the multiple dating, the dating of half a

dozen and mostly more till we finally settle on the one — this all, in many cases I fear, reflecting lack of purpose and wisdom, lack of God-centeredness and maturity in our dating. There are the broken hearts of the daters, the dateless, and the dated. And there is this sad fact: much of the dating among us is largely unsupervised, having very little to do with the Father and the families of the men and the maids.

Pagan's Progress

Yours truly has suggested before that a reason we have learned the way of the heathen is that we have thought there is no theology behind, but only some unknown wonder involved (Prov. 30:18, 19) in the way of men and maids. "Best we let wonders be," we have said.

But what has happened is that the Devil, who *loves* vacuums, "empty spaces" in our theology, the Devil who is doing his Devil best to undermine marriage and especially godly marriage and any godly way to godly marriage, has dropped heathen Dating into our laps. Without

ten texts, or even *one*, with no biblical and Reformed theology to justify her presence, here she sits, and has spent many-a-night!

A main ally of the Devil, as usual, has been *culture*. We live in an age in which sinful man with his culture, with all its products, all its advancements, all its customs is increasingly showing man's perverse and antichrist heart. Many of the products and advancements of culture we, of course, enjoy. We feast on delicacies, fly jets, buy computers, and are thankful for modern medicine — all as members of an advanced human culture. In the past, say before a hundred years ago, Christians may have been able, as well, to remain distinctively Christian while their maids and men were going about the way of marrying much the same way (in the formal sense of the word) as everyone else in society. This was because, historically, respect and honor have marked this way of men with maids. The parents even of ungodly men and maids were involved, and consulted, and gave their approval, or not. Men with maids would "court" only when ready, and for marriage. The "way" itself did not get people into trouble, but was followed to *prevent* trouble. It manifested some recognition, still, that *the holy God is and ought to be the God and Lord of marriage and of marrying*. It showed that in the culture there was still some regard for virtue and good order in this most important way of men with maids (cf. Canons III/IV, Article 4); even pagans were still listening to, guided by, some common ... sense. Thus, even though all of the pagans in their way of marrying were wrongly motivated, licentious, and shameful despisers of God as they are in everything they do, yet Christians could be found courting in a way, outwardly, like the pagans, and it would not kill them.

But the culture, the same culture which now offers us its Drama and its Dancing, has progressed in

the way only heathen cultures can to where we now have "Dating." This is a relatively new product. In one way it is like an airplane, another product of the culture. But use of this airplane, this *new* Boeing, is perilous! It is filled with terrorists and bombs. And it is on auto-pilot bound only to certain destinations: Las Vegas, Hollywood, the fair towers of our marriages, or the ground. We have got, beloved readers, to bail out! And parents of future teens and young adults must make sure their children never get on!

A study of the history of the last hundred years or so shows this progression in the culture and the development of what we call "dating." Because this is so important, I present to you, somewhat at length, some of the findings of sociologist/historian William D. Romanoski. Romanoski, in an essay entitled "Take Your Girlie to the Movies: Dating and Entertainment in Twentieth Century America," makes these following observations about the beginnings and development of "dating" as we know it. Let us follow closely these words, and be discerning also of just how there has been a tremendous progress in the sinfulness of men with maids!

During the nineteenth century a young man had to secure an invitation to "call" on a young woman at her home. They might spend an evening sitting on the front porch sipping lemonade, singing songs around the parlor piano, or attending a community event. The young woman and her mother determined the acceptability of suitors, the length of the visit, proper topics of conversation and the amount of chaperonage. There was a small-town, rural orientation to the calling system that kept courtship securely within the bounds of the Victorian home and family....

The powerful forces of modernism transformed American life around the turn of this century. Vast population growth fueled by

millions of immigrants, rapid industrialization and urbanization, the emergence of national transportation and communication systems, as well as the development of national cultural media — magazines, radio, and movies — all these created new opportunities and limitations that profoundly altered ideas and conventions of courtship in America.

Citing one Beth L. Bailey (who has written a book entitled *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America*), Romanoski notes that "with the advent of these 'forces' of modernism, however, a 'good time' increasingly became identified with public places and commercial amusements.

"Especially for the young, the city's amusements also represented and confirmed their integration into modern urban life." And (citing author Kathy Piess) "public entertainment became 'the embodiment of American urban culture, particularly its individualism, ideology of consumption, and affirmation of dating and courtship outside parental control.'"

About these origins of dating, Romanoski concludes, "while dating originated among the urban working class, it became a middle-class practice in the early years of the twentieth century. Between 1890 and the mid-1920's, going out on a 'date' almost completely replaced the chaperoned visit. The watchful eye of the local neighborhood and community was replaced by the anonymity of public space, where young people met casually and had the freedom to explore intimacy and sexuality."

Romanoski writes of the furtherance of the "dating culture" in America stating that by the mid-twentieth century

adolescence took the form of an age-segregated youth culture, which is in many ways a *leisure-oriented microcosm of adult life*. Existing largely in isolation and distinct-

tion from the adult world, adolescents spend most of their time with their peers. They have more leisure time and discretionary income than adults making them a prime demographic audience for entertainment; their separation from adults also makes them more susceptible to manipulation by the media. Young people are also relieved, to a great extent, from the responsibilities and decision making required of adults, allowing them to postpone making significant life decisions, from vocational choice to marriage partner. Increasingly throughout this century dating became disassociated from marriage and family, reflecting instead social status, competition, and popularity within the youth culture (*italics mine*, MD).

This is perhaps best illustrated by the idea of "going steady," which became popular after World War II when, for the first time, women outnumbered men in the United States. Going steady offered greater security amid more intense competition and held out the promise of 'popularity, social acceptance, and emotional security' for young people during the tumult of adolescence.

Prior to the war, going steady meant something like getting engaged does today, when a couple announces their intentions of moving toward marriage. Beginning in the 1950's, however, going steady might have little to do with getting married. Actually, few couples intended it as such but instead acted as if they were married while they went steady. The young couple exchanged signifying tokens (usually rings) and agreed not to date anyone else.... Going steady became the adolescent version of young children playing house: marriage without responsibility or commitment. But that left only leisure activities and sex as the focus of relationships. Not surprisingly, these became the center of courtship and youth culture. Consequently, the most popular dating partners (and therefore marriage partners) were those young people who were physically attractive and socially outgoing, even though these qualities did not necessarily translate into making one a responsible, committed, and loving spouse.

This sound familiar? Does any of this, a lot of this, characterize the way of our men with maids? Please take note! Note the progress of paganism in the way of men with maids so that the way is now this: focused on recreation, fun, amusements, entertainment; activities mostly outside the home and separated from the family; both the daters and the parents taking a back seat; the way of a youth subculture; something chaotic; something which shows no regard for virtue or good order or propriety, or God; something the Beatles might have imagined while they were imagining no heaven, no hell, no religion; something cheap, very cheap. Something you buy from the man wearing the trench coat on 43rd St. in Manhattan. Something we have bought.

The Way of Christ: *The Way of Family!*

We want to learn not the way of the heathen, but the way of the godly in our marrying, and in the marrying of our children. And we can learn that from Holy Writ.

What we have in Scripture guiding us in the way of godly marrying is what I would call "the Family principle." We know this "Family principle," being Reformed lovers of God's covenant. Now I want to suggest to you that we apply the covenant Family truth more precisely and more consistently for the godly marrying of the covenant seed.

The godly way of man with maid is the way of *family*. The persons involved are family: brothers and sisters in the Lord. They are mature family members — those who have confessed Christ, are active and responsible members of a local congregation, and who across the board of their life show they have put away childish things and are not lifting up their soul unto snowmobiles. The way they are to be involved with one another is familial — promoting family, involving family, honoring family, know-

ing each other as members of the family. The goal is family. The blessings of the godly way of man with maid shall be the family blessings, the covenant blessings of God with ... such families.

The first proof of the Family principle for our way of men with maids is the first Family and the first Marriage. In the first Family, and this first Marriage, there is, I believe, a *pattern* for lots of things about our families, our marriages, and also the way we are to get married.

The first Family is God's own, and the first Marriage is the marriage the eternal and original Father proposes for His Son in the counsel of the Family Trinity. This proposal for marriage is no afterthought of God, but, being a *divine proposal*, is an eternal thought in an eternity which knows no "afters." This proposal is, in fact, the *main* thought of God in His eternal decree that there be outside of Himself worlds, and horses, and people, and amoebae. For all the worlds, and all things in them, were created by, and for, the Son (Col. 1:16), that is, for the Son to come into these worlds, and to be Husband of husbands — the pre-eminent Husband-Savior.

The wife, we know, is very many people, but one Elect Bride, the church. With regard to the Father's proposal that the Son take to Himself this wife the Son agrees — this is an altogether lovely proposal. The Son's concurrence in this marriage arranged for Him is not because the Wife He woos will be a beauty. Truth is, when the Son finds her, she is altogether ugly, and dead in sins! But the Son loves the marriage proposal of God the Father, for Father and Son are One in Trinity, and when Son assumes to Himself the human nature He remains the Eternal One, and becomes the Holy Servant-Son of Jehovah in that human nature.

There may be, therefore, no other whom this Son pursues! There is, *the truth must be told!*, no

other one besides the Elect Wife whom the Son delights to save! So when the Son comes, He comes not to do His own will, but He comes only and gladly to do the wedding-will of the Father who sent Him. He communicates constantly with the Father concerning this all-important marriage. He in our flesh, this perfect Son, though He be such a Son, antithesis of all merely human and awfully sinful sons, never seeks to go on His own, even for a night. He would never think, this Son, of telling Father, as He leaves the House, "Trust me," and "Let me be on my own in my pursuit of the Bride." Rather, this Son our Lord ever delights to know Father's care, to seek Father's guidance, to experience Father's companionship on His way with His maid. Once only does He go out into the night to be alone. It is the night He hurls Himself into the black hole of the cross. But then, Son's aloneness on that night is Father's will too. In this marvelous way of atonement for sins, of the payment of the most costly Bride-Price, He gains the very Bride of His Father's good pleasure.

The eternal Father and Son who is appointed Mediator, in the love and communion of the Divine Spirit Person, this first family ... is wonderful. Their relationship and activity for the furtherance of the marriage of the Christ and His church ... is wonderful. And wonderful it is that we in our homes, as fathers, sons, and family, and in the marrying of our own children, are to reflect that divine First Family for the cause of the covenant of God with us in the world. Our fatherhood and sonship, and family, and marrying, are not divine. But as image bearers of the divine, partakers of the divine nature (II Pet. 1:4), those whose marriages are revelations of the divine mystery of Christ and His church (Eph. 5:22-33), there is by the grace of God, and ought to be by grace working faith among us, a remarkable resemblance between our families and THE FAMILY. There ought also to be a noteworthy resemblance between God's way of His Man with His Maid ... and ours.




There is more in the Bible, much more, revealing this Family principle. That will have to wait till next time.

Meantime, since we at Grace Life want to *learn* the good way for good men and virtuous maids, let us search and study the Scriptures. Look up in the Bible any and all examples you can find of the marrying of God's people, or of the marrying of sinners, or of God's people gone astray who went astray, as well, in their marrying. Look up words like betrothal, bride, groom, and phrases like "take a wife," or "giving a daughter." Study the role Father plays in the protection of his daughters, and the marriage of his children.

Discuss how "family marrying" would actually take place, in a real, live situation ... like yours.

Meditate upon that all important matter of kissing ... the Son.

Start *living* according to what you are learning from the Bible about the godly way of a man with a maid.

For peace. For godliness. For family. For marrying in the land of the covenant. 

Day of Shadows

George M. Ophoff

The Types of Scripture (9)

The matter which engaged our attention in the foregoing article was whether the believer of the old covenant perceived in the shadows any ref-

erence to future realities of the gospel. We confined ourselves to the right of expiatory sacrifice. The question was faced whether the believer of the old covenant regarded the sacrificial victim as an image of the Christ who by His suffering and death would atone for the sins of His people. We pointed out that the shadows were accompanied by the word of prophecy. The following Scriptures were singled out: "And I

will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10). "And I will make of thee (Abraham) a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a

George Ophoff was Professor of Old Testament Studies in the Protestant Reformed Seminary in its early days. Reprinted here, in edited form, are articles which Ophoff wrote at that time for the Standard Bearer.

blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:2, 3). "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Is. 53:5).

Examining these Scriptures we concluded that only the last one quoted ascribes to the sufferings of Christ atoning value. It appears that Isaiah was the first prophet empowered by the Holy Spirit to associate the shedding of blood with Him whose sufferings were predicted even at the dawn of history. For in the written record of the utterances of this prophet are found passages which assert that the Servant of Jehovah was bruised for our iniquities. Hence, the conclusion is warranted that this seer associated the shedding of blood of the sacrificial victim with Him to whose sufferings he attached meritorial value.

This much cannot be said of the seers (Eve, Noah, Moses, David, etc.) of the periods preceding the appearance of Isaiah. The written record of their utterances do not indicate that they perceived that He in whose triumphs they were wont to glory would cover their sins with His blood. Now, the prophets were the inspired teachers of the church. They were leaders in thought. It cannot very well be supposed, therefore, that the believers surpassed them in their capacity to penetrate into the mysteries of God. Hence, whether the church in the epoch preceding the prophetic activities of Isaiah was told by Jehovah that the suffering Messiah would atone for the sin of men, and whether, consequently, the sacrificial animal was regarded as a figure of the suffering Servant of Jehovah, will remain a matter of conjecture. Let it be repeated that the sacred record throws no light upon the matter.

Perception of the shadows after the prophecy of Isaiah

The next question which asserts itself is whether these particular utterances of the prophet Isaiah were embraced and understood by the church, so that, from that day on, the shadows of the old covenant spoke to the believers generally of the realities of the gospel. In other words, did the believers, with the aid of the illuminating words of the prophet Isaiah, discover in the rite of expiatory sacrifice any reference to the suffering Servant of Jehovah?

Whether the believers generally did so is again a matter of uncertainty. The blunders of the disciples of Christ do not favor the view that the church, from the days of Isaiah on, associated the sacrificial victim with the Christ. This must be admitted. Peter, it will be recalled, takes Christ aside and administers to Him a stern rebuke for intending to go to Jerusalem, and to suffer many things of the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day, thus complying with divine necessity. Further, the crucifixion of Christ greatly perplexes certain disciples on their way to the village of Emmaus. They were oblivious to the fact that Christ *ought* to have suffered all these things. The fact that Jesus expounded to them all the Scriptures concerning Himself goes to show that they were very much in the dark.

In preceding articles, we averred that the shadows, being accompanied by the word, spoke to the believers of the realities of the gospel. Our words must not be interpreted to mean that the believers of the old covenant necessarily associated in their minds the sacrificial animal with Him of whose sufferings and triumphs the prophets often spoke in their songs and in their prayers. The prophetic word — the promise of Him who should gain the ascendancy over the malice of the devil — together with the symbol, had the effect of

focusing the mind of the believers upon Jehovah. For the Shiloh was to be a man *of* or *with* Jehovah. Word and symbol plainly declared to the contrite of heart that *Jehovah* will redeem and be merciful unto His people. And the believer would say with the poet: "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.... Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord. Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies. For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great" (Ps. 25:1-11).

Both symbol and word, applied by the Holy Spirit, induced the saints of the old covenant to commit themselves to the tender mercies of Jehovah, who in His own good and just way will redeem His people and take them to His heart. It was upon Jehovah that the expectations of the church were focused. And Jesus Christ is none other than Jehovah, who in the fullness of time came to redeem those whom He loved unto death. Only in this sense did the shadows, in conjunction with the prophetic word, lead the believer of the old covenant to Christ. On the basis of the testimony of Scripture, we conclude that only in the above sense did the shadows, in conjunction with the spoken word, declare unto the believers the Messiah.

Thus we have set forth our view relative to the capabilities of the believers of old to descry the

meaning of the shadows. This view, we admit, is at variance with the view of those who hold that faith in the blood of a beast was all that Jehovah required. On the basis of the testimony of Scripture, we maintain that God trained His people of old to look away from the blood of the sacrificial animal and to cast themselves upon His mercy.

But we also refuse to subscribe to the view which insists that the saints of the old covenant clearly perceived and understood the realities of which the shadows were pictures. On the basis of the testimony of Scripture we can say no more than that the symbols, with the aid of the spoken word, had the effect of inducing the (true) church to embrace Jehovah as the God of their salvation, who provides for His people a just pardon and sanctification in His own good way, and who through the instrumentality of His Servant, the Man of Jehovah, will vanquish the forces of unrighteousness and deliver His people and bring them into the promised rest.

The saints of the Old Testament, then, were not blessed because they were covered by the blood of the beast. And Jehovah could not permit His people to entertain the view that it was the blood of a beast that procured for them the favor of God.

But, someone may interject, is it not a fact that he who attended to the prescriptions of the law was permitted to retain his place in the commonwealth of Israel and attained to much good?

There was, to be sure, a causal relation between the observance of the precepts of the law and the favor of God. It may be expressed thus: *In the way of obedience the believer of the old covenant attained to peace and happiness. However, not the practice of the law was the meritorious cause of the blessings of Jehovah, but Christ.* "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock

that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" — this Scripture applies to the church of both dispensations.

In fine, the high purpose of the transactions prescribed by the ceremonial law, as well as of the types in general, was to demonstrate to the believer of the old covenant the rudiments of the Jehovah-religion and to picture to the church the realities of the covenant of grace, viz., the kingdom of God and its righteousness.

There is one more matter to which we must attend before leaving this phase of our subject. Hebrews 9:9 reads: "Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." Here it is clearly stated that the shadows were *figures for the time then present*. Does not this assertion militate against the view that the believers in general did not succeed in associating the shadows of the old covenant with the realities which they prefigured?

To this we reply that, according to the view presented by us, the believers of the old dispensation were sensible of the fact that the symbols were but shadows, figures, and not realities. The Scripture quoted above asserts this very thing, but no more. It is not maintained by the author of the above Scripture that the believer clearly *perceived the realities* of which the shadows were but the picture or the image. We are, therefore, not at variance with the author of this particular epistle.

The shadows and New Testament believers

Now, then, if the believers of the old dispensation did not clearly perceive the realities and events of which the shadows were images,

and if the shadows were nevertheless pictures of corresponding realities and were also meant to be, according to the purpose of God, can it be maintained that the symbolical institutions of the old covenant were actually a success?

Needless to say, God is successful in all His undertakings. He realized His purposes also with the shadows of the old covenant. The symbolical events and transactions of the old dispensation were made to appear not only for the benefit of the saints of the old dispensation, but, according to the purpose of God, they also speak to the church of the new covenant. We repeat, the symbols and types are vehicles of much valuable instruction to the believers of the new covenant as well. The realities to which the shadows refer are clearly perceived by them. The shadows greatly aid the believers of the new covenant in grasping and appreciating the different elements constituting the economy of redemption. The shadows set forth in unmistakable language the glories of God. In the believers of the new dispensation God realizes in full His high purpose with the symbols of the old covenant.

To prove this we need but point to the writings of the apostles. The epistles are interspersed with allusions to the symbols of the Old Testament day.

"Elect ... unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:2).

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9).

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (I Pet. 3:18).


"For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who

is consecrated for evermore. Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was

about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. 7:28-8:6).

"Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made by hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:21-26).

It appears, therefore, from the above Scriptures, that the New Testament church was indeed prepared by the shadows for the realities of the gospel. 

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

Evangelism Activities

The Kalamazoo, MI PRC hosted a spring lecture series entitled, "The Perfect Law of Liberty," April 26 & 27, at the Comfort Inn in Plainwell, MI. Prof. D. Engelsma spoke Friday evening on "The Freedom of the Christian," followed the next morning by speeches on "The Place of the Law in the Life of a Redeemed Believer," by Rev. C. Haak, and "Preaching Liberty to the Captives," by Rev. W. Bruinsma. As you might imagine, this subject proved to be a timely one, since Christians have struggled with questions regarding the place the law holds in their lives for centuries. These three speeches tried to address the Christian's responsibility in this whole matter. The Kalamazoo congregation also extended an invitation to any out-of-towners to spend the entire weekend in the area and

worship with them on the Lord's Day. Prof. Engelsma and Rev. Haak pursued the same subject in sermons that day as well.

The Evangelism Committee of the Randolph, WI PRC sponsored a lecture, May 3, at the Second Christian Reformed Church in Randolph on the subject, "The Unity of the Church." Their pastor, Rev. Doug Kuiper, was the speaker.

On Friday, April 26, members of the First PRC in Edmonton, AB, Canada invited members of their community as well as the congregation of the Immanuel PRC in Lacombe, AB to gather with them to hear their pastor, Rev. M. DeVries, speak on "FOR IN SIX DAYS...Creation Days: Literal or Not?"

Sadly, the broadcast of the Reformed Witness Hour over WYLL AM radio station in Chicago, IL has not drawn enough response to justify the significant cost of the air time. The Evangelism Committee of the South Holland, IL PRC has decided to schedule the last broadcast for May 18.

Mission Activities

On Sunday, April 28, at Southwest PRC in Grandville, MI, Rev. J. Mahtani, our churches' missionary to Pittsburgh, PA and the Eastern United States, gave a report on his work. Some of that work includes preparing a newsletter which is regularly sent to some 1300 contacts in the Eastern U.S., as well as, just recently, recording a series of sermons on, "Preparing to Die Willingly," for the Reformed Witness Hour to air this summer.

Rev. M. Dick, along with the Fellowship in Fayetteville, NC, continues to make more contacts in their area. An April newsletter was mailed to some 80 families. We are reminded to pray that the Lord will work in the hearts of the God-fearing and those with a zeal for the truth to join themselves to this work. And we are all reminded as well of our responsibility to go forth into the world as salt and light to witness of the gospel and the gathering of the people of God (Matt. 5:13-16).

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

Young Adult Activities

Recent bulletins in the Grand Rapids, MI area included an invitation to college students to come and hear a talk at Calvin College, April 23, by Prof. H. Hanko on the subject, "The Doctrine of Creation: An object of Faith." This was sponsored by the student organization, By Faith We Understand. This is a group that was formed three semesters ago at Calvin, with students from our area churches serving as president, treasurer, and secretary. Briefly this group "seeks to encourage students in their Christian faith by discussing how to approach science and history through the eyes of Scripture. The group will emphasize faith as the basis for believing that the biblical accounts of creation and the flood are literal accounts. Then using a literal approach to Genesis we will discuss scientific and historical evidence and seek to understand how they can be viewed in the light of Scripture" (quote from their "Mission Statement"). Curt

Gritters, president of the group, also wrote me that this group meets one night per month throughout the school year. Answers in Genesis, a Christian creation organization, has also supplied them with numerous videos and magazines. Each semester they also try to have one of our churches' pastors or professors give a talk. Typically around 20 non-PRs attend, but as many as 60 have come to the larger meetings.


Congregation Activities

May 3 the congregation of the Trinity PRC in Hudsonville, MI, along with friends from other of our west-Michigan PRCs, gathered together to dedicate their sanctuary. The program included musical numbers from Trinity's Sunday School and Men's Chorus, along with a dedication reading by Rev. G. VanBaren and a dedication message given by Rev B. Gritters. By the time of dedication, Trinity had grown to a total of 51 families with 206 members. Rev. Gritters

also mentioned that a total of 439 days, or about 14 1/2 months had passed since Trinity held their first service at Heritage Christian School until the dedication of their sanctuary on May 4. In addition to the program, opportunity was also given to tour Trinity's church building, parsonage, and fellowship hall.

The League of the PR Adult Bible Societies met together on April 23 at Faith PRC in Jenison, MI to hear Rev. W. Bruinsma speak on the topic, "The Value of Speaking One to Another as Members of a Local Congregation."

Minister Activities

The Grandville, MI PRC has extended a call to Rev. C. Haak to serve as their next pastor. Rev. K. Koole received the call from Covenant PRC in Wyckoff, NJ. The Trinity PRC in Hudsonville voted on May 5 to extend a call to Rev. G. Eriks to serve as their churches' first pastor. 

Announcements

Join Reformed believers from the
British Isles & around the world at the

British Reformed Fellowship Family Conference

20-27 July, 2002
at Castlewellan Castle
Conference Centre, N. Ireland

Theme:

Assurance of Salvation

Speakers:

Prof. David Engelsma

(Professor of Dogmatics & O.T. History,
Protestant Reformed Seminary, USA)

Rev. Barry Gritters

(Pastor of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, USA)

For further details contact the Booking Secretary,
7 Lislunna Rd., Kells, Ballymena BT42 3NR
or e-mail: anmstewart@lineone.net

Interested persons in North America should get in contact with Mr. Bill Oomkes,
6299 Wing Ave., Grand Rapids, MI 49512 USA.

Telephone: (616) 698-6697. E-mail: oomkes@iserv.net

NOTICE

The Board of the Reformed Heritage Christian School Association of Kalamazoo, Michigan is inviting applications for a full-time and part-time high school teacher for the 2002-2003 school year. Successful applicants must be committed to the Reformed faith, biblical inerrancy, 6-day creation, male headship, the antithesis between Christianity and the world, and covenantal theology. Applicants should send a letter of application and résumé to:

Reformed Heritage
Christian School
700 North Fletcher
Kalamazoo, MI 49006.

For more information, phone 1-616-279-7373.

THE STANDARD BEARER

P.O. Box 603
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The 22 chapters of *Christ's Spiritual Kingdom* appeared originally as a series of editorials in the *Standard Bearer*. The Evangelism Committee of Redlands PRC has undertaken the publication of these articles in book form, out of the conviction that it will be useful in the defense and promotion of the Reformed faith, fundamental to which is a sound doctrine of the end-times.

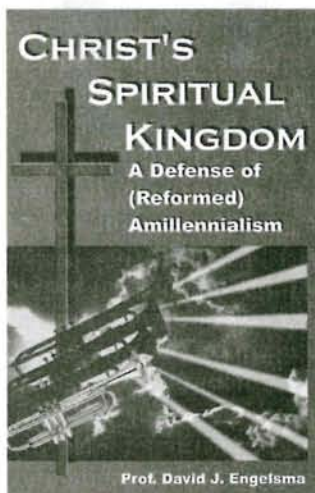
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CALL TO SYNOD!!

Synod 2001 appointed Southwest Protestant Reformed Church, Grandville, Michigan, the calling church for the 2002 synod.

The consistory hereby notifies our churches that the 2002 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America will convene, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, June 11, 2002 at 9:00 A.M. in the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church, Grandville, Michigan.

The Pre-Synodical Service will be held on Monday evening, June 10, at 7:30 P.M. Rev. Charles Terpstra, president of the 2001 synod, will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the consistory before the service.

Consistory of Southwest
Protestant Reformed Church
Gary Boverhof, Clerk.

REMINDER

During the months of June, July, and August, the *Standard Bearer* is published only once per month.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 13, 2002, the Lord willing, our parents and grandparents,

MR. and MRS. WILLIAM J.

BOOTH,

will celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary. We are thankful for the years God has given them together and pray that God will bless them in the years to come. "For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord" (Psalm 117:2).

✿ Chuck Booth

Kelly, Lindsey, Charlie

✿ Jeff and Cathy Booth

Bill, Sarah, Michael, Rachel

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Reformed Witness Hour

Station	Location	Frequency	Time/day
KCCF	Ferndale, WA	1550AM	8:30 A.M./Sunday
KLOH	Pipestone, MN	1050AM	8:00 A.M./Sunday
KDCR	Sioux Center, IA	88.5FM	5:30 P.M./Sunday
KCWN	Pella, IA	99.9FM	3:30 P.M./Sunday
WMRH	Waupun, WI	1170AM	8:30 A.M./Sunday
WFUR	Grand Rapids, MI	102.9FM	8:00 A.M./Sunday
WFUR	Grand Rapids, MI	1570AM	4:00 P.M./Sunday
WORD	Pittsburgh, PA	101.5FM	10:00 A.M./Sunday
WFNC	Fayetteville, NC	640AM	9:30 A.M./Sunday
WELP	Spartanburg, SC	1360AM	4:00 P.M./Sunday
WFAM	Augusta, GA	1050AM	4:00 P.M./Sunday
WBXR	Huntsville, AL	1140AM	9:00 A.M./Saturday
CJCA	Edmonton, AB	930AM	6:30 P.M./Sunday
KCNW	Kansas City, KS	1380AM	4:30 P.M./Sunday

Date

June 2

June 9

June 16

June 23

June 30

Topic

"The Universal Sentence of Death"

"The Rich Fool"

"The Frailty of Life"

"To Live Is Christ, To Die Is Gain"

"Walking by Faith, Not by Sight"

Text

Romans 5:112

Luke 12:13-21

Isaiah 40:6-8

Philippians 1:21

II Corinthians 5:6-8