

# THE OUTLOOK

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DEVOTED TO THE EXPOSITION AND DEFENSE OF THE REFORMED FAITH

APRIL 1982



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**CHURCH MUSIC**  
**A SOUTHERN REFORMER**  
**DYNAMIC RETIREES**

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Reformed Women Speak

# CHURCH MUSIC:

## Accommodation or Discrimination?

Laurie Vanden Heuvel

There was a time when articles on "church music" would be automatically bypassed by most laymen of the church because such a topic seemed to lie outside the area of their interest or understanding.

But times have changed. Many laymen of the church have been captive participants in worship services where a variety of unsettling, sometimes nightmarish music experiences have replaced the smooth Bible-based texts and sturdy tunes which comprised their vehicles of praise in days past. Into many worship services have been introduced everything from slick commercial arrangements of country and western tunes in jog-along rhythms, to twanging amplified guitars, to the frenzy of so-called "Christian" themes set to rock or jazz rhythms.

Suddenly many laymen find themselves groping — yes, even grasping desperately for some direction in this "rootlessness" passed off as "relevancy." Not able to give a reasoned critique for the new modes, the laymen nevertheless express audibly what they feel intuitively, that is, gross "incongruity" between the *message* of the Bible and the *musical methods* being used to convey it. At this point experts remind the layman of his inadequacy to judge and thus squash the argument by an appeal to the *subjectivity* of music so that what was "good for yesterday" no longer speaks to "today," and "Who can be the judge anyway of what is good?"

Is music a totally subjective art? Or are there basic elements put into its structure and operation by God which make one form more legitimate than another as a vehicle of praise to God?

Music is decidedly subjective. But all music, sacred or secular has three basic elements to which

we can appeal for concrete standards of judgment: rhythm, melody, and harmony which came into being in that order. These three elements do affect the emotional life of man either for good or for ill. In any given musical composition, when *melody* is dominant, it expresses itself in *song*. If *rhythm* is dominant, it automatically calls forth a *dance* response. If *harmony* is dominant, the composition is *expanded melody*. This last form has been the most widely used in the traditional psalmody and hymnody of the church.

What we are seeing today is an accommodation of current folk tunes and styles to Christian themes. It is being justified on the grounds that because the Reformers adapted the folk tunes of their day to Christian themes we may do the same. But it is important to remember that in modern folk tunes, we find a mixed dominance. The rhythmic dominance is furnished by the bass, tenor and alto lines which generally progress together in half notes or whole notes, providing the regular, dance rhythm, slower and more casual than rock or jazz but a dance rhythm nonetheless. The melodic dominance is usually furnished by the soloist carrying the often *syncopated melody*, all alone. Because of this, it is never fair to compare today's "Christian" use of folk music to the use made of folk tunes by the Reformers. Although the early Reformation musicians often used secular matter in their psalm tunes, their arrangements for congregational singing reflected *solid moving parts* without a trace of dance rhythm.

Jazz and rock (be it religious or otherwise) are basically highly exaggerated forms of the modern folk rhythms with faded and dissonant melodic lines and rhythm heavily accented, syncopated and greatly accelerated. The accompanying dance is executed with violent bodily motions and gestures and wails. An honest appraisal will have to concede that any

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person performing or participating in a jazz performance will, by virtue of his own intense, sensual, emotional, self-centered and personal involvement, find any serious contemplation of God or any of His works or attributes a feat of mental gymnastics which is virtually impossible. Newspaper reviews often guardedly admit this when they describe congregational response to a religious jazz service as "enthusiastic but shallow."

Impressive predictions about the ability of folk, jazz and rock to communicate the gospel more effectively to today's world have already paled to the point where its advocates are urging a mediate program for the worship service: a little "folk," a little "rock," a little "jazz," and a little "tradition" - a sort of musical "smorgasbord." Such a proposal is inadequate for two reasons. First, it seeks to *accommodate* the music of the church to tastes of its members. It presupposes that such music is there to *entertain* rather than *edify*. Musical form becomes the *object* of praise, instead of the *vehicle* of praise, subordinate to and supportive of the all-important Bible-based words.

Two principles, if scrupulously and conscientiously followed, will rescue some congregations from the web of confusion and restore order and harmony in the worship service:

1. The music of the church must fit the message of the church - its preludes and offertories as well as hymns. No artist dabs his brush in bright orange, red and green oils to paint a tree caught in a mid-winter snow storm. No organist plays "Stars and Stripes Forever" at a funeral or the "Funeral March" at a wedding. No well-groomed gentleman will wear dinner jacket, bow tie and highly polished shoes with blue jeans. Why then set the miracle of the incarnation, the tender and compassionate love of the Father, the grandeur of His works and the mysteries of His attributes to raucous dissonances and frenzied rhythms where all sensitivity to words is necessarily "drowned out" instead of "buoyed"? The incongruity of it all is obvious.

2. The congregation, choirs and soloist must select music in which the tune is *subordinate* to and *supportive* of the text, never calling attention to itself.

The music must magnify and adorn the Word. St. Augustine said in his *Confessions*:

"I am inclined to approve the custom of singing in church. Nevertheless when it happens that I am more moved by the song than the thing which is sung, I confess that I sin in a manner deserving of punishment, and then I should rather not hear the singing."

Each chorister, soloist, instrumentalist and member of the congregation holds before him a staff upon which are inscribed little note heads and bar-lines, possessing the power to lift the soul heavenward or wound and mutilate it. Careful *discrimination* rather than careless accommodation is the hallmark of every Christian musician who seeks to glorify God, edify His people, and testify of Him to the World. ●

# THE OUTLOOK

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"And the three companies blew the trumpets . . . and held THE TORCHES in their left hands, and THE TRUMPETS in their right hands . . . and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon" (Judges 7:20).

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# *a Southern Reformer* **with a Message for Today**

Peter De Jong

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JAMES HENLEY THORNWELL, by Dr. B. M. Palmer, reprinted by The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, and Box 652, Carlisle, PA 17013, first published 1875, republished 1974. 614 pp.

Luder G. Whitlock, writing in the Fall 1974 *Westminster Theological Journal* compared the role of James Henley Thornwell in the Southern Presbyterian Church with that of the reformer, John Knox, in the development of Presbyterianism in Scotland. Although he lived over a century ago (1812-1862), Whitlock sees his influence continuing in the new Presbyterian Church in America. This reprint after 100 years, of his biography written by his friend and contemporary, B. M. Palmer, enables us to get acquainted with him — and it is an acquaintance worth making, especially in connection with some of our major problems.

## **Presbyterian from Conviction**

At first the somewhat florid, sentimental style of writing takes us back to an earlier time, when the nation was young and its civilization was largely concentrated along the narrow colonial strip of Atlantic coast. Obstacles of narrative style recede as one's interest is aroused in the 8-year-old who had lost his father, leaving a poor widowed mother to provide as best she could for a family of five. Influenced early by the Welsh Baptist mother, later by a Methodist preacher/school-teacher who took him into his home, his further education sponsored by two Episcopalians (one a wealthy planter and the other, with whom he came to live, a lawyer from the North) Thornwell was in the course of his schooling brought step by step to personal conversion. Reading a copy of the Westminster Confession of Faith which he had bought for a quarter in the town book store led to his confession of faith as a Presbyterian and then studying for the ministry. He felt personally inclined to the pastorate of churches, but,

a phenomenally brilliant student, he was three times soon called away from such labors to become a professor. First he taught in the South Carolina College at Columbia where he was to take a leading role in combatting the religiously destructive influence of a deistic predecessor. Later he became president of that institution. Afterward he became leading professor in Columbia Theological Seminary.

## **Struggle for a Biblical Church Order**

Having become a Presbyterian through personal study and conviction rather than by tradition, Thornwell (like some other converts to Calvinism) was more deeply committed to maintaining that doctrine and church order than were many other Presbyterian leaders. He was convinced that the rule of elders or "presbyters" was the form of church order which the Bible taught. Therefore he argued persistently, but unsuccessfully, in the assemblies of the (Northern) church against down-grading the elders. He saw that done when they were not permitted to share in the laying on of hands at the ordination of a pastor and again in the church rule which permitted presbytery meetings to be held if only three ministers were present. The conviction that the Bible placed the rule in the church in the hands of elders and their assemblies led him to oppose the development of "boards" to do the churches' work. He saw these boards as an unbiblical importation of the congregationalists from a secular world, lacking the Biblical Presbyterian church structure. We find him warning

I believe that the Boards will eventually prove our masters, unless they are crushed in their infancy. They are founded upon a radical misconception of the true nature and extent of ecclesiastical power . . . (p. 233).

"... our church is becoming deplorably secular. She has degenerated from a spiritual body into a mere petty corporation. When we meet in our

ecclesiastical courts, instead of attending to the spiritual interests of God's kingdom, we scarcely do anything more than examine and audit accounts, and devise ways and means for raising money (p. 224).

I believe that the entire system of voluntary Societies and ecclesiastical Boards, for religious purposes is fundamentally wrong. The Church, as organized by her Head, is competent to do all that He requires of her. He has furnished her with the necessary apparatus of means, officers and institutions, in Sessions, Presbyteries, Elders, Pastors and Evangelists. Let us take Presbyterianism as we have it described in our Form of Government, and let us carry it out in its true spirit, and we shall have no use for the sore evil of incorporated Boards, vested funds, and travelling agencies (p. 225).

I am satisfied that what . . . we need most, is a revival of pure religion in all of our churches. The cause of Missions lags, and all our interests decay, because the Spirit of life, to a mournful extent, is withdrawn from our congregations. The Church has almost dwindled down into a secular corporation; and the principles of this world, a mere carnal policy, which we have nick-named *prudence*, presides in our councils. Until she becomes a spiritual body, and aims at spiritual ends by appointed means and makes faith in God the impulsive cause of her efforts, our Zion can never arise and shine, and become a joy and a praise in the whole earth (p. 228).

Thornwell's view of Presbyterian Church order as that prescribed by the Bible repeatedly brought him into conflict with other Presbyterian leaders who held that many such matters were left to the discretion of the church to arrange as might seem expedient. Whitlock in the *Journal* article already mentioned refers to one monumental debate with Charles Hodge in which Hodge called Thornwell's view "hyper-hyper-hyper High Church Presbyterianism" and Thornwell retorted that Hodge's principles were "no, no, No, Presbyterianism, no, no, No Churchism" (p. 54).

The issues raised by Thornwell are live issues today. They received much attention and discussion in the organization of the new Presbyterian Church in America. Our current arguments against opening of church offices to women are based on the principle Thornwell saw and maintained so clearly that the Bible must be the authoritative guide to a Reformed church order. In our churches problems and frustrations with a growing bureaucracy, Thornwell's keen diagnosis of what was happening in his church is illuminating and helpful. He pointed out that the Bible teaches some structural principles about how the Lord would have His church organized with ordained officers and their assemblies. When beside this Biblical system of officers and assemblies, churches establish an increasingly independent bureaucracy of Boards and executives in a pattern borrowed from the business world, who instead of obeying the church officers and assemblies begin to ignore or

rule over them, then the Lord's order for His churches is being subverted and it can hardly expect His blessing. (In the March OUTLOOK I pointed out how this is happening especially in our denominational finances.) Thornwell's call for return to the Biblical church order (which we call Reformed or Presbyterian) is loud and clear and as urgently needed today as it was 140 years ago.

### The Threat of Unconstitutional Government

The account of Thornwell's influential political role in the secession of the confederate states and his leadership in the formation of a separate Southern Presbyterian Church brings us into a fascinating era of our nation's history regarding which there has been much misunderstanding. The issue as he saw it was not slavery. Thornwell was himself prepared to move for its elimination (p. 482). The real issue was constitutional government. Does the majority have the right, disregarding its constitution, to impose its will on the minority if it is powerful enough to do so? Does might make right? This was the argument of Thornwell and other southern government and church leaders against the North. As we look back after more than a hundred years we see the evil of slavery outlawed by the Civil War. A less desirable legacy of that war and the Northern policy in it was the development of a federal bureaucracy which can step into any community and order what schools its children shall attend and how they must be transported, who may be hired or fired as teachers, and what may be read or taught in a classroom. The run-away growth of federal regulatory agencies, unrestrained by the limitations of the constitution, as courts appeal to or ignore at will, encroaches upon our freedoms, guarantees inflation of our money and threatens our whole economy with bankruptcy. Bringing the cancerous development of the federal government back under control is coming to be generally recognized as one of our most immediate and baffling national problems. The South, although wrong in defending the monstrosity of slavery, may have been in principle, right in opposing the monstrosity of a lawless and enslaving federal government. In our current problems we might profitably learn something from Thornwell and his associates about the responsibilities and limits of constitutional government in both church and state.

### Personal and Family Piety

The biography gives many a glimpse of the warm personal and family godliness that characterized Thornwell and his family. A century ago people often died of illnesses which modern medicine has found ways to treat or prevent. The increased health of our time we ought to appreciate, but the awareness of the uncertainty of life and the urgency of seeking the Lord early, keenly felt by our spiritual forebears we ought to regain. The death of a daughter, Nancy, just before she was to be married, prompted Thornwell while grieving, to rejoice in her faith and to observe in a letter, "My second daughter is a professor of religion, and I think, a true child of God. . . . Pray for us, my dear friend; es-

pecially pray that I may have no unconverted child." We would profit by closer acquaintance with Thornwell, the great Presbyterian church father, as well as with his present spiritual successors, whose Biblical, Reformed faith and cause is also ours. ●

*Bibliographical note:*

*The Banner of Truth Trust has also reprinted The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell in 4 volumes.*

*It has reprinted a biography of Thornwell's contemporary famous Southern Presbyterian leader The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney by Thomas Cary Johnson. Dabney's career as preacher, church leader and educator and his convictions were similar to Thornwell's. When the seminary in which he was teaching was closed by the Civil War he became for a time an adjutant general, aide to General Stonewall Jackson in the Confederate army. Of him his biographer wrote, "He is the most biblical of the great American theologians. His exposition and defense of the Westminster Standards is more of the nature of an exposition of the Scriptures bearing on the parts of the system." Comparing him with the other most famous Presbyterian theologians, the*

*writer continued, "in practice no one of them made so much of the 'thus saith the Lord,' in comparison with his philosophical arguments . . . not one of them . . . saw so clearly the infinite difference between the profoundest human speculation and the absolute teaching of God's Word" (p 555).*

*Regarding the political issues raised by the lives and writings of these men, it may also be of interest to our readers that the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company has recently issued a revised edition of C. Gregg Singer's A Theological Interpretation of American History. Singer shows that the United States Constitution has a different spirit and was drawn up by different authors than the earlier Declaration of Independence. The writers of the Constitution, although by no means all Christians, revealed much more Christian influence on their political views than did the writers of the earlier document. Singer traces the liberal attacks on the Constitution and what it embodies of Christian principle through the nation's history. The new edition is similar to that of 1964 except for the addition of about 50 pages of discussion of later political developments up to the election of the Reagan administration. This book would interest readers who might like to consider further the southern Presbyterian theologians' views regarding the U.S. Constitution and their bearing on our current government policy crisis.*

## Our Risen Lord's "Remote Control"

### EASTER MEDITATION

John Blankespoor

"And when he had left speaking he said unto Simon, put out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answered and said, Master we toiled all night and caught nothing; but at thy word I will let down the net" (Luke 5:4, 5).

"They (the disciples) went into the boat and that night they took nothing . . . And he (Jesus) said unto them, cast the net on the right side of the boat and ye shall find. They cast therefore and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." (John 21:3, 6.)

Christians, of course, believe that Jesus rose from the grave and conquered death. But God wants us to do more than believe this. He also wants us to serve this risen Saviour. With this in mind the Scriptures tell us what kind of risen Lord He is. After all, we must know whom we serve. Therefore the Scriptures relate not only the history of the resurrection itself, but also accounts of several appearances of

Christ. There were at least ten in all, all in different circumstances and settings. In each one of them there is an important lesson. The appearance we now recall was connected with the fishing of the disciples, beautifully telling us what and who He really is as the risen Saviour, and what he does and can and will do for those who listen to Him as He speaks in His Word.

Several disciples went fishing. They had gone to Galilee, in the north, as Christ had instructed them to do. Christ was not with them physically, as previously. Everything was different from former times. Apparently they had been here for some time, perhaps several days. And they waited and waited. Finally Peter again took the lead and decided to go fishing. The others joined him. They did this, perhaps just to do something, perhaps because they needed food or fish to sell for income, or perhaps because they had no idea what would now happen to

them as "former" followers of Christ. Thus they returned to their former occupation.

It is interesting that what we read further is much like what had happened before, as recorded in Luke 5. There are many similarities between Luke 5 and John 21, but also remarkable differences. We find similarities in that in both instances they went fishing all night, that they caught nothing, that Jesus instructed them to cast the net into the water, and that at both times they caught a large number of fish. Notice also the differences and the progress in revelation. The first time Jesus was with them physically. The second time, as the risen Lord. He was with them indeed but on shore. Also, the first time, in Luke 5, the net broke, but not now. In other words, fishing was much better this way and they would be much more successful and blessed when He is with them as the spiritual, risen Lord than when He was with them before His resurrection.

Notice the people whom Christ was instructing and encouraging. First of all there were the disciples, the fishers of men. They were given the special office of apostleship. That office no longer exists. It is no longer necessary. But we do have the special offices of pastors, elders and deacons, as well as that of the office of all believers. And let us never minimize the latter. Pastors, professors and missionaries are important, but surely also teachers, many workers in the church and, last but not least, fathers and mothers in our homes. Each one in his and her own place is called upon to be a kingdom worker. Aren't we all going to be judged after a while according to our works?

We observe the fact that the disciples caught nothing. In the whole long night, not one fish got caught in the net. As Jesus taught those followers long ago, without Him we can do nothing. It is important to all of us to learn this — pastors, parents, all kingdom workers. The Lord wanted to emphasize this. Therefore they *must* catch nothing. What a miracle it was that later they caught so many fish with the net on the other side. But it appears to have been a similar miracle that all that night they caught nothing. The risen Lord, with His spiritual power and "remote control" can control the course of every fish in the sea, of hundreds, perhaps thousands of them, so that not even one will get in the way of the net. Without Christ, His presence and the blessing and power of the Spirit, we can do absolutely nothing! Learning this, we think less of ourselves and become more humble. Learning this, we look away from ourselves and our own ability and ingenuity and we turn to Him in prayer.

"Cast the net on the other side of the boat," was the command. Wouldn't we expect at least one of the disciples to have replied by saying, "But that's not going to make any difference — only moving the net over a few feet?" God's ways and God's instructions often don't seem to make sense. In fact, at times His ways and commands seem wrong to us. With our spiritual calculators we try to determine what the result of a certain action or program will be. But the lesson we must learn is to be obedient to the Word. In obedient faith the disciples must cast the net on the

other side. They listened. And blessed are all those who listen in child-like obedience and trust.

What amazing results the disciples experienced when they believed and obeyed. All God's obedient children and workers may experience similar amazing blessings.

The disciples caught one hundred fifty-three fish, big ones. Why is the number given? Likely because it is just incredible that in such a short time, with this obedience to His command, they could catch so many big fish. And the net did not break — an added assurance of success to people who listen to Him.

How could all this take place? I imagine that the disciples thought about this marvelous experience and history many times in the subsequent years. Jesus not only arose from the grave, but what a power He now has. How could He control the courses of all those fish under the water, and at great distances? There's only one answer to all such questions. We believe in miracles which we shouldn't try to understand. How important this message is to us in our particular, often difficult situations. As a Christian, don't ask how this or that can be done, or why? Believe in the risen Lord who has "remote control" also today over all things happening in our lives, in the church, in the world and with our children. In Him God's providence governs all these minute details. It is He who watches over "worthless" sparrows, who counts the hairs on our heads every day of our lives, knows our thoughts from afar and knows all our need, heartaches and cares.

He not only arose from the grave, He also ascended into heaven, and was given all authority in heaven and on earth.

To the disciples He said, "Cast your net on the other side of the boat." To us He says, "Live by My Word, listen to it, obey it, be subject to it. And you shall be blessed, in an abundant measure." With true obedience, our cups will overflow. That's His promise.

One more detail should get our attention. The disciples came to the shore. Breakfast was ready for them, the common food of the day, broiled fish and bread. Notice, Jesus who had prepared the breakfast, did not take of the fish the disciples had caught to be used for their breakfast. The lesson, no doubt, is that their calling is to be fishers of men and obedient to His Word. And He will provide for all of their physical needs. For all of us this implies that not the material things, and the secular, but the spiritual should be our aim in life. And seeking first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, He will give us all we need physically. Matt. 6:33.

The apostle John concludes this great "story" by saying that this was the third time that Jesus as the risen Lord had been manifested to the disciples. What a manifestation it was! It is given to us that we may know that we have this kind of risen Saviour. He lives today and will never leave His people (Matt. 28:20). As the one who has conquered our death, He assures us that He is in control of all the experiences of our lives, and that He will give blessings beyond measure . . . to all who are obedient to His Word.

# The Doctrine of Last Things Death

Jerome M. Julien

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour,  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

So wrote the poet Thomas Gray in his "Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard." After a life of great things he saw death. The conqueror death is always there! There is no escaping it. And of course, he was correct: death is sure. Death is "the inevitable hour."

The Bible sees death as no respecter of persons. The high and the low, the wicked and the good, the young and the old are threatened by and conquered by death. Starving millions, those whose tables overflow with food, some who take to the crowded, modern highways, innocent by-standers in war, soldiers on the front lines, our neighbors, our loved ones, even we ourselves are met by death. "It is appointed unto men once to die (Heb. 9:27)." No matter how we try, we cannot escape it. With every tick of the clock death conquers another living being.

We try to stop it, but we cannot. Medical science conquers in one area and another way of death is uncovered.

Not being able to stop it we try to cover it and shield ourselves and our children from it. But death's ugliness still remains.

Just what is this death which is a very real part of our experience?

A. A. Hodge defined death as

The suspension of the personal union between the body and the soul, followed by the resolution of the body into its chemical elements, and the introduction of the soul into that separate state of existence which may be assigned to it by its Creator and Judge. (*Outlines of Theology*, 548).

Yet, no matter how carefully we define it, it still remains a mystery.

Oh, we know it's here. Death is not something built into creation like gravity — a natural law, as some call it. Death is the result of our sin. "In the day that thou eatest thereof [of the forbidden tree]

thou shalt surely die (Gen. 2:17)," said God to Adam. Adam sinned and "sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men ... (Rom. 6:23)." Death is part of the curse of sin: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19).

The death that comes because of sin is total death: spiritual, physical and eternal. As Dr. A. A. Hoekema writes: "Man is a totality, with a spiritual side to his being as well as a physical. Since according to Scripture the deepest meaning of life is fellowship with God, the deepest meaning of death must be separation from God (*The Bible and the Future*, 82)." Indeed, Adam's sin brought devastating separation from God. Because of sin we are without fellowship with God. Unless God works salvation in our hearts by His grace we will know eternal death — eternal condemnation in hell. The gateway from the first experience of death (to the eternal experience of death) we call *death* — physical death.

Contrary to what some think, that moment of physical death is not the end of existence. It is only a severing of this earthly life's relationships.

There are two ways we can face death. We either face it as believers or unbelievers. For the unbelievers it is a terrifying moment. Eternal hell has opened its door. For the believer it must be entirely different. And we know this because we have God's precious revelation to show us this difference. Of course,

It is thoroughly human to dread death. Only a fool will jest about death as if there were nothing horrible about it.

Even the Christian instinctively dreads death, though he is assured that his Savior will lead him by the hand through the dark valley of death into the regions of light (J. J. Knap, *Life Beyond the Grave*, 11).

Nevertheless, this dread does not become an expectation of danger. It is there because death is an undesired guest — it is unnatural. It changes all our plans; it brings an end to what we know; it severs ties with our loved ones; it brings us to the gate of the unknown.



However, because Jesus really, physically died, a believer's death takes on new meaning. The *Heidelberg Catechism* asks (q. 42):

Since, then, Christ died for us, why must we also die?

Our death is not a satisfaction for our sins, but only a dying to sins and entering into eternal life.

What do we believe?

We believe that our death does not pay for our sins. This payment has already been accomplished for us through Christ's atoning work. Instead, for us death has become "a dying to sins." In this life we do not yet experience in full the perfection which is ours in Christ. We still struggle with sin. Because of it we know distress. "In this present life sin is the heaviest burden we have to bear. The older we get, the more it grieves us that we keep on falling short of doing the will of God" (A. A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 85). Physical death means the end of this. In fact, death for the believer means perfection in glory (Heb. 12:22, 23). Instead of dying *in* my sins, because of Jesus' death, I die *to* my sins.

Nevertheless, being human, there is a certain gloom connected with the tomb when we view it from this life. And, so our catechism reminds us that death for the believer is also an "entering into eternal life." This is just another way of saying with Paul, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Phil. 1:21)." Think of it: everything that still resisted the full development of the life in Christ is gone in death! Though we in this life know eternal life, it is only a bare beginning (*Heidelberg Catechism*, q. 58). Death is the gateway to a new and glorious experience of eternal life. It is the gateway to a new beginning. It means that we are "at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8)."

Because Jesus died, the sting of death is gone, and so is the fear of death (1 Cor. 15:55-57, Heb. 2:14, 15). He went there for us.

It is no wonder that those who die "in the Lord" are said to be "blessed" (Rev. 14:13). Their death is described as being "asleep in Jesus" (1 Thess. 4:13, 15, 1 Cor. 15:18). That is, they are at rest from their labors (Rev. 14:13).

The Lord Jesus explained the new way of seeing death for the Christian when He said to Martha at Lazarus' tomb: "he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26).

One day, the Last Day, it will become apparent that death which seems humanly to bring defeat is indeed defeated because Christ is victorious. Thus, this death shall be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26).

How do we explain what happens in death?

Without attempting to use physician's language, we simply use the definition of Hodge: "The suspension of the personal union between the body and the soul. . . ." This "suspension of the personal union" is a separation — a termination of physical life. According to Ecclesiastes 12, this is always coming. When it finally completes its work, our bodies are placed in the ground. Unto dust they are to return (Gen. 3:19).

The Bible, however, indicates that the soul — that is, the life-principle, or what makes me, me — continues to exist after death (Rev. 6:9, John saw "souls," not persons; Rev. 20:4; Matt. 10:28; James 5:20). For some, it is in bliss (Rev. 20:4). For others, it is in eternal destruction (Matt. 10:28).

A common way of describing the soul's existence is with the word "immortal." Often, however, it is not understood that there are two very different ways of understanding immortality. Though the word is used by poet, philosopher and theologian, there are different meanings.

For some, immortality belongs to every soul without exception. Every soul, according to philosophy, continues to live endlessly, perhaps in a mere colorless existence. The "immortal soul" is the imperishable soul. And so, when an unbeliever dies, the world being completely unconcerned about a hell, takes comfort in the soul's immortality — its indestructibility.

The ancient pagan religions believed this. Thus, the Egyptians (who also believed that the soul could not enjoy immortality without the body and therefore carefully preserved the body) provided the corpse (or, mummy) with the treasures which have been found in the tombs in recent years. Similarly, the American Indians provided their departed ones with bows and arrows, food or anything else which would be necessary to get to the happy hunting ground. The soul would live on.

However, the Biblical teaching on "immortality" is very different. We find the word used in 1 Corinthians 15:53, 54 and 1 Timothy 6:16. In these passages the word really means "deathlessness." It is also found to be the translation of a word meaning "incorruption" (1 Tim. 1:17, Rom. 2:7, 2 Tim. 1:10).

What, precisely, do we learn from these passages? 1) God is spoken of as immortal (1 Tim. 1:17, 6:16). In fact, we are told that He *alone* is immortal. 2) Immortality is only for some, not all (Rom. 2:7). 3) Immortality is only experienced through Jesus Christ and His resurrection (2 Tim. 1:10, 1 Cor. 15:53, 54).

What, then, do we believe concerning immortality? Only God is really immortal. Only He is deathless and incorruptible. Through the Lord Jesus Christ the believers are immortal before God. Jesus dies and as a result for the believer there is the death of death, life and eternal blessedness (John 14:19). For the soul and body there is imperishable salvation. To experience this in full, the soul awaits the resurrection.

Immortality cannot be said to be the experience of unbelievers. For them, eternity is not life or fellowship with God, but eternal death and destruction. Although it is a continuous conscious existence for soul and body, eternity is the eternal consciousness of death.

For the believer, on the other hand, immortality cannot be defined as the continued existence of the soul, but rather, the experience of everlasting life in Jesus Christ — a life in fellowship with God — a life which will only be *fully* experienced when at last the believer's body will be transformed in the Resurrection.

# IN MEMORIAM: WILLIAM HENDRIKSEN

Louis and Geraldine Kerkstra

It was on November 18, 1900 that Willem Hendriksen made his entrance into this world in the city of Tiel, province of Gelderland, the Netherlands. He was the youngest child in a family of eight sons and one daughter.

His father, Bernardus Antonie Hendriksen, a carpenter and specialist in wood carving, was a perfectionist in his work. He was very generous in helping the poor, as well as a man who loved children and who spent much time fixing toys for them. In his later years Bernardus Hendriksen wrote a book of beautiful Dutch poetry.

Willem's mother (Jannetje van Ravestijn) was a woman with a sound and practical faith. She committed to memory a great amount of poetry and would recite it by the hour as she went about her housework.

It was at the age of 5 or 6 years that little Willem, when asked what he was going to become when he grew up, replied that he would be a minister. He was already much impressed by the story of God's love for sinners as he learned it from his parents, his Sunday School teachers, and a pastor whom he loved.

## Education

Willem began his education in the Netherlands where he completed the fourth grade before immigrating to America. The family settled in Kalamazoo, Mich., where William (to which his name was changed) was placed in the third grade because he had no knowledge of the English language. After completing the fourth grade he was advanced to the sixth. He took the seventh and eighth grades in one year and hoped that he would be allowed by his parents to spend at least one year in high school, but they insisted that he take a job instead of continuing his education.

During the summer of 1916, while he was still 15, his mother died. Several weeks later he and his father went to the Netherlands for a lengthy visit. Efforts to return to the United States were complicated by World War I and the sudden illness of his father. After his father's recovery and a dangerous trip, they arrived in Kalamazoo in May 1917.

William soon found work in a stationery factory. He also enrolled in a correspondence course covering the first two years of high school, and completed the course in nine months. He received a one-semester appointment to teach in the Fourth Street Christian School, Roseland, Chicago. He then secured a teaching position in a one-room school near Hospers, Iowa, where at the age of 18 he carried the responsi-

bilities of teaching children of all ages. It was while living in the vicinity of Hospers that Dad made his profession of faith under Rev. M. Vander Heide.

Dad's desire to become a pastor did not diminish over the years. He wrote his friend Anthony A. Konig for information concerning requirements for entrance into Calvin College's pre-seminary course. He diligently studied the necessary books, took exams to receive credit, and was admitted into Calvin. He took the four years of college in three, graduating in 1924.

After his first year in the seminary, William married Rena Baker. She was born in Friesland, the Netherlands, and was the daughter of Daam Bakker and Pietje Kikstra Bakker. It was she who became the mother of William's three children, Bernard, Daniel, and Geraldine. She was a wonderful wife and mother. Rena encouraged her husband to publish his manuscript of *More Than Conquerors* by borrowing the necessary funds after a publisher to whom it had been submitted turned it down. This book, an exposition on the Book of Revelation, was to become his best selling publication. After *More Than Conquerors* appeared in print it received very favorable reviews. In 1940 Baker Book House took over as its publisher.

## Pastor

After graduating from the seminary in 1927 Dad received three calls. He felt the Lord wanted him to accept the call from the Third Christian Reformed Church of Zeeland, Mich. It was in that church that he was ordained into the gospel ministry. He served that congregation faithfully for over three years and in 1931 accepted a call from the Allen Ave., Muskegon, congregation. He greatly enjoyed his work in Allen Ave. When in 1935 the call came from the Oakdale Park CRC in Grand Rapids he did not feel he should accept. But the Lord made it clear that he should heed the imploring letters he was receiving from that congregation's members. It was with heavy hearts that the Hendriksen family left the warmth of Christian friendship at Allen Ave. (During the years he was in Muskegon Dad received the Th.M. degree from Calvin Seminary.)

The work load at Oakdale was tremendous. For seven years Rev. Hendriksen faithfully toiled among its people. Many lasting friendships were made.

## Professor

In 1942 he received an appointment to become professor of New Testament Theology at Calvin Seminary.

*Rev. Louis Kerkstra is the pastor of the Kelloggville Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

Along with the appointment a year's leave was given to study toward Securing a Th.D. degree at Princeton Seminary. He began teaching at the seminary in the fall of 1943. During the next five years, besides the heavy load of teaching required courses and developing elective courses, Dad wrote his doctoral dissertation on "The Meaning of the Preposition *anti* in the New Testament." At the request of the seminary faculty he also wrote *Bible Survey* (which is now entitled *Survey of the Bible*). Professor Hendriksen was awarded the Th.D. degree in 1948.

While teaching at the seminary Dr. Hendriksen also served the church in general by preparing and delivering series of lectures on eschatological themes as well as accepting invitations to preach. He developed graduate courses to help pastors in their preaching. It was also during his years of teaching that his first volume of the *New Testament Commentary on the Gospel of John* was published.

A deep wound, which left a lasting scar, was created when the Synod of 1952 decided not to renew his teaching appointment. But the Lord did have vital work for his faithful servant. Dad became the pastor of the First Byron Center, Mich. church, where his ministry was eagerly received and greatly appreciated by young and old. It was toward the end of this pastorate that his wife Rena passed away after severe illness.

## Writer

In 1961 Dad accepted a call from the Creston CRC in Grand Rapids in the hope that shepherding a smaller congregation would leave more time for commentary writing. Not long after he made this move he was united in marriage to Reta De Boer, who had been a member and friend from the Oakdale Park congregation. She was a loving and devoted wife to him and has been loved and appreciated greatly by us children and grandchildren. She was also of great assistance in the typing of Dad's manuscripts. Due to his love for writing Dad retired from the ministry as soon as he reached age 65. Florida was chosen as the place in which to spend the retirement years. By this time his commentaries on The Gospel of John, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, and Titus has been published.

The retirement years were very productive. Dad would rise each morning at 5:00 a.m. to begin his work, maintaining that these were his best hours for clear thinking. He completed work on his commentaries on Ephesians, Galatians, Matthew, Mark, and Luke and revised his *Bible Study*. He also completed a two-volume commentary on Romans and had begun work in I Corinthians. During those years he accepted periodic lecturing engagements and preaching requests. A high point in his later years was a visit to England where he spoke several times in the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London in which Charles Spurgeon spoke many years ago.

Serious illness, from which Dr. Hendriksen remained free most of his life, came in 1980 when our

dear father submitted to surgery for the removal of a malignant tumor. Even though this surgery curtailed his strength so that he was no longer able to preach, he continued with his writing. (He also played the piano frequently. Most of the music was memorized.) But in August of 1981 another malignancy was discovered which made it necessary for the surgeons to perform more drastic surgery. As a result of this, Dad's strength was greatly reduced. It was decided between Dad and Mother to move back to Michigan so that they could be near the children for the remainder of his life here on earth.

On Friday, January 8, after they had been in their home in Grandville only ten days, a visit was paid them by Rev. Jerry Pott who presented Dr. Hendriksen with two copies of his *New Testament Commentary on the Gospel of John* translated into the Spanish language (recently completed). How it thrilled him that God was using his writing for the benefit also of people in foreign countries. (He never accepted any royalties from the printing of his books in other languages. Certain of his books have been translated into Spanish, Dutch, Korean, Afrikaans, Japanese, and Tamil.) Less than two hours after this presentation, while his beloved wife was getting him ready for a doctor's appointment, his strength gave out and he collapsed. He was taken to the hospital by ambulance where it was found he was suffering from pneumonia. After four days of labored breathing, the Lord took him home.

On the day of his death, Tuesday, January 12, his wife Reta read to him a letter from an old friend and classmate, Rev. J. H. De Haan. Among other things, he wrote:

"... We feel the breaking down of this earthly tabernacle. We are traveling to our eternal home, and we must keep the bright reward in view ... What a blessed assurance is ours."

Having heard the letter read and commented upon by his loving wife, Dad nodded and closed his eyes as though drifting into a peaceful sleep, following a restless night. At noon he breathed his last as his loved ones were gathered at his bedside. Thus it was that the soul of one who so eloquently spoke and wrote about heaven and God's amazing love, went its way to the eternal mansions above.

However, he left behind more than his disease-ravaged body, which was buried a few days later in the blessed hope of the coming resurrection. He left behind a treasure of biblical insight and admonition which will be a blessing to thousands here below who are still walking this pilgrim journey. We give thanks to God who gave to us as a family a wonderful Christian husband, father, and grandfather, to the church a gifted pastor and teacher, and to the Christian community at large an author with the unique combination of keen insight and down-to-earth communication. We truly believe he was, by God's grace, more than a conqueror whose work will continue to point men and women everywhere to God's love for sinners, by means of which they too may gain the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

# Letter to the Ephesians

## THE MILITANT CHURCH.

### Lesson 15

### Ephesians 6:10-13

Glorious things have been written about the church in the epistle to the Ephesians! The church is the fulfillment of the "mystery" which had never been revealed before. Jew and gentile, rich and poor, bond and free, learned and unlearned — they all meet together in the church. Paul has also spoken of the "dimensions" of the love of Christ which has been revealed in the church. This true church of Jesus Christ is the one outside of which is no salvation (Belgic Confession Art. 28). This church has been organized at Ephesus! The truth has been made known there. The members have tasted of the glorious salvation which Christ has brought. Is it all joy in the life of that church? Surely, God will guard that church. It shall stand to the last day. Even the gates of hell shall not prevail against the true church. However, that church will remain standing only if she recognizes her responsibility and strives valiantly. Those are the things of which the Apostle speaks in the last chapter of this epistle.

#### "Be strong in the Lord"

The members of this church are counseled to "be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might." They must realize at the outset that they will not be able to stand, far less conquer, in their own strength. Why not? For the simple reason that they have no strength in themselves! Let them be humble in accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ and let their humility continue in the exercise of their spiritual

responsibility. This will become clearer in the following verses. But, the fact that they have no strength in themselves should not discourage them, because they are able to draw on a strength which is far superior to any they could have imagined. They are to be strong in the Lord! They must live close to Him and no evil shall befall them. Only in His power will they be able to do what is required. He has an inexhaustible supply of strength for them. He is the almighty One not only in creation and in providence, He is also the Almighty One for the salvation of His people. He has revealed to them that He is both able and willing to give aid to His people. They can look back at all the things He has done in the past for the help of His people. He led Israel out of Egypt; He gave Canaan into their hand; He slew kings for their sakes; He raised Jesus from the dead and exalted Him to His right hand. Let them believe in the Lord but let them also stand strong in Him! They will have to strengthen themselves in Him every day and every moment of their lives.

#### "Put on the Whole Armor of God"

To be able to stand strong in the Lord they will be required to put on the whole armor of God, which he explains later as to its various parts. Let it be clear immediately that it is an armor which He supplies. Also, that it is an armor which believers must put on. God supplies all the things necessary but it is not an evidence of faith to say that if He wishes, He will safeguard them. No, they have the responsibility of putting on this armor which He supplies. Only in this way will they be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

## **Able to Stand**

Let them be assured that they will be able to stand in the battle for their souls if they are faithful to the commands which he gives them. This may be difficult for them to grasp because they will have to face the wiles of the devil! Paul believes there is a personal devil. He believes there is that person of the most extreme evil who attacks the church and seeks to destroy it (Rev. 12). He is afraid of this power because he knows it is great and ruthless. Yet, the power of Jesus Christ is far greater than that of the devil. The Lord will finally vanquish him. But, they, the members of the church, must stand in the strength of the Lord! That is the only safe place.

## **"Wiles of the Devil"**

Not only does he speak of the devil as their antagonist, but he reminds them of the "wiles" of the devil. He doesn't fight fairly. He uses deception. He uses ambush. He uses any methods available to him. He mixes truth and error. He even comes with the words of Scripture — as in the temptations of our Lord. He reveals himself as an angel of light, while he is the prince of darkness. The people at Ephesus and all who read this epistle must therefore be on their guard. The prayer "Lead us not into temptation" receives new urgency here. How shall they ever be able to stand against such a dreadful and ruthless power which also makes use of every means of deception? Humanly speaking, they will not be able to stand. But, God has supplied them with armor. That is all they need — but they need this desperately. No armor of man will do. Putting on the whole armor of God they will be able to stand, i.e., hold their ground. They will not be overcome by the evil one. The victory will ultimately belong to the Christ and to those who have placed their trust in Him.

## **A Spiritual Warfare**

Now the Apostle informs his readers as to the nature of the battle in which they will be engaged. He says that the wrestling is not against flesh and blood. It is not against men or other physical creatures. If it were, it would be an equal match. Then they might find an armor which would satisfy. Men have often mistakenly thought their enemy to be other men. But, this is not the case. In the previous verse Paul has spoken of the wiles of the devil and he now explains more fully what kind of adversary the believers will meet. It is a spiritual conflict. The foe cannot be seen. The foe does not have the weaknesses which are common to men. He, or they, have tremendous power. He refers to them here as "principalities," "powers," "world rulers of this darkness," "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." This is a description of the host of the wicked fallen angels. These are the ones who dared to defy God and were cast out of the heavens. Believers are completely surrounded by these evil forces. They have no moment of truce. The tactics of this evil host change constantly but the goal always remains the same: ruin the work of God! It is diffi-

cult to fight this kind of a foe because it is an overwhelming host. It has superhuman power.

## **Controlling Powers**

When the Apostle speaks of the world rulers of this darkness we see some of the means which they employ for the destruction of the faith of God's people. The evil one is in control of the false philosophies which fill this world. This is the darkness which even attacks the revelation of God! At the instigation of the evil one, men sit in judgment on the word of God itself. This darkness blinds men and leads them astray. It has slain its thousands throughout the history of the church. This darkness is not lifted as time progresses but becomes deeper. This darkness achieves its greatest triumph in the days of Antichrist. Believers must be on their guard that they are not misled by these world-rulers of this darkness. God allows them to rule in this realm for this time.

Paul also speaks of "the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Does he mean that these have invaded heaven itself? No, when he here speaks of the heavenly places he means that it is the area which does not belong to this earth. It is in line with his emphasis on the fact that these are spiritual forces and therefore do not belong to the mundane. Christians must know the enemy well in order that they may make the proper preparation. He who underestimates the strength of the enemy will be destroyed.

## **Take the Whole Armor**

One is able to speak of the strife of the entire church or of the strife of the individual believer. Paul shows us that the strife is personal and that it is intense as well as a strife of the entire body of believers. Therefore they are to take up the whole armor of God. Every piece has its purpose and the one who will fight in this battle will not be able to do without any part of this armor. Wherever there is a "chink" in the armor, the evil one will find a way to defeat the one who has been careless. But, if the whole armor is employed, you will be able to withstand in the evil day. In other words, victory is guaranteed to those who are faithful and obedient. That evil day of which Paul speaks cannot be avoided. There comes the time in the life of every child of God when he is vulnerable. The evil one then attacks with all his fury. But, even in that evil day you will be able to stand if you are clad with the whole armor of God.

## **An Offensive Weapon**

Although these words are introductory to the description of the various pieces of this whole armor of God and each piece of it does not pass in review here, we must not lose sight of the fact that this armor is not only for defense. It includes also the sword of the Spirit with which the believer goes on the offensive. Jesus told His disciples to go out into the whole world and conquer it for Him by making disciples of all nations. So the church goes out with the gospel throughout the history of the church. S-

also does the individual believer go out with the claims of Jesus Christ into every area of life. It is true that the believer must be safeguarded in his strife with evil, but more is necessary. He must put on the whole armor of God to do the work of Jesus Christ in this world.

### Assured Victory

It is not mere repetition of words when the Apostle says in the closing words of verse 13: "and having done all, to stand." He emphasizes the fact that readers will be able to hold their ground when they have put on the whole armor of God. When all is said and done they will be victorious! The evil one, even with all his power and deceit, has not been able to conquer them. They are then still strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

The warning in these words is, of course, clear. The man who is writing these words is indeed inspired by the Spirit of God, but is also writing out of his own experience. How the devil has sought to capture Paul! It seemed as though he had him in his early years, but the Lord took him out of Satan's grasp. Later he fought the good fight — and he kept the faith! No one shall separate us from the love of God! None shall snatch us out of His hand! Strife? Yes, but there is no doubt about the outcome for those who have put on the whole armor of God.

### Questions for discussion:

1. Seeing Christ has fought the battle for us, why must we fight for our faith?
2. Is "Knowing the Lord" the same as being strong in the Lord? How do we become strong in the Lord?
3. To believe there is a personal devil is ridiculed today. Do you think the devil appreciates this?
4. How do the ungodly philosophies disturb the faith today? Do you think that the "newer" interpretation of the Bible is included in the present "darkness"?
5. Do we fight valiantly the battle for the truth when we ignore or criticize our confessions? Why?

## THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD.

### Lesson 16

### Ephesians 6:14-24

Before coming to the close of this beautiful epistle, Paul goes into detail concerning the armor of God to which he has referred in the previous verses. The interpreter must always be careful that he does justice to the figure which the writer employs, and yet not press every detail concerning the various pieces of armor so that he misses the purpose for which the illustration is used.

### An Armed Stand

Paul again begins with the words "stand therefore." This he emphasized in verse 11, "that ye may

be able to stand;" verse 13 "that ye may be able to withstand . . . and having done all, to stand." There is great danger lurking everywhere for these Ephesian Christians and Paul wants to safeguard them against all the pitfalls of spiritual life. The only way they will be able to hold their ground is by putting on the whole armor of God.

Paul uses the imagery of the armor elsewhere in his writings. In I Thess. 5:8 he mentions some of the pieces of this armor. However, nowhere else does he speak of this armor as completely as he does in this last chapter of Ephesians. He, no doubt, has in mind the Roman soldier of his day. The Roman soldier was well equipped and certainly had been successful. To be able to stand in the spiritual conflict one must be just as well equipped.

### The Girdle of Truth

First of all he speaks of the loins being girded with the truth. He refers to the belt worn by the Roman soldier wherewith he gathered up his loose garments. This is the only way the soldier will be prepared to fight. The Christian must first of all be truthful, sincere, dependable. If he is not, none of the other pieces of armor will do him any good.

### The Breastplate of Righteousness

The Roman soldier also had a breastplate which covered the front and back of the person and protected his vital organs. It covered him from the neck to the thighs. This was a most important piece of equipment because it gave protection in battle against both arrow and sword and javelin. The Christian must have a breastplate when he goes into spiritual battle and his breastplate is his righteousness. The righteousness of Christ is not meant, but his own subjective righteousness as a believer. His moral rectitude! No one can do battle, much less stand in that warfare, if his own righteousness is lacking. The life which he lives in obedience to the law of his God must furnish him protection in battle! How can he fight if he does not live the life which is required by his Lord?

### The Footwear of the Gospel

The feet must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. The Romans had placed great emphasis on the sturdy footwear of their soldiers because only the well-shod army is able to move quickly and for long distances. The soldier must not be shod with the sandal common to Jewish life. The soldier in the spiritual battle must be ready at any time to move against the opponent. The shoes do not picture the gospel itself, but the preparation to use the gospel! To "buy up the opportunity." To be ready when the opportunity presents itself to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### The Shield of Faith

The believer is also commanded to take up the shield of faith wherewith he may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. The opponents would dip their arrows in a tar-like substance, light

them, and then shoot at the opposing army. The shield which the Roman soldier carried was to be used to defend against these arrows. If one would get beyond the shield, great damage would be done and life would be threatened. To say that the Christian warrior must go out in faith is saying the obvious. But, what does this faith accomplish? It is your shield, says the Apostle. Only with that faith will you be able to extinguish the fiery darts which the evil one, the devil, sends at you! Without faith no one will be able to stand. Notice, however, that even when that faith is exercised it does not mean that the evil one will not fire his arrows at the Christian; it only means that these arrows will not penetrate to do vital damage to his person.

### **The Helmet of Salvation**

"And take the helmet of salvation." Who would go into battle with his head uncovered? Such a person would be courting disaster. The soldier of Paul's day placed a sturdy helmet on his head to protect that vital part of the body. Salvation plays that role in the battle of faith, says the Apostle. It is offered! Who would be so foolish that he would not take it? If his salvation is still questionable, a person will soon fall in battle with the evil one. This writer also believes that this salvation protects his *thinking*. Having salvation through the blood of Christ, he will not fall victim to the false philosophies of the world.

### **The Sword of the Spirit — the Word of God**

The Christian must also take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. This is really the only offensive weapon mentioned. There are some commentators who see offensive properties in some of the other parts of this armor, but this seems far-fetched. However, the sword is the primary weapon of offense. No soldier is merely going to stand on the battlefield well-protected against all opposing weapons; he is there first of all to conquer! The only offensive weapon of the Christian, says Paul, is the word of God! But, remember, *that* is the sword of the Spirit. It is Spirit filled and directed. With that sword one is able to vanquish any foe. Let the Christian realize that with this sword he invades the territory of the opposition and conquers the opposition. The child of God is not standing, though well-protected, on a battlefield to see whether or not he will be able to endure. No, he must go on the attack! That sword has wrought great things! If that sword is blunted in any way, the Christian is helpless. The imagery used by the apostle in this chapter should alert us to the dangers whereby we are surrounded. It is not only Satan's arrows which we are to fear; we are to fear the attempts to take the sword of the Spirit out of our hands!

### **Completely Equipped**

Equipped with this whole armor of God (panoply), the believer will be able to stand. He is not placed as a defenseless individual in the midst of this world. The Lord does not throw him to the wolves! God gives him whatever he needs to be able not only to

stand, but even to rob Satan of his ill-gotten goods. The Christian is not able to get along with less than that which is here offered. He must take up the whole armor of God!

### **Indispensible Prayer**

The whole armor of God reveals to us how much the believer has received out of the hand of his God to be able to function in the way he should in this world. Many indeed are the spiritual gifts given to the child of God. Properly using these he will be able to stand in the evil day. However, there is one other item absolutely necessary in order that he may be able to stand. This is prayer. He cannot live without it. He must even put on each part of the armor prayerfully. This is also the way he goes into battle — with prayer and supplication. He prays on all occasions and he does so in harmony with the Spirit of God. Such a person perseveres in prayer for all the saints. He lives in the spirit of the communion of saints. Prayers one for another are natural to those who love the Lord.

Paul also asks that the readers may remember him in their prayers. We must remember that he was in prison at the time he wrote this epistle. This was the first imprisonment at Rome. He does not ask them to pray for his release, but that "utterance may be given unto me." He prays that he will be found faithful in the infrequent occasions he has to bear testimony to his Lord. Of course, he is not able to go out to preach the gospel as in former days. But, he is in the presence of members of the Roman guard. He may also be brought into a courtroom again. Let him then be able to give the word of God to those who are his jailors. Boldness in making known the mystery of the gospel will be difficult. May he have the spiritual strength in that day to be faithful!

### **Ambassador in Chains**

The fact that he is in prison is not one which he seeks to hide as though he is ashamed of it, because he is being held in prison on account of his faithfulness. Those who are not faithful to their Lord are not being imprisoned by Caesar. It is a badge of honor that he is in prison. But, he is an "ambassador" in prison. He is the emissary of the great King. Surely, the King whom he represents will not allow him to remain in prison! Let those who have incarcerated him realize that they are hereby bringing dishonor on the name of the King whom Paul represents. We would also think that this man ought to be free to publish abroad the gospel of Jesus Christ. But no, his Lord allows him to be imprisoned so that he may speak to an individual here and another later and that he may have time to write these glorious prison epistles!

### **Faithful Helpers**

There has been concern in the churches about the Apostle's welfare. The very fact that they receive an epistle from his hand cheers them but they would like to know more of the details concerning his life.

Tychicus is bringing this letter. He is a most dependable helper of Paul. When he comes they will be able to ask Tychicus and he will be able to tell them how Paul is doing. What a blessing that this man has helpers whom he can trust. He can trust them with the precious letters which have been laboriously written and can also trust them to comfort the hearts of the members of the churches. Timothy and Titus; are such helpers, as is also Tychicus. Paul always has the welfare of the churches in mind. He is afraid that the people may fall away from the way which he has shown them. They must be helped. They must not draw the wrong conclusions from the fact that he is imprisoned. Let them put on the whole armor of God prayerfully, and let them remember him in these prayers.

### Benediction

A beautiful benediction closes the book. He speaks of peace and love and faith and grace to be given to them by God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Many have wondered about the order in which these blessings are named. This is a totally useless exercise. All these blessings belong to the brethren. All these proceed only from the Triune God. The Apostle ends with a beautiful description of the "brethren." They are those who love the Lord Jesus Christ with an imperishable love.

In the communion of saints; in the body of Jesus Christ; in the church of our Blessed Redeemer are all the blessings found of which he has spoken in this letter. It is a wonderful benefit to belong to the true church of Christ!

### Questions for discussion:

1. How are the details of an illustration sometimes pressed so that we lose sight of the meaning the author has in mind? Is this also done with the interpretation of parables?
2. In I Thess. 5:8 the same author speaks of "the breastplate of faith and love," while here he speaks of the "breastplate of righteousness." Is there a conflict? Must these passages be harmonized? Or could you imagine that this "breastplate" might even mean other things in other connections?
3. Is the "sword of the Spirit which is the word of God" still quite sharp today? Do those who deny the factual character of any part of Scripture still have the "sword of the Spirit"?
4. Can anything be accomplished, even in full armor, without prayer?
5. Would any king worthy of the name, allow his ambassador to another land to be imprisoned? Do God's ways sometimes shake our faith?
6. Why is Ephesians an important part of Scripture?

## DYNAMIC (Do-too-Little) RETIREES

### a challenge and a plea . . .

Simon C. Walburg

A telephone call: "Pete, can you make it today? The weather is fine. How about eighteen holes of golf?"

"Sure Klaas, nothing else to do today. I'll see you in fifteen minutes. G'bye."

Or Hans and Joe over a cup of coffee in their condominium: "Hans, how about a game of cards or triominos?"

"Sure Joe, what else is there to do? They do it all for us, ja. No grass to cut, no garden to weed, no outside work at all. I just helped Maw with the

dishes—then, ach, what else is there to do?"

Then comes early Autumn and with many retirees the conversation goes something like this: "Getting ready to go with the 'snow birds' Jim? We're leaving before Thanksgiving this year—late November."

"Sure," responds Mike, "leave before the weather gets too bad. That'll give us six months north and six months south. Yeh, we come and go with the birds, hah, hah."

"You bet, good idea," echoes Jim.

Then once in Florida, the Petes, the Joes, the Jims, the Mikes together with their wives spend their time fishing, golfing, shuffle-boarding—eating at Pat's Eatery, Phil's Gourmet, Emmie's

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Diner—and evenings—a game of cards, dominoes—or just “kletchen” over coffee and a snack, etc. etc.

**BUT IS THIS ALL THERE IS TO RETIREMENT?** Let us take a quick inventory. Hours and hours are spent on fun and frolic and for self-indulgence, or just plain ‘goofing off’ so to speak. Meanwhile—yes, meanwhile many of these retirees are still dynamic, especially if they break off work at 55-60 years old. Certainly some have health problems—but too many have forgotten all about the work ethic and the command of Scripture advising us to busy ourselves by **REDEEMING THE TIME**, because the days are evil. Ephesians 5:16. Their desire to do something constructive and for the cause of Christ and the community (instead of self) is smothered by a continual round of fun, fun, fun.

A recent article in the Northwest Iowa *Doon Press*, was titled: ‘**RUST-PROOFING YOUR RETIREMENT.**’ It stated the following: “Retirement doesn’t have to be a red light. It can be a green light. Othmar Ammann would agree. After he “retired” at age 60 he designed among other things, the Connecticut and New Jersey Turnpikes; the Pittsburgh Civic Arena; Dulles Airport; the Throgs Neck Bridge; and the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. Paul Gauguin “retired” as a successful stock broker and became a world famous artist. Heinrich Schliemann “retired” from business to look for Homer’s legendary city of Troy, and, he found it. After Churchill made his mark as a world statesman he picked up his pen and won the Nobel Prize for Literature at age 79. Don’t just go fishing when you retire. Go hunting. Hunt for the chance to do what you’ve always wanted to do, and do it.”

### **Exercise And Come Alive.**

Surprisingly growing numbers of senior citizens, even those supported by canes, confined to wheel chairs or bed-ridden are learning to reap the mental and physical rewards of exercise. Many elderly persons are finding that exercises tailored to their personal needs make them feel better and help them live a healthier life.

“The body was made for movement,” says Lawrence Frankel, a 77-year old exercise physiologist of Charles, West Virginia. He states, “It’s never too late in life to become fit; no matter how frail or debilitated the individual, exercise has a tremendous potential for enriching the lives of older people.”

Maybe it’s Reagan-itus, the vim and verve of a 70 years plus President that has stirred an interest in more exercise and activity, but whatever the cause, “The bottom line is that if your metabolism is down, you don’t look at anything rosy,” says Dr. Samuel Fox, a Georgetown University cardiologist and exercise advocate. He continues, “You brighten older people up by exercising. You get the adrenalin flowing. There’s no doubt about it.” In addition, exercise (within limitations, dependent on the individual) helps senior citizens to sleep better. The fact is, it increases circulation to distant blood vessels; it decreases bone demineralization; it helps control

blood pressure; it decreases the incidence of phlebitis; and generally slows the aging process.

### **Areas For Service In Action.**

So much for the benefits of physical exercise. But there is a combination of service-in-action that automatically circulates your blood and gets you in healthful motion. You have possibly heard of the F.I.S.H. Program. This program provides volunteer drivers responding to the needs of people in your community who are in need of a ride to their doctor, dentist, social service center, or other places. Since October 1969 some 60 churches have sent out members of their congregations on over 50,000 missions to those seeking help in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area. One day a month the Captain calls to assign the name of a person who needs a ride to some service. This indeed is a worthwhile Exercise with a capital E.

Additional channels for similar Exercises of a worth-while nature were brought to my attention by Colleen Tobin of the Voluntary Action Center in Grand Rapids, MI. (Your own locality, no doubt, has similar programs.) Colleen Tobin stated there were nearly a hundred areas in which senior volunteers could take part. I list just a few: Kent Community Hospital, West Michigan Gleaners, Inc., Capital Lunch, Grand Rapids Public Schools, Association for Child Development, Grand Valley Blood Program, R.S.V.P. Handyman’s Corp, and many other neighborhood Associations. In the Grand Rapids, MI area, retired persons who are interested should contact the Retired Senior Volunteer Program at 459-4869.

### **Redeeming The Time.**

A prominent physician once remarked, “I hate to see those retirees come to see me. They have all kinds of aches and pains and imaginary ailments.” Are you one of these? Then possibly the “action” program will get your blood to circulating, your adrenalin to flowing and, automatically, your outlook will be more rosy.

Even if you are a cripple there are possibilities. Ma Bell is available. Give another buddy that is shut-in a jingle on the phone. You’ll be surprised how happy that will make him or her. This way you can “reach out” even while you are sitting in your arm chair or wheel chair, and it saves gas too. Of course a personal visit tops them all, but, next to that, remember Ma Bell and a chat enriches the “communion of the saints.” Add to that; don’t forget cards or letters. These too are vital links to keep alive the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. There is also **PRAYER**, that poignant, powerful panacea that heals and lifts on wings of love—oh, how we need prayer in this age of broken hearts and homes! So let us be up and doing while it is day, ere the night come and the Judge of all the earth calls us to give an account of all our doings—**EVEN THE WAY WE SPEND OUR RETIREMENT YEARS.**

P.S. Some folk may be irked by this evaluation, but as Spurgeon would say, “**IF THE SHOE FITS, PRAY WEAR IT A BIT.**” ●

# News and Views

Elco H. Oostendorp

A CHRISTIAN HUMANIST MANIFESTO *Eternity* magazine for January, 1982, features the subject of secular vs. Christian Humanism. It attempts to confront the cultural and intellectual movement which has dominated much of our society, and especially public education, with a statement of the Christian alternative. Secular humanism came to expression in the Humanist Manifesto I (1933) and II (1973). Like these documents, "the Christian Humanist Manifesto declares the place of the human species in the universe — man's origin, duty, and destiny." A number of Christian scholars assisted the *Eternity* editors in drawing up the manifesto.

In these days when secular humanism is so much in the news — for example, in the creation vs. evolution case in Arkansas — *Eternity* has rendered the evangelical community a real service. Readers are invited to revise or amend the statement and send in suggestions. To stimulate further reading and thought on this subject the Manifesto is accompanied by an article on "Who's Who on Humanism Hill" which reports on developments in this area as reflected in decisions of the courts, and gives a resume of recent films, books, and journals which attempt to expose secular humanism and state the Christian position. In addition to this there is a two-page Glossary of terms, both Christian and secular, that are frequently used in the discussion of these issues: common grace, creation ordinances, cultural mandate, image of God, Humanism, humanistic psychology, naturalism, scientific humanism, scientism, secular and secularism.

SYNODALISM In *De Wachter* of January 19, 1982, the Editor has taken over an article by the Rev. Henry De Moor that appeared in the Dutch *Centraal Weekblad* of October 14, 1981. The Dutch title is "Synodalisme," by which the author means rule of the church from above by synod and classes in a way that does not do justice to the local consistory and congregation. In a very interesting way he contrasts the procedures of our Christian Reformed Church, in which he served until recently moving to the Netherlands to serve a congregation of the Gereformeerde Kerken, with the way things are done in the GKN. For the benefit of his Dutch readers Rev. De Moor outlines how agendas for

classis and synod meetings are published well in advance of the meeting and sent to all consistories. Important matters are publicized in the church press. From his experience he gives examples of church members who took an active interest in matters before classes and Synods. In this way, ideally at least, the decisions of the broader assemblies can reflect the positions of the churches at the local level. In contrast with this he describes how things are done in the GKN, where not even the delegates sometimes know what is on the agenda before coming to the meeting of Classis. He describes his frustration as minister of his church in trying to get information about some important synodical decisions. Decisions are handed down without giving any account of the opposition arguments. He states, "Men wordt, zoals bij een Vatikaans concilie, beslissingen toebedeeld waar men alleen maar op kan reageren," which freely translated means that decisions are handed down after the manner of a Vatican Council, to which one can only react. There is no real input from the bottom up and views of the opponents are not expressed in official reports.

De Moor writes, (translation by E.H.O.) "People are often offended nowadays that in the Christian Reformed Church so many voices are heard who cannot any longer value the bond with the Gereformeerde Kerken. I would like to point out that there it is the assumption that decisions of our general synod are representative of at the least a majority of our church membership. The realization that a great gulf exists between synod and congregation only arises after one has been able to experience it for months."

He also suggests that the problem may not be wholly the fault of the broader assemblies, but may result from lack of interest on the part of local churches and members. All in all, the article should alert us to a real danger in our denomination also, that while we have the democratic apparatus that seems lacking in the GKN, abuse by the broader assemblies and indifference on the part of local consistories and church members can easily result in the loss of truly Reformed church polity in practice.

**BIG TROUBLE AT THE WORLD'S LARGEST CHURCH** That is the heading of a news item in

*Christianity Today* for January 22, 1982. Can you imagine a congregation with 200,000 members, 12 ordained ministers, 260 licensed ministers and 15,000 lay leaders? Those are some of the statistics about Full Gospel Central Church of Seoul, South Korea. It constitutes about one-third of the membership of the Assemblies of God denomination in Korea, with 450 churches making up the other two-thirds. The reason why this super-congregation got in the news, however, is not its size, building program (plans are to enlarge the building to hold 40,000!), nor its mission and television ministries. The "big trouble" in the church concerns the founding minister, Paul Yonggi Cho, who has been accused by denominational leaders of being a heretic because of his concessive stand on veneration of the dead. In the Orient generally parents are highly respected, and in several religions this respect carries over into ancestor worship. This has been a matter of controversy ever since Roman Catholicism came to Korea in 1625. Leaders of other denominations and missions have been drawn into the uproar about Paster Cho. The article concludes, "Certainly the surprising uproar over Pastor Cho's remarks indicates that there is a need for the Christian church in the East to develop a theology that deals with ancestral rites."

*Rev. Elco H. Oostendorp is a retired Christian Reformed minister living at Hudsonville, Michigan.*

## Now is the Time for Answers!

Arthur Besteman

"I feel wounded." This statement was made by a member of the administration at Calvin Seminary in a speech given several weeks ago. I have been reflecting upon the statement. What has caused the speaker's wound? It was the decision adopted by Classis Pella at its September 1981 session and reported in *THE BANNER* dated November 16, 1981. The Stated Clerk of Classis Pella reports that the Classis decided to request "the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary to instruct each of the Calvin Seminary faculty to answer for us the following questions: Do you believe Adam and Eve were created by God and are our first parents? Do you believe that man's corrupt nature comes from the fall and disobedience of Adam and Eve? What do you believe is taught by Paul in Romans 5 concerning: 'In Adam', 'In Christ', 'the historicity of Adam' and 'original sin'?"

Why would Classis Pella make such a request? Is it because Calvin Seminary has not been meeting the "rural needs" and therefore suspicion has arisen? The appearance of suspicion and the asking of questions, however, is not restricted to Classis Pella. The newsletter published by a committee of Classis Minnesota South after each session of classis reports that Classis Minnesota South approved the overture of one of its churches "to secure information from the Calvin Board of Trustees with respect to the Seminary Faculty's endorsement of Mr. Clayton Libolt for candidacy." The report in the newsletter goes on to say, "Mr. Libolt holds a highly questionable position in regard to the historical character of Genesis 2 and 3. Since the faculty endorsed him, do they accept such an interpretive approach to Genesis as valid for Reformed pastors?"

Classis Zeeland at its fall session adopted a motion instructing the delegate to the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary to convey the concern of classis in regard to the teachings of Professor John Stek and to inquire whether Professor Stek has brought his teachings into conformity with our confessional standards. Since a satisfactory answer has not been received by Classis from the Board of Trustees, the Classis at its recent session in January by a unanimous vote sought additional information from the Board of Trustees in regard to the Stek matter.

On my desk is a copy of the overture adopted by Classis Grand Rapids South at its recent meeting. The overture requests Synod "to appoint a competent and objective committee of Ministers and Elders, authorized to ascertain for the church the loyalty of every Seminary Faculty member to the Scriptures as interpreted by the three Forms of Unity, and to the Form of Subscription each has signed, and to report to the Church through Synod, its findings."

Is there reason for the questions raised by Classis Pella? Are there grounds for the concerns expressed by other classes and consistories and many members of the Christian Reformed Church? I believe so. One needs only to recall the report of the Calvin Board of Trustees found in the Acts of Synod 1981, page 147, where we are given the conclusions of the committee appointed by the Board of Trustees in May 1980, to study the views of Professor John Stek concerning the nature of the biblical narrative in Genesis 1-11. We read, "The committee concluded that Professor Stek's present theory brings him into conflict with the church's standing confessional view of significant elements in these Genesis narratives." Should anyone be surprised that the church is asking questions since we have never been informed that the "conflict" has been resolved.

The church is well aware that at the June 1981 meeting of Synod a young man recommended by the Calvin Seminary faculty was denied candidacy. It was reported in the August 1981 issue of *THE OUTLOOK* "that the problem regarding Mr. Libolt's candidacy had to do with his view of the opening chap-

ters of Genesis, and particularly, with his conception of the factuality of Adam and Eve, the serpent and the fall." The reporter in the same issue goes on to indicate the support given on the floor of Synod to Mr. Libolt by two Calvin Seminary professors. Is there reason then to feel "wounded" when the church in its ecclesiastical assemblies raises questions and asks for answers?

Many members of the church have learned recently about a survey taken among Calvin Seminary students. The questions asked in the "Insta-Poll" were as follows: "1. On a scale from 1-5 how important do you consider questions relating to the historicity of Adam and Eve to be? 2. Do you believe that Adam and Eve were *real* persons (as you and I are *real* persons)? 3. Are you satisfied with the opinions of the Seminary professors (in so far as you are aware of those opinions) on the historicity of the events recorded in Genesis 1-11?" What were the results of the survey? The church is left to wonder because we read in *THE KERUX*, the paper edited by the Calvin Seminary student body which includes the "Insta-Poll," that the Senate (the student governing body) requested the editor not to print the results of the poll "to avoid possible misinterpretation of the data." Is it a surprise that suspicions are awakened?

What is to be done? Classis Pella has raised some honest questions. Classis Grand Rapids South out of a legitimate concern for the church and her seminary is asking for the appointment of a committee to ascertain the loyalty of every seminary faculty member to the Scriptures as interpreted by the three forms of unity. When I suggested to the seminary faculty member to whose address I referred earlier that I thought the questions of Classis Pella should be answered, he expressed surprise and said that I would have a hard time proving that from the Church Order.

But what about the welfare of the church? What about the welfare of Calvin Seminary? There is alarm! There is suspicion! Classis Grand Rapids South in its overture says, "It is natural for many who take these matters seriously to suspect that what is publicly known can be but symptomatic of attitudes held toward the Scriptures, the Creeds, the Form of Subscription, and the decisions of Synod by various members of the Seminary faculty and conveyed to students deliberately or otherwise." It is not enough to be told the number of book reviews, devotional meditations and scholarly articles written by members of the Calvin Seminary faculty during the past ten years. This will not satisfy the church. This will not still the suspicions held by many within the church concerning their seminary. The church is waiting for honest answers to honest questions such as those being asked by Classis Pella. The church must have such answers. The question now is, **WILL THE CHURCH RECEIVE SUCH ANSWERS?**

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*Rev. Arthur Besteman is pastor of the North Street Christian Reformed Church at Zeeland, Michigan, and Secretary of the Reformed Fellowship.*

# Mid-America Reformed Seminary News

Dr. Timothy Monsma

Dear Friends of Mid-America Reformed Seminary,

It is time to bring you up-to-date on several exciting developments in the Seminary since our last visit with you by newsletter. When you read on, we think you will agree with us that the Lord's prospering hand is establishing this effort in answer to your many prayers. The Board and its Executive Committee have spent many hours discussing the varied questions surrounding opening the Seminary this fall.

To be ready for opening this September, we have begun remodelling the building (already!). The north wing, once a dormitory-style annex to the main building, is almost a library now. We eagerly await the arrival of the shelving and furniture in order to begin organizing and cataloging the books and magazines. We aim to have at least 5000 volumes by this September and have already received about 1300 volumes. If you or anyone you know wishes to donate books or magazines to the Seminary, please send a *list* of them to Rev. Jerome Julien, 919 9th St., Sheldon, Iowa 51201. A generous donor who wishes to remain anonymous gave to the Seminary a charitable trust of more than \$50,000.00, the interest of which is designated for library expense. By means of other donations, the remodelling and furnishing costs have also been met.

By now you know that we plan to open the doors of the Seminary this coming September! If your calendar is handy, mark the following date in bright colors: Wednesday, September 1, 1982 — for the Second Annual Seminary Festival to be held that afternoon, and for the First Annual Seminary Convocation, which will officially begin the school year. If you have not yet seen our facilities or have never been to a "convocation," why not plan a little trip for that week! On Thursday, September 2, at 8:00 a.m., classes will begin, the Lord willing, and Mid-America Reformed Seminary will be a reality!

To have a school, we need students and teachers. And we have both! Already three students have committed themselves to study at Mid-America this September, and we are confident that as our recruiting efforts proceed in earnest, more will join them. Please pray that the Lord will open the hearts of young men so that they may consider studying for

the ministry at Mid-America Reformed Seminary and come to us for their training.

At the January meeting of the Board, appointments were offered for teaching at the Seminary. We are happy to report that both Dr. Peter Y. De Jong and Rev. Henry Vander Kam will be teaching part-time for the first year. At this writing we also have a full-time professor, Dr. David Van Gelder, who has come to us for the academic year 1982-83, with the intention of reappointment after the first year. Dr. Van Gelder is a native of Orange City and will be teaching the Old Testament language and Bible courses. His doctrinal dissertation is entitled *The Use of Calvin's Anthropology in Pastoral Counseling*.

Our curriculum has been adopted for the program of study at the Seminary. We like to describe it as "lively" and "intensive." *Lively*, because it offers all of the basic courses in Biblical Studies, Ecclesiastical Studies, Doctrinal Studies, and Ministry studies, in a way designed to thoroughly equip men for enthusiastic, committed, Reformed preaching and teaching as ministers of the Gospel. And *intensive*, because the semesters average 17 hours of classroom study per week. Between semesters students will enjoy an interim during January for intensive study in one course. In addition to classroom work, we are making plans for a Pastoral Apprenticeship Program, in which seminarians will learn many of the "how to's" of calling, consistory meetings, and teaching by being tutored under individual pastors in the local area.

If you would like more information about the details of our Seminary program, we invite you to write the Seminary for a catalog. Better yet, write for two catalogs, and give one to a prospective student at Mid-America!

During this past fall and this coming spring, Adult Education Classes were and will be taught to local church members who are interested in learning about anything from the Church Order to the work of Deacons and current issues in the CRC. Many enthusiastic comments were heard after our first session, and so we are encouraged as we prepare for a second session which will begin soon.

Truly the Lord has blessed the efforts of the Seminary in ways beyond our prediction. So often we have prayed for His direction and help as many knotty questions were faced. And we still rely upon our gracious Lord, especially now as we go out to recruit students and to bring the program of study before the public. This infant is learning to crawl! She will soon be ready to stand up and take that first step! Our confession has always been, "Unless the Lord build the house, those that build labor in vain." Please continue to pray with us that the Master Builder will continue His work among us.

One more thing: the Board, at its January meeting, requested Rev. Nelson Kloosterman to pursue post-graduate study for the purpose of returning to teach at Mid-America, and the Board committed itself to the financing of this study according to need and existing academic regulations. Rev. Kloosterman has said "yes" to the Board's request, and plans

to move his family this summer to the Netherlands, to take up his studies at the Theological College of the Liberated (not the synodical) Reformed Churches in Kampen. Some time ago a Scholarship Fund was established for the purpose of supporting qualified young men for post-graduate study like this. The funds needed are outside of the general operating budget of the Seminary. And so we now make our appeal to you for your contribution to this Scholarship Fund. Please give this need your prayerful consideration. Write to Mr. Harlyn Jacobsma, Treas., c/o Mid-America Reformed Seminary, P.O. Box 163, Orange City, Iowa 51041. *Please designate your gift for the Scholarship Fund.*

Again, your prayers and gifts for the establishment of Mid-America Reformed Seminary are sincerely appreciated. Many congregations took collections this past Thanksgiving and holiday season.

Brothers and sisters, our warmest Christian greetings to you! Remember us in your prayers!

Fraternally,  
Mid-America Reformed Seminary  
Executive Committee

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*Dr. Timothy Monsma, veteran Nigeria missionary and presently professor at Reformed Bible College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, has accepted the appointment to be a full-time professor in Mid-America Reformed Seminary. He will be teaching in the areas of Church History, Apologetics and Ethics. His masters dissertation at Calvin Seminary was entitled "The Bible as Spectacles in Calvin's Apologetics." His doctoral dissertation at Fuller Seminary is entitled: "African Urban Missiology; a synthesis of Nigerian Case Studies and Biblical Principles."*

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## A NEW MAGAZINE

We have just received the impressive first issue of *Reformed Perspective: a Magazine for the Christian Family*. It is designed, as its mast-head states, to be a "Reformed Social-Political Magazine," bound by the Bible and the Reformed creeds. In August of 1981 we reprinted a speech on "Reformed Journalism" by the editor of the Dutch Christian daily newspaper, *Nederlands Dagblad* during his visit to this continent. He spoke under the sponsorship of our Canadian (and American) Reformed Church brethren who were planning to launch this new publishing venture, a 32-page, smooth-paper monthly.

The first issue contains an editorial outlining the aims of the periodical to stress the kingship of Christ over all things. The leading article is an 11-page illustrated survey of important events and developments of 1981 with an effort to evaluate in a Christian perspective what we have usually seen portrayed from a secular viewpoint. That is followed by a translation of an article from the *Nederlands Dagblad* on the Christian perspective toward present history and our hope in the Lord's return.

The range of the magazine's interests is indicated by articles on "Reformed Education: A Divine Commission," "Vivaldi's Winter Music," three pages of comment on religious developments, world-wide and in our Reformed circles, and an article on Literature commenting on Schiller's *Christ and Culture*, Homer's *Odyssey*, Augustine's *City of God*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Zola's *Germinal*, Henry James, and Huxley's *Brave New World*. Dr. Walter Meester writes on "Interferon: a New Miracle Drug?" for the treatment of cancer and there is a novel, *The King's Way*, to be printed serially.

We welcome this bold venture in the uncrowded field of Reformed journalism. The address of the publication is Box 12, Transcona Postal Station, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2C 2Z5. Its editor is John DeVos and Executive Director is Gerry Kuik. Subscription rates for the U.S. and Canada are \$22.50. Complimentary copies may be obtained by writing for them.

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# Biblical Universalism

Cecil W. Tuininga

The teachings of Universalism are not new. For many years we have been urged to take the teachings of Scripture on the salvation of all men more seriously. We have been told for many years that when Scripture uses such terms as "all men," "world," "all," or "every one" that we must take that at full value. Scripture, we are told, proclaims that all men are taken up in the work of Christ. He died for all and paid for the sins of all. Rev. Neal Punt is now adding his voice to the list in this chorus. He too says that we must take such texts for what they say. To him they say that all men are elect in Christ, though not all men are saved. That ultimately depends on whether man accepts or rejects that election he has in Christ. Says Punt: All will be saved except those who refuse to have God in their knowledge.

Rev. Punt refers to several texts in his writings that teach this truth, among them 1 John 2:2. Here we read, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world." Of all the texts quoted by Universalists, this is the real clincher. You cannot have it spelled out more clearly than that.

Let us take a close look at this clincher. I contend it says much more than Rev. Punt, or any other Universalist, wants it to say. To the new converts John wrote "if anyone does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the

Righteous One" (vs. 10). He wrote those words to comfort those troubled by their sin against a loving Father. John says, as it were, that we can always go to the Father through the Son because "... he is able to save those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:25). This truth John conveys in the words, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins." Christ's eternal interceding (speaking to the Father in our defense) rests on, and has its eternal ground in, His once-for-all sacrifice on the cross for all our sins, past, present, and future.

For all believers that text would have been sufficient had the apostle left it at that. But he added the words "for the sins of the whole world." Rev. Punt says that we must take these words just as they stand. Suppose we do that. Then this text says that the whole world, of which the apostle testifies that it is "in control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19) shares with believers in the great redeeming work of God. It must follow then that Christ speaks to the Father in defense of those in control of the evil one. We must then conclude that all men are Christ's purchased property while still being children of the devil, citizens of his dark domain, lost in sin, under the dominion of Satan.

Very evidently this text says much more than the Rev. Punt wants it to say. But Punt does not want to draw such conclusions. He contends that Christ died for all men but not all are saved by Him. They will be saved, but that depends on whether they reject His or not. So Punt puts us right back into the camp of Arminian intellectualism. Salvation ultimately depends on man. We must then conclude that Jesus actually saved no one, but made salvation possible. He died on the cross to purchase to Himself a "church of God" (Acts 20:28; Peter 2:9) but he does not really possess what he purchased. That depends whether men say "yes" or "no" to that. So in one stroke we empty this beautiful text of its comforting message.

We must ask: Just what is the message of Scripture in this text? The text says that we can go to the Father because Christ died for us. He is the atoning sacrifice. For those for whom he died He is the defender, the interceder. We cannot read here: He will be, or He once was, depending on how we respond or react to Him. It is precisely in the knowledge that Christ has removed all our sins as far as the east is from the west (Ps. 103:12) by His atoning sacrifice that believers find their source of comfort. That is the glorious truth the apostle proclaims. The apostle declares that the "whole world" shares in this. If we conclude that this means all mankind then it must follow that all men, head for head, are saved. Yes, we would have to conclude that the world that now lies in the evil one is really a saved world, purchased by Christ, washed in his blood, recipients of eternal salvation, heirs of the new heaven and the new earth.

The Rev. Punt rejects such a teaching. I judge he is badly mixed up in his thinking at this point. On the one hand he says that only born again believers are saved, on the other that all are saved save those who reject the salvation they have in Christ. That is

saying that men can be saved but cannot be saved at the same time. Or that man is saved but can lose it at any time along the way. In any case we are dealing with the old Arminian heresy that salvation ultimately depends on man. Then Rev. Punt's conclusion that all men are elect in Christ empties election of all meaning. Election means nothing to man. His response to the Gospel means something. Indeed, Arminians have always said that we are saved by grace, but they contradicted this, and still do so today, by averring that it depends on man's will whether he is saved or not.

Now if the apostle's declaration cannot mean that all men share in Christ's salvation, just what does he mean? Must we not conclude that "the sins of the whole world" means all mankind? We cannot conclude that because Scripture does not allow us to do so. No one who takes God's Word seriously would ever contend that all men will eventually be saved. Scripture says that though many are called, few are chosen. It speaks clearly of those who in the final judgment will go away into eternal punishment. Unless we want to empty this text of its comforting message we had better maintain that those for whom Christ died are verily saved, can depend on that because it is God's Work and hence cannot fail.

We must thank God this is so because if salvation in any way depended on us we would all be lost. Indeed we are called, indeed we must believe, but our faith was also purchased on the cross and is a gift of God's grace.

What then did the apostle teach? That when Christ died on the cross He completely fulfilled His mission. He paid the supreme price and purchased to Himself the Church of God. But He did more, and this glorious truth the apostle joyfully proclaims. Jesus not only purchased those given Him by the Father of all nations, kindreds, and tongues, but he also purchased a new heaven and a new earth. What the Son presented to the Father was nothing less than a saved world. When the great work of Christ is finally consummated we will see a new heaven and a new earth peopled by God's elect children. I believe we can say that John's contrast was between "the little flock" and the multitude before the throne "that no one can number" (Rev. 7:9). That is the world that shares in Christ's atoning sacrifice, the world He continues to intercede for. That, and that alone, is the true Biblical universalism! ☉

*Rev. Cecil W. Tuininga is a retired Christian Reformed pastor living at Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.*



### Ignorance, How Sad

Having been a reader for 40 years, I still enjoy our church papers.

The *Banner* of December 21 and the first *Outlook* of the new year give me a pain. So much energy wasted! (I refer to "Classis Calls Conference on Women" and "An Evening With Women's Liberation", January *OUTLOOK*).

When I put all the people mentioned on a time basis and miles traveled, I see a great danger that the issue of debate has become a point of pressure, not principle, as it should be. I say, how sad.

First, I speak to both groups with regard to the foolish waste of time, for which God also holds us responsible.

If the professors don't have anything more important to do, why not donate some time to a more worthy cause? If they are employed by someone and have time to waste, why not have the board reduce the

faculty number, thereby increasing the work load? (Idleness is the Devil's workshop).

As for the women, they already made themselves unworthy of the office. Paul writes that love is a first requirement, anyone who has anger within himself or herself is not fit to serve so worthy an office. Furthermore, what is contained in the heart is in danger of coming out of the mouth. (The Bible also refers to this.)

Finally that submissiveness which is also part of their confession, they have made themselves unworthy and disqualified for the office. (Not members in good standing.)

Cornie Vos  
Oskaloosa, Iowa

### Response To Rev. Jacob Binnema (March Issue)

Like Rev. Binnema I am Reformed, and even "Gereformeerd" by birth. I enjoyed his lines of verse, although I'm not quite ready to say, "I want out." But I do want to stress that I am not the one behind the wheel, if I may continue the use of my analogy. I suspect Rev. Binnema and I are closer together than he seems to think.

The issue that comes through in his letter is "newness" in theology. If there is to be newness, as I believe there should be, it is not because God has added to His Word or revelation but because theology must seek ever better formulations, some of which draw on philosophy. I believe we must affirm the possibility of theology making genuine progress through its contact with philosophy and the sciences. In other words, we can learn from the modern

world—even from such thinkers as Marx and Freud—provided we bear in mind that what we learn from a secular thinker is not necessarily what he would like to teach us. What it all boils down to, then, is that we need a fuller awareness of contemporary thought in our theological education. Only through such an awareness will we be able to meet the challenge of liberation theology, for example.

This is not to say, of course, that I embrace with open arms all that calls itself contemporary in the philosophical world. For example, I do not believe the Reformed community is well-served by the growing orientation toward analytic philosophy, which is the philosophical movement that has become dominant in the Anglo-American philosophical world in the twentieth century. I believe that this philosophy does not enable us to get a proper grasp and comprehension of the intellectual challenges and opportunities that confront us today. In this sense it is a narrow philosophy. It certainly represents one dimension of current thinking, but it is not educational in the best sense.

Yet this philosophy is not without merit. I believe its chief merit is the work done in apologetics. Nicholas Wolterstorff has recently reminded us that "apologetics must always be person-specific. It must always be contextual. An apologetic satisfactory for all comers is impossible" (*Reformed Journal*, April 1981, p. 24). Now, various thinkers in the contemporary world are analytic philosophers. For such I can prescribe no better apologetic medicine than to read some of the writings of Alvin Plantinga. However, for the majority of unbelieving intellectuals a different type of apologetic would be needed. The

challenge of Freud and Marx and other such enormously influential thinkers must also be met in our apologetic writings. Thus there is a great deal of work that remains to be done if the Reformed community is to address the contemporary world in an effective manner.

Theodore Plantinga

### Unconditional Good News

Dear Editor:

Calvin Coolidge said he was a man of few words, "... because you never have to defend what you have not said." Evidently Coolidge never had the honor of entering a public discussion with the Rev. Jelle Tuininga.

Consider how Tuininga lays the basis for his charge that I am "in conflict" with our creeds. (*Outlook*, 1/82). He valiantly defends the following statements, intentionally leaving the impression that I deny or compromise them:

1) "The human race [is] lost apart from Christ." 2) "No one is saved except through Jesus Christ." 3) "All men fell in Adam *unto condemnation*." 4) "Dead is dead, and no man comes alive unless the Spirit of Christ makes him alive." 5) "That means there is condemnation to those apart from Christ." 6) "Man is responsible for his own condemnation, children included." 7) "In faith we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation." 8) "Even though unbelievers can do so-called 'civic good,' this is not owing to any goodness in them, but solely to God's revelation which impinges on them." 9) "There is no neutrality."

If I deny or compromise any of the above statements I would indeed be "in conflict" with our creeds as Tuininga charges.

I hereby challenge Rev. Tuininga to cite in a just and fair manner, so much as *one* reference in which I, either directly or by good and necessary deduction, deny or compromise any one of the above nine statements. If he fails to meet this challenge, all the readers of *Outlook* may know how carelessly he has dealt with truth in this matter.

I would be delighted to respond to Rev. Tuininga's other arguments, including the urgency for gospel proclamation, if the Editor can spare some more space in *Outlook* for me to do so.

Cordially,  
Neal Punt

### Reply

1. Punt states in his *Banner* article (Jan. 12, 81) that "we do not read that anyone will suffer eternal wrath because of origi-

nal sin in Adam, *apart from* actual, personal ... sin." (Cf. also his book, pp. 24, 26). I consider that to be in conflict with The Canons of Dort, Chap. II, Reg. of Errors, Para. 5, where the fathers of Dort reject the error of those who say "that no one shall be condemned because of it" (namely, original sin). Cf. also Chap. III/IV, Reg. of Errors, Para. 1.

It is worth noting that the Study Committee dealing with Boer's gravamen *did not* draw the conclusion about the salvation of infants that Punt draws, but went out of its way to disassociate itself from it, referring, a. o., to the Canons cited above. (I was a delegate to synod that year, and remember this distinctly.)

2. Punt considers it an unwarranted assumption to say that all persons are outside of Christ except those whom the Bible declares will be saved. He wants to start with the assumption that all are elect in Christ. I repeat (in the words of Spykman): "Our starting point must be ... the ... human condition of universal reprobation resulting from mankind's fall into sin. ... We are to begin not with 'limited election' but with the human predicament of unlimited reprobation. ..." Or, to say it with David Dunbar in the *Journal of ETS*, Sept. 81: "My fundamental problem with this book is whether the assumption that 'all are elect in Christ,' as Punt wishes to understand the phrase, is really a Biblical assumption, or whether the traditional Christian understanding that 'all are lost except those who trust in Christ' does not more accurately reflect Biblical teaching. I am inclined to think that the weight rests with the latter case."

3. Since God condemns men on the basis of original sin, and since regeneration does not take place *apart from the Word* and Spirit of God, and since many who die in infancy have no contact with the Word at all, it would seem to be a "good and necessary deduction" that such infants are lost. This is contrary to Punt's position, and that is why I stressed points 1) through 6) of Punt's response. One can't have it both ways. Infants of believing parents are holy in Christ, received unto grace in Christ without their knowledge. That's why we don't doubt their salvation. *In no way* can this be said of infants of unbelievers and heathens.

4. Punt says the gospel is the "announcement of an objective state of affairs" and that faith is not *essential* to salvation (cf. pp. 107, 108 of his book). With Murray I say once again, "in faith *we* receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation." Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). I consider Punt to be in conflict with Q. and A. 20, 32, 60 and 65 of the *Heid.*

Catechism, and with the Canons, Chap. II, Reg. of Errors, Para. 4, where the Synod rejects the error of those who teach "that the new covenant of grace ... does not herein consist that we by faith ... are justified before God and saved."

5. I hear Punt saying (cf. quotation on p. 130 of book, in my art. above) that unless there is open rejection of God's revelation by them, we must consider all men to be partners in fulfilling the cultural mandate, and we can only press the claim of Christ "on the assumption that all persons are in Christ." I disagree with both points. Without a new heart decent people like Esau and Hiram etc. are *not* really joined with us. And if they already are in Christ, there is no need to call them to obedience to him.

J. Tuininga

(This concludes this exchange — Editorial Committee)



GLORIOUS IS THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT, by Robert K. Churchill. Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976. 74pp., paper. \$2.50. Reviewed by Rev. Jerome M. Julien, pastor of the First Christian Reformed Church of Sheldon, Iowa.

The Rev. Churchill, an Orthodox Presbyterian minister, noting the generally inadequate understanding of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, undertook the writing of this little devotionally written volume. Many subjects related to the work of the Holy Spirit are covered. It is not a technical treatise, but it is a Biblically oriented study. No reader will find it dry. Not only did I learn about God's Word and the work of the Holy Spirit, I also received a great blessing as I read.