

THE *September 1, 2007* STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

In This Issue:

- ◆ Continuing in Prayer 458
- ◆ Editor's Note 460
- ◆ Supervising Preaching...
Edifying Congregations (3) 460
- ◆ Letters 462
- ◆ Covenant of Sovereign Grace (8) 463
- ◆ Not Anabaptist, But Reformed (2) 465
- ◆ The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (3) 468
- ◆ Federal Vision Theology (2) 470
- ◆ Prophecy of Malachi (18) 472
- ◆ Issachar vs. the Scribes, Revisited (4) 474
- ◆ With Contentment (2) 477
- ◆ News From Our Churches 478

Volume 83 ◆ Number 20

Continuing in Prayer

Continue in prayer....

Colossians 4:2

The apostle Paul has already exhorted the believers in Colosse in this epistle to live a godly, sanctified life. They are to put off the old man with its sinful deeds and put on the new man in Jesus Christ. Paul has also shown how they are to live as new men and women in Christ, especially in the home and family. Exhortations have been given to husbands and wives, to parents and children, even to masters and slaves.

And now the apostle calls the saints to pray. They are to *continue* in prayer.

They are to do so that they may live in the godliness to which Paul has already called them.

How important this instruction

is for us. There is widespread failure today to follow this instruction to continue in prayer. The result is that we do not attain the level of godliness in our lives and homes that we could and should. Let us heed the instruction to continue in prayer.



Prayer is a wonderful, marvelous thing.

Prayer is communication with the living God. God communicates with us through the Scriptures, especially as those Scriptures are faithfully proclaimed to us in the preaching. And we are able to respond to God through prayer.

In prayer we have opportunity to thank and praise God for all His goodness to us. Prayer is also the opportunity to bring all our needs before God and seek His help.

This is an amazing thing! We are talking about God, the One who is infinitely exalted above the universe, the King of all kings, the One who works day and night to uphold and govern the entire uni-

verse. Yet we can approach Him in prayer at any time and from any place with our cares and concerns. This is not something we can do with earthly rulers. Very few have direct access to those in high places in our government. Yet in prayer we have direct access to the living God, the King of all kings, to lay before Him the burdens of our heart.

Prayer is a privilege God gives to us in His covenant.

Not everyone has the right to approach God in prayer. The ungodly, who know not Jesus Christ, and who walk in the darkness of sin and unbelief, have no right to come into God's presence in prayer. Their prayers will fall on deaf ears.

Only those who belong to God's covenant have the privilege of prayer. God's covenant is an inti-

*In prayer
we have
direct access
to the
living God....*

Rev. Slopsema is pastor of First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Standard Bearer (ISSN 0362-4692) is a semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August, published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc., 1894 Georgetown Center Dr., Jenison, MI 49428-7137.

REPRINT POLICY

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

EDITORIAL POLICY

Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of his own articles. Contributions of general interest from our readers and questions for The Reader Asks department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be signed.

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Prof. Barrett L. Gritters
4949 Ivanrest Ave. SW
Grandville, MI 49418
(e-mail: gritters@prca.org)

BUSINESS OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
Mr. Timothy Pipe
1894 Georgetown Center Dr.
Jenison, MI 49428-7137
PH: (616) 457-5970
FAX: (616) 457-5980
(e-mail: tim@rfpa.org)

Postmaster:

Send address changes to
The Standard Bearer
1894 Georgetown Center Dr.
Jenison, MI 49428-7137

CHURCH NEWS EDITOR

Mr. Ben Wigger
6597 40th Ave.
Hudsonville, MI 49426
(e-mail: benjwig@juno.com)

NEW ZEALAND OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
c/o B. VanHerik
66 Fraser St.
Wainuiomata, New Zealand

UNITED KINGDOM OFFICE

c/o Mr. Sean Courtney
78 Millfield, Grove Rd.
Ballymena, Co. Antrim
BT43 6PD Northern Ireland
(e-mail: cpfraudiostore@yahoo.co.uk)

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

\$17.00 per year in the U.S., US\$20.00 elsewhere.

ADVERTISING POLICY

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

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

Website for RPPA: www.rfpa.org
Website for PRC: www.prca.org

mate relation of friendship and fellowship that God establishes and maintains with His elect people in Jesus Christ. In that covenant, God becomes the Friend of His people. As their Friend, God covers all their sins in the blood of Jesus Christ, He renews and sanctifies them, He lives with them in intimate friendship and fellowship, and He blesses them with every good thing. One of the privileges of that covenant is the right to come to God in prayer.

How important it is that we exercise this covenant privilege of prayer!

Prayer is the chief means given to us by God to show our gratitude to Him. How God has blessed us in His covenant with us! God has given us the right of prayer in order that we may thank Him for His great blessings.

But prayer is also the opportunity God has given for us to lay all our needs and concerns before Him and be heard. In fact, it is only through prayer that we receive the blessings and help of our covenant God. The Heidelberg Catechism states it this way: "God will give His grace and Holy Spirit to those only who with sincere desires continually ask them of Him, and are thankful for them" (Q&A 116).

It is this latter importance of prayer that is Paul's concern as he writes to the Colossian saints. He has exhorted the church to godly living. The grace and strength to do so is found in prayer.



Continue in prayer!

That the saints may live godly, Paul exhorts them to pray.

And they must not just pray, they must *continue* in prayer.

To continue in prayer is to give constant attention to prayer. It means to persevere in prayer, to give yourself over to prayer so that you are much in prayer. It means to do this regardless of all the distractions of life that would keep

you from prayer, and regardless of any difficulty you may encounter in prayer.

There are, in Scripture, many examples of those that continued in prayer.

Scripture sets before us the pattern of praying at least three times a day. In Psalm 55:17 David confessed, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud." This was also done by Daniel, even though it was forbidden by his foolish king and brought him to the lions' den.

In times of distress the saints would spend much time in prayer. While fleeing from his enemies in the wilderness of Judah, David would pray early in the morning, and even through the night (Ps. 63:1, 6).

Jesus was often pressed to the point of weariness by the crowds that demanded His attention. To rest and refresh Himself He did not go on a Caribbean cruise or flee to some vacation spot. He rather found a lonely place with His disciples in order to pray.

In the same manner must we continue in prayer.

Certainly this means that we pray a minimum of three times a day—morning, noon, and evening. And we must not be content with prayers that simply ask God's blessing upon our meals, uttered perhaps automatically and thoughtlessly. These must be meaningful prayers from the heart—prayers in which we bring our needs before the face of God and thank Him for His wonderful blessings in Jesus Christ.

In times of trouble and distress we must spend additional time in prayer. We do well to rise up early in the morning to pray. Or per-

haps we even need to pray deep into the night.

There is on our part a widespread failure to do this.

Instead of giving attention to prayer, too many of us are giving attention to all sorts of activities that are of lesser importance than prayer and that quickly crowd out time for prayer.

Instead of giving attention to prayer, too many of us are giving attention to all sorts of activities that are of lesser importance than prayer and that quickly crowd out time for prayer. Many continue in sports and recreation rather than in prayer. Rather than continuing in prayer, still others continue in televi-

sion, video games, and the Internet. Still others neglect prayer because they have given themselves over to advancing their careers, maintaining nice homes, and living the "good life."

This is all to our spiritual hurt. Worldliness is creeping into our homes, our schools, and our churches. And it is all connected to a sad neglect of prayer.

Let us be those that continue in prayer! Let us busy ourselves in prayer. Let's do that as churches. Let's do that as families. Let's do that as individual saints, young and old alike.

This requires spiritual self-discipline and self-control. It also requires a certain measure of sacrifice. To continue in prayer may well require that we curtail or even give up things and activities that we have come to enjoy and cherish.

But the fruit of continuing in prayer is well worth any sacrifice we may have to make. After all, what is more important than cultivating our relationship with God in prayer? What is more important than the grace we find in prayer to walk uprightly before God? All else is of lesser importance.

Continue in prayer!

Editor's Note

With the October 1, 2007 issue, the annual subscription rate of the *Standard Bearer* will increase to \$21 (domestic) and \$25 (foreign). This is the first increase since 1995. The Board of the Reformed Free Publishing Association recently made this decision because on July 15, 2007 the mailing rate increased by 23% for domestic and almost 300% for foreign!

The new subscription rate is still reasonable for twenty-one issues of the *Standard Bearer*. We can offer the magazine at this low rate because of the generous support by Protestant Reformed churches through regular collections, and by

individuals both within and outside the PRC. The readers may know that for both domestic and foreign, the subscription covers only a part of the production and mailing costs of the magazine. So we value, and need, this support over and above subscriptions.

The number of subscriptions is now at 2,420. Thank you for subscribing! We hope to see continued subscriptions. And we desire increase in subscriptions. This will keep the cost of subscriptions as low as possible. But especially we are interested to have the *Standard Bearer's* witness to the Reformed faith and life reach more people to

the glory of our good God. The RFPA continues to work on this.

But you can help, too. We hope elders will recommend the magazine to the members. All the readers can encourage family and friends to become readers of the *Standard Bearer*. Gift subscriptions are still half price for a year. Keep this in mind for a gift for your neighbor, work acquaintance, friend, or relative.

Please pray for us.

Pray for all the writers.

May the *Standard Bearer* be one means to bring God's Word to the ends of the earth.

— BG 

Editorial

Prof. Barry Gritters

Supervising Preaching...Edifying Congregations (3)

In the past two issues of the magazine, the editorials treated what I called the "admittedly sensitive" subject of elders working with ministers for the improvement of the preaching. The first article noted that the Reformed Church Order, the Questions for Church Visitation, and Reformed church history call the elders to take an active (not just *re-active*) role in the supervision of the preaching.

The last editorial proposed a method by which the elders could

judge one particular dimension of the preaching ministry—the content of the sermon. The editorial did not treat the sermon's delivery or organization, two very important aspects of sermons that do bear on the sermon's quality. The editorial limited itself to the question whether the sermon's contents glorify God and edify the people of God. God's glory and the congregation's upbuilding are the elders' main concern. The article suggested that the elders ask whether the congregation is built up in *faith* (both the knowledge and assurance of faith), in *hope* (for the near and distant future), and in *love* (for God and the neighbor). These three Christian graces may well cover the whole counsel of God,

which preachers are called to declare.

But there is another dimension to sermons that is not so obvious, a requisite quality that almost defies description. Yet its absence is so plain that children and young people can sense it.

Spirituality

The quality is best described as spirituality. God-honoring sermons are spiritual sermons. Edifying sermons are spiritual sermons. Spiritual with a capital "S." That is, they are sermons that have their source and power in the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ. An elder may not find this quality in a sermon manuscript he might read. The people of God may not see it

Previous article in this series: August 2007, p. 437.

in an outline distributed to the congregation. But they know it when they hear it. We preachers do, too.

There is something about a good sermon, therefore, that goes beyond orthodoxy. Without denying the absolutely essential element of orthodoxy, and without doing anything to minimize the importance of truth

(God forbid), what must be emphasized is a dimension in the preaching that an unspiritual man cannot have. Balaam's ass can bring a word from God, a true word. King Saul can work for a time among the prophets. But God does not often edify believers and gather His elect through donkeys and unregenerate men.

This spirituality has a mystery and power to it that only a spiritual man can understand. For "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14).

Preaching is one of those "things of the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 2). Preaching is the Spirit's grand domain. The Spirit brought forth the Word that must be preached (II Tim. 3:16). The Spirit enlivens men and women, and opens their hearts, so that they are able to attend to the things spoken in the preaching (Acts 16:14). The Spirit of Christ issues the saving call and makes it a power in the people of God.

Thus, the man who brings the Word in the preaching must have a vital interest in making his work a spiritual work, from beginning to end.

He must himself be a spiritual man. The spiritual preacher will be one in whom the Spirit has worked His sin-convicting, repentance-inducing, life-giving, Christ-

loving power. The spiritual preacher is a believer. The spiritual preacher hates the ways of his own flesh, loves righteousness, seeks the kingdom of God, esteems others better than himself, loves God, and loves his neighbor. He "tastes and sees that the Lord is good." He is familiar with the realities he speaks about. He is "first partaker" of the fruits (II Tim. 2:6). He is spiritual.

His sermons also are spiritual.

Earnestness

These spiritual sermons will have recognizable characteristics—one mainly.

Yes, Christ's Spirit will produce *liberty* in the minister. This is a freedom that releases him from fear of people's opinions, even while he is sensitive to their needs. It is also a liberty to say what the Spirit gives him—even during the course of delivering the sermon.

Yes, the Spirit will produce *confidence* in the minister. Confidence that the Word he studied is truly the Word of God. Confidence that his message is the fruit of "rightly dividing" the Word of truth. Confidence that enables him to stand on the pulpit and speak as King Jesus' ambassador.

But the characteristic of most interest to elders is *earnestness*. The spiritual minister comes to the pulpit with a passion and zeal that are unmistakable as the work of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

The people of God recognize this in their pastor as an earnest love for the Lord, whose Word he brings, and a passionate love for them as the dear children of God. One might not find this in a manuscript or sermon outline, but God's people recognize it.

No preacher can force this ear-

nestness. A note in the sermon's margin "Be Passionate Here!" will not produce it. No pastor can tell himself successfully, "be more earnest today." A rhetorical "pulpit fire" is not the same as the earnestness produced by the Spirit. There is a life in the preaching that can come only from the Spirit of Christ.

Thus, his sermons are not full of heavy-handed criticisms of everyone else. His rebukes are moderated by the sense of his own sins. His instruction is not cold, intellectual presentation of fact, but declaration of truth that is living.

Because the Spirit of Christ is a *person*, spiritual sermons are personal. God lives His covenantal life with His people through the preaching. And because the covenant life is a personal life, covenantal preaching will be personal preaching, full of applications that will address the needs of the saints.

Because the Spirit is the Spirit of *Christ*, spiritual sermons will be sermons that are full of Christ. The

preacher will not have to ask, "Where is Christ in this sermon?" because he has been living with Christ, and dying with Christ, all week long. Christ is the ground of gracious forgiveness, the power behind the holy life, the reason for thankful obedi-

ence. If the Spirit's great work is to manifest Jesus Christ in the world (John 16:13, 14), then a spiritual sermon shines, and gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 4:6).

Because the Spirit is like a *fire* (Matt. 3:11), spiritual sermons will be fiery sermons. Fiery, not only in that they call to holiness, but fiery in their zeal. The Word of Jesus Christ burns within the preacher. Jeremiah said about God's word: It "was in mine heart as a burning

There is something about a good sermon that goes beyond orthodoxy.

A rhetorical "pulpit fire" is not the same as the earnestness produced by the Spirit.

fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer. 20:9). Like that prophet, Spirit-filled preachers today cannot restrain themselves when they come to the pulpit; they weary of holding back. To use different biblical figures, they must unburden themselves of the Word's load. They bubble over with what the Spirit puts in them.

The Spirit works in preachers in such a way that the love of God for His people in Jesus Christ oozes, as it were, from every part of the minister's being. To the simplest hearer it is obvious that the minister groans to make the Word clear to him. To the distressed members it is plain that the minister wants the Word to comfort them. And the hardened sinner really senses that the minister has been praying that the words of the sermon will be sharp arrows to pierce his rock-hard heart.

How clear this is in the Word of God. Scripture describes the faithful preacher as the one whose heart yearns for the welfare of the people. The apostle Paul bared his soul to the church: "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged" (II Cor. 6:11). His mouth opened in the preaching because his heart was enlarged toward them. He loved them. He was not afraid to say it. And his work among them showed it. "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears... that ye might know the love which I have

more abundantly unto you" (II Cor. 2:4). Paul will pour out his life for them, even when he knows they do not love him as much as he loves them: "...I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (II Cor. 12:15; and note the "gladly"). Their lack of love does not stop him. The Spirit of Jesus Christ drives him to love them, and empowers him to show that when he preaches.

Every faithful preacher implores God to give him this in all his preaching. Spirituality. Earnestness.

The Study

The Spirit gives this most often after a week of careful, spiritual preparation in the study. Study that does justice to the Spirit's authorship of the Word. Study that prays God to make the Word clear to him, and make him clear to the people.

His preparation includes the whole of his life, day and night, publicly and privately. His life does justice to the Spirit's holiness—separation from sin and devotion to God. He is painfully aware that the Spirit will be grieved (Eph. 4:30) and withhold His blessing when he lives carelessly. He has learned that the Spirit will not fill the minister who is not devoted to God and His cause, will not empower the min-

ister who contradicts God's holiness. He has learned that the hard way.

But primarily the Spirit comes through the Jacob-like wrestling in the study: "Lord, I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Some-

times it takes all night. Usually all week (which is why old sermons are usually hard to preach). Finally, the Lord enlarges his heart, opens his mouth. Now he

can stand before the people of God whom he loves: "Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you...." He declares that with authority from God. With all his heart, he wants it for them. And that becomes plain in the preaching.

Discussion

To speak with the minister about this spiritual dimension of the preaching may be difficult for the elders. But they should consider it carefully as they oversee the gospel ministry—their primary task. They will certainly pray about it: "Lord God, fill our pastor with Christ's Spirit, so that he may reflect Thy heart in his sermons. Enlarge *his* heart. Open his mouth. By his preaching, magnify Thy name; we love Thy name. And edify the saints; we love them, too."



Primarily the Spirit comes through the Jacob-like wrestling in the study.


Letters

Federal Vision

I am so glad to see an article in this month's *Standard Bearer* (July 2007) on the heresy of the Federal Vision doctrine. I ask that you please convey to the author to remember that some of us are not of the intellectual frame and would

like a 'Federal Vision for Dummies' type approach so that we can clearly see what this is, and how it is unbiblical and steer clear. I have been trying for several months now to find a 'Federal Vision' in a nutshell type of explanation, and have been faced with just a lot of big

words that don't connect in my average, run-of-the-mill, uneducated brain. Many thanks, and your publication, while over my head sometimes, is still greatly appreciated.

Cindy Newcomb
Mickleton, NJ 

The Covenant of Sovereign Grace (9) or The Decisive Influence of the Reformation Gospel upon the Orthodox Doctrine of the Covenant in the Netherlands

Calvin's Influence

In confessing that election governs the covenant, as they did at the very beginning of their history, particularly in the "[Reformed] Form for the Administration of Baptism" (1574) and in the Canons of Dordt (1618/1619), the Reformed churches in the Netherlands were guided by the Reformer John Calvin. The basis of this doctrine for the Reformed churches certainly was Holy Scripture, but the Spirit used that mighty instrument, Calvin, to lead the Reformed churches in the Netherlands to the knowledge of this fundamental truth of the covenant.

It was not so much Calvin's explicit teaching about the covenant that influenced the Reformed churches in the Netherlands to view the covenant as governed by election, although there was such explicit teaching scattered throughout Calvin's writings. Important as the covenant was for Calvin, he did not systematically and thoroughly develop the doctrine of the

covenant. This was work that the Spirit of truth reserved for the Reformed theologians who would follow Calvin.

Calvin on Election

But Calvin taught that the eternal decree of election is the source of the grace of God in Jesus Christ; that election determines the objects of this grace; and that election makes the grace of God in Jesus Christ effectual in the everlasting salvation of every one towards whom this grace is directed and in whom this grace begins to work. Thus, Calvin taught that all the saving work of God in Jesus Christ originates from, depends upon, and is governed by God's election.

Calvin taught this clearly. Calvin taught this prominently. Calvin taught this from the beginning of his ministry to the end, and more zealously at the end than at the beginning. Calvin taught this everywhere in his writings. Calvin taught this emphatically. Calvin taught this as the very foundation of the Reformation gospel of sal-

vation by grace alone. Therefore, he vigorously defended the truth of election as the sole source and determiner of grace and salvation against all those who opposed it.

In the final, 1559 edition of his *Institutes*, Calvin deliberately placed the doctrine of predestination at the conclusion of his treatment of God's gracious salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ in order to demonstrate that election is the sole source and only determiner of this grace and salvation. The lines that introduce the doctrine of predestination in the *Institutes*, immediately following the conclusion of Calvin's treatment of God's gracious salvation of sinners in Jesus Christ, are these:

Calvin taught that all the saving work of God in Jesus Christ originates from, depends upon, and is governed by God's election.

In actual fact, the covenant of life is not preached equally among all men, and among those to whom it is preached, it does not gain the same acceptance either constantly or in equal degree. In this diversity the wonderful depth of God's judgment is made known. For there is no doubt that this variety also serves the decision of God's eternal election.

Prof. Engelsma is professor of Dogmatics and Old Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

Previous article in this series: June 2007, p. 397.

(It ought to be of some embarrassment to the many Reformed theologians today who vehemently insist that the covenant is not closely related to election, much less governed by election, that in Calvin's opening line on predestination in the *Institutes* he expressly states that the "covenant" is controlled by "decision of God's eternal election.")

Immediately, Calvin added:

We shall never be clearly persuaded, as we ought to be, that our salvation flows from the well-spring of God's free mercy until we come to know his eternal election, which illumines God's grace by this contrast: that he does not indiscriminately adopt all into the hope of salvation but gives to some what he denies to others.

Calvin's definition of predestination followed:

We call predestination God's eternal decree, by which he compacted with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others. Therefore, as any man has been created to one or the other of these ends, we speak of him as predestined to life or to death (*Institutes*, ed. John T. McNeill, tr. Ford Lewis Battles, Westminster Press, 1960, 3.21.1, 5).

In his "Treatise on the Eternal Predestination of God," Calvin contended with an opponent who, like the men of the federal vision today, taught that God chooses those who make good use of His grace, which He bestows on all alike: "He chose us out of all men, because He foresaw that that which was set before all men for their reception [that is, God's grace—DJE] would become peculiar to us, who alone would receive it."

Against this "folly," Calvin responded, with reference to Ephesians 1:3-12, by declaring that all of God's grace and saving work

in Jesus Christ have their source in and depend upon God's eternal election.

God is said to have saved us "according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself" for this very reason, because, finding no cause in us, He made Himself the cause of our salvation. Is it for nothing, think ye, that the apostle repeats five times over that the whole of our salvation is the effect of, and dependent upon, that eternal decree, purpose and good pleasure of God? Is it with no intent whatever that the apostle declares that we were "blessed" in Christ because we were "chosen" in Christ? Does not the apostle refer all sanctification and every good work to the election of God, as waters are traced to their originating source? Does not Paul attribute it to the same grace that we are the "workmanship of God, created unto good works, which He hath before ordained that we should walk in them"? Why did God choose us out, and separate us from the rest, but that we might know that we are what we are, and that we are blessed above all others by the free favour of God alone? (John Calvin, "A Treatise on the Eternal Predestination of God," in *Calvin's Calvinism*, tr. Henry Cole, Eerdmans, 1956, pp. 153, 154).

Commenting on Ephesians 1:4, "According as he [God] hath chosen us in him [our Lord Jesus Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him," Calvin taught the same truth. Every saving grace and all the divine work of salvation have their origin in, depend upon, and are determined by God's eternal decree of election.

The foundation and first cause, both of our calling and of all the

benefits which we receive from God, is here declared to be his eternal election. If the reason is asked, why God has called us to enjoy the gospel, why he daily bestows upon us so many blessings, why he opens to us the gate of heaven—the answer will be constantly found in this principle, that he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world.... This leads us to conclude, that holiness, purity, and every excellence that is found among men, are the fruit of election.

Well aware of the alternative to viewing election as the source, foundation, and determination of God's grace and saving work, Calvin astutely concluded, "Election, therefore, does not depend on the righteousness of works, of which Paul here declares that it is the cause" (John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, tr. William Pringle, Eerdmans, 1957, pp. 197-199).

Applying Calvin to the Covenant

When, very early in their history, the Reformed churches in the Netherlands confessed that the covenant of grace has its source in, depends upon,

and is governed by election, they were simply applying Calvin's teaching concerning election specifically to the covenant. In the covenant, the objects of God's grace in Christ, particularly among the physical children of believers, are determined by election.

In the covenant, the objects of God's grace in Christ, particularly among the physical children of believers, are determined by election.

dren of believers, are determined by election. In the covenant, all the blessings of salvation, including union with Christ, regeneration, conversion, justification, sanctification, and perseverance, are bestowed and worked by the Spirit of Christ according to election. In

the covenant, God's grace depends upon His election. In the covenant, therefore, God's grace and saving work are sure, so that no one in whom God begins the work of salvation shall fall away and perish.

It is preposterous to suppose that the early Dutch Reformed churches, hearing and reading the gospel of grace as preached and written by Calvin, would have concluded that, although election is the source of grace and salvation, the grace and salvation of the covenant are excluded; although God's sav-

ing works in Christ depend upon election, in the covenant they depend upon something else (namely, a condition fulfilled by the children); although election determines the objects of grace, in the covenant many more are the objects of grace than the elect; although the grace of God in Christ is effectual and irresistible, in the covenant many successfully resist the grace once bestowed on them, so that they forfeit the grace and perish; although God's gracious gifts and calling are without repentance, in the cov-

enant the gifts and calling of God can be, and often are, revoked.

Of course, the Reformed churches in the Netherlands, like the Reformed and Presbyterian churches everywhere in those glorious early days of the Reformation, alive by the gospel of salvation by sovereign grace as proclaimed especially by John Calvin, confessed the covenant of sovereign grace. This was simply the gospel of the Reformation applied to the covenant.

... to be continued. 

Translated Treasures

Not Anabaptist, But Reformed*

By Rev. H. Danhof and Rev. H. Hoeksema

Chapter I : The Covenant with Noah (1)

The first subject Rev. Van Baalen treats in his pamphlet is the Noahitic covenant. Or rather, the subject of the brother's treatment is not that covenant as such, but the differing views that exist, with respect to that covenant, between Dr. A. Kuyper on the one hand, and Revs. H. Danhof and H. Hoeksema on the other. These last two brothers had denied that the covenant established with Noah was a covenant of common grace, in the common sense of the term, and had written that there must be seen in that covenant also

a phase of the development of the covenant of grace. According to us, then, God reveals the covenant of grace with Noah as inclusive of all generations of the earth, upholding all that exists in time so that God's creation also might soon be relieved from the curse and be glorified.

Rev. Hoeksema had criticized Dr. Kuyper's reasoning with respect to this covenant with Noah. The first argument we raised, which has been cut to pieces by Rev. Van Baalen, is that nothing can be built on the different use of the names God and Jehovah in this connection. The argument of Dr. Kuyper in his *De Gemeene Gratie* was that in Genesis 9, which speaks of the covenant with Noah, not the name Jehovah, but the name God is used. Jehovah is the covenant name, and God is the name that describes the Most High as the God of all flesh. And where the covenant of particular grace is spoken

of in Genesis 3, and in Genesis 9:25-27, the name Jehovah is used. But in Genesis 9:9-17 Scripture does not use the name Jehovah, but God. This, then, is one of Dr. Kuyper's grounds for concluding that the latter passage does not speak of the covenant of particular grace, but of a universally gracious covenant, a covenant of common grace. We respond that nothing can be built on this use of names with respect to that covenant notion, simply because the names God and Jehovah are used interchangeably in this regard. Rev. Van Baalen thinks he must criticize that. Let us see to what extent that criticism is correct. First of all, our critic writes that we have not done justice to Dr. Kuyper's position. Dr. Kuyper did not write that this distinction always occurs, but only in the places mentioned, namely, Genesis 3 and 9:25-27, and Genesis 9:9-17. Now we agree with that. But we do not

* *Not Anabaptist, But Reformed* was a pamphlet written by Danhof and Hoeksema in 1923 as a "Provisional Response to Rev. Jan Karel Van Baalen Concerning the Denial of Common Grace." Translated here from the Dutch by seminarian Daniel Holstege.

Previous article in this series: July 2007, p. 421.

agree that this concludes or settles anything in the matter under discussion. For in the first place it is not true that only the name Jehovah is used in Genesis 3. Both names appear there, and often together (Jehovah-God). But in the second place, this still does not take away from our argument in any way. What underlies Kuyper's argument is the notion that the name Jehovah indicates the covenant of particular grace and the name God the relation of the Most High to all flesh. The first name expresses the covenant relationship to His people, the second His relationship as Creator to every creature. If this is not true, then nothing can be built on the use of names in Genesis 9 either. Our argument is simply this: if the names God and Jehovah are used interchangeably in Genesis, and no attention is given to any particular or universal relation of God to His people or to His creatures, then no one has the right to make an argument for the institution of a covenant of common grace in the use of those names in Genesis 9. Then we pointed out that in Genesis 17, certainly a classic chapter (if we may use such an expression) for the establishment of the covenant of particular grace, the name God and not Jehovah is used repeatedly. No one concludes from the use of that name in Genesis 17 that a covenant of common grace is spoken of there too. Therefore the argument also fails when it is applied to Genesis 9.

Rev. Van Baalen now supposedly refutes this last argument by a proposition which simply astonishes us. The proposition is that Abraham did not know the name Jehovah and therefore can never be presented as employing that name, and that we never read of God introducing Himself to Abraham as Jehovah. Moses knew that name well, and consequently he also made this distinction. But before Moses there was no one who knew that name. Rev. Van Baalen writes, "It appears no-

where that the Supreme Being *introduced Himself* as Jehovah to Noah or Shem or Adam or Eve or the snake, for He would do that first to Moses. But this is noteworthy, that Moses, who certainly knew the name Jehovah, made that distinction when he wrote the book of Genesis. Moses wrote under the inspiration of the Spirit that Jehovah spoke to Shem and Noah when it pertained to the covenant of particular grace. But Moses wrote that God spoke when it pertained to common grace" (*The Denial of Common Grace: Reformed or Anabaptistic?*, page 17).

So strongly is the writer convinced of the validity of this argument that he considers it crazy to think of it differently: "No, Dr. Kuyper was not so crazy that he did not know that the Lord would not have used the name Jehovah with Abraham. The Lord God could not have done that; not even if He spoke of the covenant of grace. And why not? For the simple reason that it was His plan to make known that covenant name first to Moses. See Exodus 6:3: 'And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by *the name of* God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.'"

Understood, reader? Supposedly, Abraham knew nothing of the name Jehovah. Moses was the first to be aware of that name. Therefore, Moses also does not portray it such that anyone before his time took that name upon his lips or that God would have revealed Himself as Jehovah to anyone before Moses' time. Hence the name God in Genesis 17. And the author even thinks it would be crazy for someone to claim anything else!

Now there is not one letter of truth in this entire argument. We were actually shocked that a man like Rev. Van Baalen would write something like this. If he had done a little bit of study on this matter, he would not have written such a thing. This certainly does not fit

with Scripture. In the first place, it is not true that Moses wrote "Jehovah" when the covenant of particular grace was spoken of and "God" if it had to do with the covenant of common grace. Moses absolutely does not make such a distinction. We will quote a few passages to prove this:

When Scripture relates to us the conversation between God and Cain, the name LORD is continuously used. For the sake of clarity, we will write Jehovah every time that name appears in Scripture.*

Genesis 4:6, "And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen?"

Genesis 4:9, "And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother?"

Genesis 4:13, "And Cain said unto Jehovah, My punishment is greater than I can bear."

Genesis 4:15 (take note, the following passage is the very passage that is sometimes quoted as proof for common grace!), "And Jehovah said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And Jehovah set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him."

In all these passages we find the name Jehovah used for God when He speaks with Cain.

In several passages which have to do with God's relationship to man in general, and especially to ungodly humanity, the name Jehovah is used.

Genesis 6:3, "And Jehovah said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh."

Genesis 6:5 and 6, "And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

Furthermore, the names are sometimes used interchangeably.

Genesis 6:8, "But Noah found

grace in the eyes of Jehovah." Parenthetically, Rev. Van Baalen, was this common grace? It was by that grace that he did not perish with the world. Just read this verse once in connection with verse 7. And yet this was really "particular" grace, wasn't it? You will certainly agree with that.

Genesis 7:1, "And Jehovah said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark."

Genesis 7:5, "And Noah did according unto all that Jehovah commanded him."

Genesis 7:9, "There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah."

Genesis 7:16, "And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and Jehovah shut him in."

Genesis 8:1, "And God remembered Noah and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged."

Genesis 8:20 and 21, "And Noah builded an altar unto Jehovah; and took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And Jehovah smelled a sweet savour; and Jehovah said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake," etc.

Furthermore, the name God is used when it has to do with the relationship of the covenant in the particular sense of the word.

Genesis 5:24, "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." This walking with God is certainly particular grace, and it has its eye on the inner covenant relationship between God and His people, does it not?

Genesis 6:9, "...Noah walked with God."

Genesis 17:3 and 4, "And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee."

Genesis 17:9, "And God said

unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations."

In light of all these passages of Scripture, what remains of Rev. Van Baalen's contention that Moses wrote "Jehovah" where it had to do with the covenant of particular grace and "God" when it pertained to a covenant of common grace? This entire argument is no good. Not for a moment does it hold any water in the light of Scripture. And therefore, you simply cannot apply it to Genesis 9:9-17. Moses does not make that distinction.

Even stranger is Van Baalen's exegesis of Exodus 6:3. According to him, no one before Moses would have known the name Jehovah! And Moses never presents it that way. God could not call Himself by the name Jehovah before Moses. And Dr. Kuyper was not so crazy that he did not know this.

This is what Van Baalen writes.

But what does the Scripture say?

Genesis 14:22, "And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto Jehovah, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth."

Genesis 15:2, "And Abram said, Lord Jehovah, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless...?"

Genesis 15:7, "And he said unto him, I am Jehovah that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees...."

Genesis 15:8, "And he said, Lord Jehovah, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?"

Genesis 22:14, "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Shall Foresee It."

Genesis 24:2 and 3, "And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by Jehovah, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth." And a little later we read that Abraham's servant calls out to God as follows:

Genesis 24:12, "And he said, O Jehovah God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham." Genesis 24:27, "And he said, Blessed be Jehovah God of my master Abraham...."

These examples could be multiplied, but we trust that Rev. Van Baalen will look them up himself and come to the conclusion that he is making a colossal mistake here. The entire argument on pages 16 and 17 rests on this error. This is the result, brother, if one reasons from a single text of Scripture and simply ignores all the rest. This is a weakness revealed more often in your pamphlet, as we will later demonstrate.

Our conclusion with respect to the use of names is as follows:

a) That nothing can be concluded from the use of the name God in Genesis 9:9-17 with respect to a universal covenant of common grace. The names God and Jehovah, with respect to this point, are used interchangeably in the Holy Scriptures.

b) The remark, "No, Dr. Kuyper was not so crazy that he should not have known," etc. (p. 16, Pamphlet) is erroneous. And the entire argument that follows the remark is also a misunderstanding. Moses again and again presents the saints from before his time as knowing the name Jehovah. And God also introduced Himself to them as Jehovah.

Once again, Rev. Van Baalen, acknowledge that you have erred!



* Translator's note: The Dutch version used by the authors (Staten Vertaling) translates the Hebrew name 'Yahweh' with 'HEERE' (LORD). Here the authors change 'HEERE' to 'Jehova' wherever that name 'Yahweh' appears. Similarly, the KJV translates 'Yahweh' with 'LORD.' We have taken the citations from the KJV and changed 'LORD' to 'Jehovah.'

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (3)

We have seen that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper God is pleased to sit at the feast table with us. The table of our Lord is the table of the covenant! The great and holy God takes sinners into His fellowship—not as sinners, but as those cleansed with the blood of His dear Son. Christ's work in our redemption instills in us a desire to join our Lord in the fellowship of His love, to confess His name, and to partake of Christ and all His benefits.

While we have yet to consider in depth what is required of us in order properly to approach that table of the covenant, we must now consider more carefully the nature of the feast that God has provided for us.

The Sacramental Operation of the Lord's Supper

What makes this feast so special? Is it only because we *remember* something when we partake of the Lord's Supper? Is it because the bread and the wine change into the physical body and blood of Christ? Is it something else? What makes this feast so special?

The answers to these questions are important. The Lord's Supper must not be a ceremony of superstition to us. All the exercises of our

Christian religion must be exercises of the mind, *spiritual* exercises of the mind. We must understand these things. They belong, after all, to our worship of the Lord our God.

Satan, that great adversary of the church, understands the significance of the Lord's Supper to the church and her worship of God her Savior. One of the great reformers of the church in the sixteenth century, Peter Martyr Vermigli, wrote a treatise on the Eucharist (the sacrament of the Lord's Supper) in 1549 in which he grappled with the controversies that troubled the church at that time on this particular doctrine.

Peter Martyr wrote that this doctrine "has been so overwhelmed, buried, and deformed by lies, devices, and superstitions that it could be reckoned anything besides what the Lord instituted in the Supper."¹

He continued:

"...the devil (the greatest enemy of all peace and truth) has sown so many opinions, controversies, disagreements, heresies, and battles, although without blood, that scarcely any consent worthy of Christians can be hoped for by human reason. Alas! we have not endured these things without harm, for we have dealt double injury to this sacrament: in part because we have erected an accursed idol instead of the excellent and special gift of Christ; in part because we have abused these holy mysteries, without sincere faith, with conscience defiled by

grave sins, scorning a proper examination of our own hearts."²

The only way out of such calamitous error is by returning to Scripture and evaluating in the light of God's authoritative Word the doctrine of the sacrament. We make that evaluation recognizing that by that Word the Spirit of Christ leads the church into all truth. We also do so on the backs of the Reformed fathers who have gone before us and who have summarized the biblical teaching in our Reformed confessions. Particularly our Heidelberg Catechism and Belgic Confession are Reformation documents adopted by the Reformed churches as setting forth the Bible's teaching concerning the fundamental doctrines of the faith, including the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Because the churches of the Protestant Reformation came out of the Roman Catholic Church, and because the Reformed churches themselves are distinguished from the Lutheran churches, it is important that we know where we stand over against the teachings found in those churches as well.

The dispute concerning the Lord's Supper centered on the nourishment that the sacrament provides.

Our Spiritual Feast

Christ instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for our spiritual nourishment. We must approach the table in that under-

Rev. Key is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hull, Iowa.

Previous article in this series: August 2007, p. 444.

standing. When we eat and drink spiritually, we enjoy spiritual nourishment by that means. The question today is how.

How are we nourished at the Lord's table?

What does it mean that the Lord's Supper is our spiritual feast? Fundamentally it is a question that concerns the grace of God. How is the Lord's Supper a means of grace? That is essentially the question. And it is certainly our desire, it must be our desire, that we receive grace in this spiritual feast.

Scripture makes plain that the spiritual nourishment that must be ours is very similar to what happens in our physical life.

In our physical life we eat and drink. We must. We can't live without food and drink. And because God has given us a physical body, that which we eat is physical food. God places on our tables food and drink. In that food and drink are all the nutrients necessary for the sustenance of our earthly life. But if all we do is look at that food, it does us no good. There must also be the physical activity in which we eat and drink.

Still more, our bodies must be functioning properly so that when we eat and drink with our mouth, that food is also assimilated into our bodies. Not only must that food go down and be digested, but the body must also transform that food by the complex process of metabolism, so that the nutrients are put to good use by the body, either energizing vital functions or in fact changing into our very body and into our very blood.

What happens in our physical life is simply a mirror of what must happen in the spiritual sense of the word.

Spiritually too it is necessary that we receive nourishment in order to live. We *need* that. We cannot live without it! I refer to you who have spiritual life.

By the wonder of regeneration the Spirit of Christ has given us

life. Regeneration is not physical. It is not even psychological. It is spiritual. God by His Holy Spirit changes our natural life of spiritual death into a living spiritual existence! We are born again! You must be born again, Jesus said in John 3:3, if you are to see the kingdom of God.

But because of that regeneration, we, as newborn babes, must have spiritual nourishment. Our spiritual life can no more be sustained without spiritual food than we can live without food in the physical sense.

What is that spiritual food that we must have for life everlasting?

Christ, Our Spiritual Food

The spiritual nourishment necessary for our spiritual life is *Christ*. That, in one word, is the spiritual food necessary for our spiritual life. We must eat and drink *Christ*.

In John 6 we read of the discourse of Jesus following His miracle of feeding about five thousand. He set Himself forth as the Bread of life. And in verses 53-56 we read: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

That is also what Paul wrote in the opening verses of I Corinthians 10: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; (now notice) And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink."

Notice that. He speaks of Israel, the people of God, eating *spiritual meat* and drinking *spiritual drink*. And so he explains: "*for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*"

Even in the Old Testament, God's people ate and drank of *Christ*. He is, in one word, the spiritual food necessary for our spiritual life.

What does that mean?

Think of what the Bible teaches as it reveals Christ to us. What does Scripture say concerning Christ?

It says, *Christ is righteousness*. And you and I must have righteousness. We can have it only *in Him*.

Christ is holiness. And that holiness we must also have. *Christ is that*. We must, therefore, partake of Him.

All *knowledge* of God in the spiritual sense of the Word is to be found in Christ. He, after all, is the revelation of the God of our salvation. So He said in Luke 10:22: "All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." The same idea is expressed by the inspired John in his gospel account, John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." *Christ is true knowledge*. In Him alone is the knowledge of God as the God of our salvation. And, as we read in John 17:3, that is life eternal. We must be partakers of that knowledge.

Still more, *Christ is wisdom*. And we must have wisdom—true, spiritual wisdom. That is essential for our spiritual life. *All the blessings of salvation are in Christ*.

We can sum it up as Christ says of Himself, "*I am life.*" He *is* life. And you and I have no spiritual

1. Peter Martyr Vermigli, *The Peter Martyr Library*, Volume 7 (Kirksville, Missouri, Truman State University Press, 2000), p. 125.

2. Ibid.


life apart from Him. That is exactly what He said in John 6. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath

eternal life."

The deeper question involved here is the question of how Christ is present in the Lord's Supper.

When we eat of the bread and

drink of the wine of the Lord's table, how is that eating and drinking Christ?

To that question we turn our attention in our next article, God willing. 

Marking the Bulwarks of Zion

Prof. Herman Hanko

Modern Heresies: Federal Vision Theology (2)

As I noted earlier, the Federal Vision has its roots in the heresy of a conditional covenant. It emphasizes that it is a doctrine that has to do with the covenant, has its roots in covenant theology not only, but defines the nature and essence of the covenant.

No matter what view of the covenant one may take, the doctrine of the covenant has to do with the doctrine of salvation. If the covenant is conditional in its very nature, salvation itself is conditional. This obvious fact is carried to its extreme by those who promote the Federal Vision.

If the covenant is conditional, it is conditional because it is established with more people than are actually saved. And this is what the promoters of the Federal Vision maintain. They take hold of the old covenant conception of William Heyns, developed and promoted by Dr. Klaas Schilder, and carry it

to its logical extreme. Prof. Heyns and Dr. Schilder taught that baptism was a sign and seal of the covenant, and that God established His covenant, therefore, with every baptized child. Thus every child of believers is included in the covenant, fully, and in such a way that all the blessings of the covenant are his.

Dr. Schilder and his followers today do not believe that election ought to be the controlling principle that determines membership in the covenant. They are adamant about separating God's electing determination of His people from the covenant. Dr. Schilder maintains that all born in covenant lines belong to the covenant. The men of the Federal Vision diverge from Schilder on this one point. Here they go beyond Schilder. They take the position that all born within covenant lines are elect, really, fully, completely. They are all elect from eternity, written in the Lamb's book of life, destined for eternal glory, and the objects of God's electing love.

And, because all are elect, all receive in fact, really, fully, and completely, all the blessings of the covenant—which is to say that they receive all the blessings of

salvation. They are regenerated, converted, justified, and sanctified, and are objects of saving grace.

But, because all are not saved, the covenant, with all its blessedness, is conditional. That is, all these blessings will continue to belong to the children of the covenant as long as they fulfill the conditions of the covenant. Should they fail to fulfill the conditions, namely, walk in obedience to God, they will lose their election, their conversion, their sanctification, their justification. A conditional covenant results in a conditional salvation.

This conditional salvation is applied especially to the doctrine of justification. When applied to the doctrine of justification, the result is a doctrine of justification by faith and works. And so we are back where the church was in 1517, for we are back to Roman Catholic theology.

One may object that such a position vindicates the Roman Catholic Church. And so it does. One formerly Protestant author has justified his return to the Roman Catholic Church by an appeal to Shepherd's doctrine of justification by faith and works.

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

Previous article in this series: July 2007, p. 419.

One may object that the Reformers unanimously repudiated Rome's heresy and agreed that justification was by faith alone. The promoters of the Federal Vision are not deterred by an appeal to the Reformers.

One may object that Luther called the truth of justification alone the standing or falling of the church. It makes no difference. One promoter of this heresy simply wrote Luther off as wrong.

One may object that our Reformed confessions and the Westminster Confessions are all agreed that justification is by faith alone. That too makes no difference. The confessions are dismissed as being wrong or, at best, being inadequate on this point.

With a cavalier wave of the hand, the entire tradition of the Reformation is dismissed.

One may object that Scripture is clear, especially Paul in his epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, but this too is argued away.

But here we come to another aspect of the heresy of the Federal Vision. Paul is clear, unmistakably clear, that justification is by faith alone. Something must be done about Paul. And so what is called "A New Perspective on Paul" is promoted. The leading figure in this effort to get rid of Paul is a British theologian by the name of N. T. Wright. He has invented the novel theory that Paul was not writing against justification by faith and works, but was rather combating a Jewish heresy that sought salvation in the works of the law. Paul's fierce denunciation of justification by faith and works, as well as his repeated insistence that justification is by faith alone, was simply a refutation of Jewish legalism. James in his epistle sets the balance right when James tells us that both Abraham and Rahab were justified by works.

This is, admittedly, a brief summary of the teachings of the Federal Vision, but it is sufficient

to give us an idea of the extent of the heresy.

The Wrong of the Federal Vision

The church of Jesus Christ is, with the rise of this heresy, confronted with a vicious and unprincipled attack against the truth of sovereign and particular grace, which rivals in danger anything the church has yet confronted in her entire history. This assessment is legitimate in light of the fact that it has come under the guise of the Reformed faith, and in this disguise has deceived many within Reformed and Presbyterian churches.

The so-called new perspective on Paul is born out of a higher critical view of Scripture that is destructive of God's Word and insidiously deceptive. But this "new perspective" is so critical to the whole system, that should it be proved to be wrong, the whole system crumbles in pieces. Paul has to be reinterpreted by some sort of exegetical legerdemain in order to give credence to the view.

We reject its higher critical view of Scripture as heresy.

The true children of the Reformation will be appalled at the arrogant dismissal of the teachings of all the Reformers. In such a dismissal of these men whom God used to reform the church, there is a pride and conceit that staggers the imagination. Theological pygmies stand in the shadows of the giants of the sixteenth century and criticize them for being so tall.

But worse: the way is paved for a return to Rome, something many Protestants have already done. If justification is not by faith alone, then the church can find no reason not to apologize to Rome for the sins of the sixteenth century and to rush back into the embrace of the pope. But let it not be forgotten: along the way back to Rome, one will have to pass by the graves of countless martyrs who died excruciatingly painful deaths in their commitment to the truth of sovereign grace. These graves

will be the silent accusers of all who repudiate their glorious heritage.

To adopt the views of the Federal Vision is to repudiate every one of the five points of Calvinism, points laid down carefully by the great Synod of Dordt. For a particular, sovereign, and efficacious decree of election, the defenders of the heresy of the Federal Theology opt for the damnable Arminian doctrine of a universal and conditional election. For the doctrine of total depravity, the Federal Vision people teach that man has a free will and can do works by his own power and the power of a free will. For particular redemption, we are now confronted with the age-old heresy of a universal atonement. If all baptized children have salvation in fact, this is because Christ died for them all. The church has fought for a particular atonement in vain if these views are accepted. Instead of irresistible grace, we are told that grace is resistible, for all baptized children receive grace, but some successfully resist it. And no longer can the believer find refuge in the doctrine of the preservation of the saints, for he may once have been elect, once regenerated, once justified; but he has no guarantee that he shall remain such. All hangs on his own obedience and good works.

God's everlasting covenant of grace, the one unifying truth of the gospel and the over-arching doctrine of salvation, becomes a mere conditional agreement dependent on our faithfulness and willingness to fulfill the conditions of it.

Why do so many want such poison pap instead of the rich and nourishing foods of God's sovereign and particular grace? The only answer can be that they are enemies of the gospel. Let the righteous beware, and let them thank God every day for the truth of His own everlasting covenant of grace.



The Prophecy of Malachi

Covenant Faithfulness and Unfaithfulness (18)

The Sixth Disputation, Chapters 3:13-4:3 (continued)

4:1. For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

There can be no doubt that this prophecy of the destruction of the wicked is a reference to the end of the world and the eternal state that follows for the wicked. It must refer to that great event, because its opposite, the salvation and blessedness described in chapter 3:16, 17, refers to the end and to eternity. This is part of “the day” that will be for those who fear the Lord, a day of salvation and bliss, but for those who do wickedly a day of terror. It is the day so often referred to in Scripture that ends the long history of this world.

Nevertheless, we must remember that almost all prophecy has a continuing or successive fulfillment and that the day of the Lord referred to here includes the whole New Testament age. It is described as a day because on God’s calendar it is the short time in which He finishes all His work and cuts

it short in righteousness (Rom. 9:28).

In that day the prophecies of the Old Testament have an ongoing fulfillment, so that this Word of God is fulfilled throughout the New Testament. Moore describes it well:

It is true that the deluge, the destruction of Sodom, Babylon and Jerusalem, and all subsequent visitations of God’s wrath, were days of the Lord, and in each one of them the proud and evil-doers were as chaff. But as each one did not exhaust these ominous predictions, so all together have not yet met the full reach of the terrors, which will only be done in that future day in which the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the drama of earth shall be ended. All previous judgments were but reddening of the dawn, that betokened the coming, but did not unfold the terrible brightness of that awful day. As the prophet in this verse gazes upon its distant rising, he exclaims, as if in breathless emotion, It comes! burning like a furnace! the wicked proud are chaff! the day burns them! There is something very forcible in these abrupt exclamations, as if the prophet was elevated on some mount of vision, and actually beheld this terrible pomp come rolling up the distant skies, on its reddening pathway of fire and blood.¹

Thus Peter speaks of blood and fire on the day of Pentecost, and Jesus of judgment in connection

with His cross. Thus it is that the proud are not just living under the threat of judgment but in the midst of judgments that are already beginning and increasing as the final hour approaches. They live in a world that is already on fire with the conflagration that will finally consume it (cf. II Pet. 3:7). Already now before the judgments of the Lord they are as chaff, as the recent disasters in Southeast Asia have shown.

Not only shall they themselves, the wicked and the proud, be consumed, but that day, as the prophet reminds us, will leave them neither root nor branch. “The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (II Pet. 3:10). Even the elements shall melt with fervent heat and “the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved” (II Pet. 3:12). Nothing will be left to show that wicked men ever lived on this planet. All their vaunted works and culture will be burned and destroyed as a bit of hay flares and is gone in the fire.

Then, too, it will be evident that there is a difference between the righteous and the wicked, a difference that is the result of God’s gracious work upon and in His people. When all is consumed, they shall endure. When all is destroyed, they shall stand. When the wicked call for the mountains and the hills to fall on them and hide them from the face and wrath of the Lamb, they will with uplifted heads and outstretched arms be waiting for their redemption.

Rev. Hanko is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Lynden, Washington.

Previous article in this series: July 2007, p. 426.

2. *But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.*

Those judgments of Malachi 4:1 are part of the coming of the Sun of righteousness. The fire is the fire of His holiness (Heb. 12:29), and the brightness of that day the brightness of His coming. What a contrast the verse presents, therefore. Instead of destruction, healing; instead of judgment, righteousness.

That this Sun of righteousness is Christ cannot be doubted. Moore says: "We cannot think that the prophet here meant to predict Christ personally,"² but he is wrong. Even those who prepared the KJV, as the capitalization of the word "Sun" shows, understood Malachi to be giving a specific prophecy of the coming of Christ. And when Jesus calls Himself the light of the world (John. 8:12) and is seen by John on Patmos with His countenance "as the sun shineth in his strength" (Rev. 1:16), we know it is He of whom Malachi speaks. Because He is the Sun of righteousness, there will be no need of sun or moon in His everlasting heavenly kingdom (Rev. 21:23).

Christ is called the Sun of righteousness because, by bringing in everlasting righteousness, He brings light into our dark night of sin and dispels the darkness of our unbelief, ignorance, and depravity. He is called the Sun because His righteousness is righteousness of God, and shines with the glory of God. His coming is described as the rising of the sun because when He comes the awful night of sin will be over, and the darkness of unbelief and the lie will be banished forever.

Here again those who wait for Him are described as those who fear His name. They know how great He is—that without Him we sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. They know who He is as

the Son of God: the one in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. They know what He does in God's name and by God's power in order to save those whom God loved, and, knowing, they tremble in adoring awe and humble reverence.

That He as the Sun is described with wings is an allusion to the apparent movement of the sun as it "flies" through the heavens, and in His case to His swift coming. Like the sun He brings light, the light of life, and with it spiritual healing and peace, for just as no man can live without the light of the sun, so cannot we live without His light. Apart from Him we know only pining sickness and death.

The joy that shall be ours is described in terms of the young calves running and leaping in the fields when first released after the long confinement of winter. Moore calls it "a striking image of the joy that the righteous shall feel after being kept so long waiting for deliverance."³

4:3. *And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.*

Not only shall the righteous see the destruction of their enemies, the ungodly, but they shall have a part in their judgment and destruction. They shall sit in judgment with Christ over their enemies (Jude 14). That day of judgment is also presented as a day of victory, for those whom they shall judge are not only the ungodly but their enemies. The victory will be Christ's, but will also be theirs with Him. It will be a complete victory, for every wrong shall be righted, every tear avenged.

It is this promise that gives heart and patience to God's people as they live out their lives here and suffer for the kingdom's sake. They know, though the ungodly seem not to know, that there is a God of judgment (chap. 2:17) and

that He judges in perfect righteousness.

The Belgic Confession, in the article from which we previously quoted, expresses the very same sentiments as Malachi and shows how the word of God here in Malachi 4:3 is a comfort to God's people:

And therefore the consideration of this judgment is justly terrible and dreadful to the wicked and ungodly, but most desirable and comfortable to the righteous and elect: because then their full deliverance shall be perfected, and there they shall receive the fruits of their labor and trouble which they have borne. Their innocence shall be known to all, and they shall see the terrible vengeance which God shall execute on the wicked, who most cruelly persecuted, oppressed, and tormented them in this world (Art. 37).

This recurring emphasis on the coming judgment in the last chapters of Malachi is an important part of the message of the book, for it is the final revelation of God's faithfulness to His elect and of the unfaithfulness of many.

The Conclusion: Chapter 4:4-6

4:4. *Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.*

The last three verses of the book form a kind of conclusion to the whole and are in the form of a double admonition to remember the law of Moses and to look for the coming of Elijah the prophet. The first admonition is a reminder that covenant faithfulness is a matter of obedience to the law of God, and the second admonition a reminder of how this covenant faithfulness would be worked in the

1. T.V. Moore, *A Commentary on Haggai and Malachi*, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974, pp. 170, 171.

2. Moore, p. 172.

3. Moore, p. 172.

hearts of God's people, that is, by the work of God's messenger.

Many modern so-called scholars do not believe that these concluding verses were written by Malachi, but were added later. There is, of course, no proof for this, and it reflects the prevailing unbelief of modern Bible scholarship, which does not see Scripture as the Word of God. In fact, even a child can see the similarity between verse 5 and chapter 3:1 and can see therefore that these verses not only belong to Malachi but are an important part of the book.

In seeking to understand the admonition to remember the law, we should remember that the Mosaic law was at the heart of God's covenant with Israel. It is so described in Deuteronomy 4:13. All the sins that Malachi admonishes were not only violations of the law, therefore, but of God's covenant with Israel.

We understand that the covenant is God's, and that the making or breaking of that covenant does not in any way depend on the obedience or disobedience of His people. He makes and He keeps

His covenant without any help from them. Nevertheless, it is by their obedience that they show that they are God's friends and that they have a place in His covenant. It is impossible to do so in any other way but the way of obedience. The law, therefore, which shows the way of obedience, is part of God's covenant with them, an essential part.

The law is referred to in three ways, not only as law, but also as statutes and judgments. Each of these words has a slightly different but important emphasis. The word "law" emphasizes the fact that the commandments of God are a "way." It is so translated in many passages. The idea, then, is not only that the law encompasses one's whole life, but that it is only in the "way" of the law that covenant fellowship and friendship with God are possible.

The other two words emphasize respectively the permanent character of the law (statutes) and the important truth that the law is not only a way of life but a code according to which all shall be judged. God is saying by these

three words: "Walk in my ways. In spite of the changing circumstances of your lives, I do not change, and this is the only way that you can know and love me. Do not forget that you must stand before me someday and give an account of what you have done in keeping or not keeping my law. Those who walk in my ways shall experience the eternal healing that my Messenger will bring when He comes. Those of you who do not shall be as ashes under His feet."

Always God's judgment is according to works. That does not mean that works are of merit and that we earn our way into His favor, but works are nevertheless the evidence of whether or not we belong to Christ and are among the sons of Levi who have been purified by Him, or whether we are among the proud and impenitent who say, either by words or conduct, that it is vain to serve God. Those, therefore, who by grace keep His commandments will live forever before Him and enjoy Him into eternity. Those who do not will be banished from His presence.



Understanding the Times

Mr. Cal Kalsbeek

Issachar vs. the Scribes, Revisited (4)

"And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment."

I Chronicles 12:32

Mr. Kalsbeek is a teacher in Covenant Christian High School and a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Walker, Michigan.

Previous article in this series: June 2007, p. 394.

In the former articles written under the title, "Issachar vs. the Scribes, Revisited," the point has been made that modern-day Issachar should look for and be able to identify bias in news reporting, but that *media bias* does not necessarily mean *media deception*. Since the writing of those articles, Joel Belz has written an article in the April 21, 2007 issue of *World* magazine under the title "Seven big lies" in which he argues that the major media is attempting to deceive us on at least seven sig-

nificant, specific issues. In this article we will very briefly discuss those seven areas: evolution, global warming, abortion, homosexuality, stem-cell research, Islam, and pluralism. In connection with each we will include what Belz wrote in his April 21 column and in some instances present other source material and commentary.

In his introduction Belz inquires:

So why in the world do we keep listening to our nation's ma-

jor media? Why do the nation's big newspapers, radio and television networks keep getting a pass—when day after day and night after night they keep hurling king-sized lies our way? Just to remind us how gullible we all tend to be, here's a short list of where the big media regularly get it not just slightly skewed but exactly backwards. Here are seven Big Lies we all are subjected to virtually all the time:¹

Evolution

Belz writes concerning evolution, "Amazingly, according to polls, the masses—after at least two generations of propaganda—aren't convinced. By majorities of at least 2-1, they still think 'God' had something to do with where everything came from. But evolution remains a basic assumption of the elites who control the media. The evidence? Almost never will you hear an argument. What you almost always get instead is an 'expert.'"

What you also will not hear from the mainstream media is anything about the relationship between some of the ideas of Charles Darwin and some of the Nazi and Communist crimes carried out by the likes of Hitler and Stalin. According to David Noebel their crimes can be traced directly to Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest. Noebel writes, "In fact, Hitler criticized Christianity because it was in rebellion against nature! Nature being Darwin's theory of natural selection, which works every hour of every day to bring about earth's 'favored races.'"²

Nor will you ever be told that the *complete* title of Darwin's famous book is *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*. And this for obvious reasons: Darwin's racism might tend to lead one to question his revered theory.

Of further interest with respect to the theory of evolution is the current tendency of some to ques-

tion the political qualifications of those who reject it. Way back in 1986 a man by the name of Gorman wrote: "My issue is apes. The apes are my relatives. I'm proud to have them, and I don't intend to vote for anybody who isn't related to them, or is ashamed to admit it. I have one question for each presidential candidate, and I think it's a question everyone should want to know the answer to: 'Are you kin to the apes or not?' Once we know, we'll know how to vote."³

More recently, May of 2007 to be exact, Tom Teepen pontificated,

"It ought to count as a national embarrassment not just that the 10 Republican presidential aspirants were asked in their first debate whether they believe in evolution but, worse, that the question was called for. And worst of all, that three testified to their disbelief.

So far has the Republican Party fallen into a sink of anti-intellectualism. Indeed, into fantasy. You might as well ask the candidates whether they believe in ghosts, fairies and calorie-free doughnuts.

One doesn't believe in or not believe in evolution, any more than one believes in physics. Evolution simply is."⁴

Global Warming

Concerning global warming Belz directs us to his column in an earlier issue of *World* where he suggests that those "global-warming folks" keep hurting their own cause, and weakening their own argument by exaggerating their evidence and attempting to bully their opponents by insisting that the debate on global warming is finished and it's now time for action.

Belz points out, however, that the "global warming folks" can't get their act together on what they are predicting.

...All the current hullabaloo stems from a series of four reports coming this year from the "Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change," a UN-sponsored group of scientists from around the world. But that very IPCC is notable for having quietly adjusted one of its main predictions earlier this year: In 2001, the IPCC was saying that within the next few decades we should expect to watch the oceans of the world rise by as much as 35 inches. In this year's IPCC reports, that forecast has been reduced to just 16.5 inches. And both those prognostications are supposed to be taken seriously in the context of Al Gore's warning in his famous movie that the oceans are likely to rise by no less than 10 feet!

Is global warming real? Almost certainly. Is there room for honest skepticism about its extent, its causes, and the best ways to counter it? Both the volume and the tone of the experts suggest they want to allow no such room.

And that's just the point. When voices get raised, when the facts get exaggerated, when you're told repeatedly that the discussion is already over—that's a good time to say in a measured tone: "Wait a minute. I still have a few more questions I'd like to ask."⁵

Abortion

Major media lies about abortion. Belz writes, "Just imagine 45 million people dying from any other cause over the last 34 years since the *Roe v. Wade* decision—and then avoid painstaking media analysis. Where are the truth-seekers about the connection between those 45 million deaths and the Social Security crisis? Or truth-seekers exploring a possible connection

1. Joel Belz, "Seven big lies," *World* April 21, 2007: 6.

2. David Noebel, "Darwinian Fairytales," *The Journal* March 2007: 4.

3. James Gorman, "Would You Vote for a Man Who Says He's no Kin to an Ape?," *Discover* September, 1986: 27.

4. Tom Teepen, "Evolution Question was Embarrassing," *The Wichita Eagle* May 30, 2007.

5. Joel Belz, "Protesting too much," *World* March 24/31, 2007:10.

between those 45 million deaths and our nation's need now to allow a steady stream of problematic immigrants? Where are the truth-tellers who will show—on TV—what really happens during an abortion?"

We would inquire further, where are the truth-tellers who with drumbeat consistency browbeat us with: "a mother has a right to control what happens to her own body," when it comes to informing us of the research from immunology that demonstrates that the pre-born child clearly is *not* part of the mother's body.

...(T)he most recent work in humans has established beyond doubt that IDO (indoleamine2,3-dioxygenase) is a specific mechanism at the mother-child interface for preventing the mother's immune system from rejecting her child....

The research also highlights the fact that the child's individuality—its unique genetic makeup—exists from the moment of conception. At conception the new person's genetic instructions come together for the first time—in a single cell called the zygote. But it is not until day 6 that IDO production kicks in. Why day 6? Well, day 6 is a preparation day for day 7, when the new embryo first attaches itself to its mother's womb so that it can draw nutrients from its mother's bloodstream. This is exactly the time when the mother's killer T cells would normally begin to attack and reject it—if not for the amazing protection already provided by the baby's IDO production on the previous day.⁶

The usual worshipers of science ignore the science when it interferes with their agenda.

Instead of scientific truth we receive lies like that of the April 9, 2006 *New York Times Magazine* cover story about Carmen Climaco. In that article freelance writer Jack Hitt castigates anti-abortion laws of El Salvador by informing *Times* readers how Climaco received a 30-

year prison term for aborting an 18-week-old fetus. Hitt's lies were later exposed by a pro-life group when they reported the forensic examination results concerning the death of Climaco's child. Those results showed that in actuality it was a full-term normal delivery, and that the official cause of death was asphyxia by strangulation. According to columnist Michelle Malkin, the *Times* "refused to acknowledge Jack Hitt's false reporting." She goes on to suggest: "The next time you hear a *New York Times* columnist defend the paper's commitment to accuracy, fairness and ethical standards, give them two words: Carmen Climaco."⁷

Homosexuality

Concerning major media reporting on homosexuality Belz asks a simple question: "Why no serious pursuit of why homosexuals have a life span 20 years shorter than the general population?"

How many people in this country know that? How many know that the nation's blood banks will not receive the blood of those who have engaged in homosexual activity? Yet homosexual practices are portrayed in public school sex-education classes to unsuspecting children as healthy alternatives in lifestyle. One might think their dogmatic commitment to Darwin's concept of "survival of the fittest" would trump this culture of death. Instead, commitment to it is leading to a new definition of the very foundation of society: the family.

The major media's refusal to tell the truth about the homosexual lifestyle is having serious consequences, and it makes them responsible for placing more and more members of society at risk to its dreaded diseases.

Stem-cell Research

Joel Belz's list of "Seven big lies" of the media includes also the media's treatment of the stem-cell research controversy:

Almost every day on the news, you'll hear references to conservatives' opposition to "stem-cell research." I'm offering a free lifetime subscription to *World* to anyone who can identify a prominent conservative who holds to such a point of view. The debate, of course, is about *embryonic* (emphasis ck) stem-cell research—a practice that requires the discarding of early human embryos. The mainstream media so often and so consistently confuse the two practices that their basic honesty has to be called into question.⁸

Furthermore, when it comes to legislation for the public funding of embryonic stem-cell research, the media consistently makes it appear that the president opposes the research. In actuality it would appear that he is not opposed to embryonic stem-cell research as much as he does not want to offend his conservative political base by signing a bill that would approve the use of taxpayer dollars to *fund* the research.

Islam

Concerning the media's "big lie" about Islam, Belz posits, "Mainstream media, like mainstream politicians (including President Bush), dance dishonestly around this one—and for understandable reasons. But isn't it a hallmark of serious journalism that the truth must be pursued no matter the cost?"⁹

With this we concur. Though Belz does not delineate the "understandable reasons," no doubt one is fear of violent reprisals from believers in Islam. For further commentary on these reasons and the mainstream media's response to Islam (or lack thereof), we refer the reader to *Standard Bearer* volume 82 (p. 106) and the article titled "Western Responses to Islam: The Secular Response."

Before we move on however, we should consider briefly one specific example of the media's non-

response to Islam. In May of 2007 a poll of American Muslims was conducted. The results showed that of American Muslims less than 30 years of age 26% believe that suicide bombings are sometimes acceptable to defend their religion and 60% are not sure that Arabs were involved in the attack on 9/11. While it's true that caution must be exercised when considering poll results, as far as the mainstream media is concerned this was a non-story. One would think such poll results would have generated a flurry of investigative reporting, but, alas, nothing.

Pluralism

Pluralism is the last of the "Seven big lies" of the media that

Belz identifies. He writes: "Assumed by all elites to be an indicator of a mature and virtuous society, pluralism never seems to face the serious scrutiny of the media. Nor does the public get much help exploring exactly what pluralism, multiculturalism, and similar so-called qualities ultimately mean. Basic test: How do the media determine which movements can be mocked and ridiculed, and which ones can't?"¹⁰ A follow-up question: Why are media-perceived inconsistencies of Christianity immediately exposed, condemned, and laughed at, while those of Islam ignored?

Belz's Conclusion

Belz concludes "Seven big lies"

with a plea: "On all these issues—and they're not tiny, insignificant social questions—we're not asking that the media agree with us. All we want is an honest discussion. So long as such a conversation is regularly denied, why should we not conclude that someone actually means to be lying to us?"¹¹

Good question, Joel! 

6. Alexander Williams, "Abortion argument unravels," *Creation* Sept.-Nov., 2005: 18.

7. Michelle Malkin, "The Times' false abortion story," *The Grand Rapids Press* Jan. 6, 2007: A10.

8. Joel Belz, "Seven big lies," *World* April 21, 2007: 6.

9. Belz 6.

10. Belz 6.

11. Belz 6.

When Thou Sittest in Thine House

Abraham Kuyper

With Contentment (2)

"Godliness with satisfaction is great gain," wrote the apostle to Timothy (1, 6:6, Dutch version).

Notice carefully the word "satisfaction." Even as the Dutch word for "taking satisfaction in a thing," it has the meaning in it of the word *enough*. Not only in our language, but also in the original language of Holy Scripture.

He who has "enough," is satisfied, and tastes "pleasure."

And godliness brings you this "satisfaction," because it makes you believe that God appointed you your lot in life, that your environment is of His making, that the

work in which you engage is the calling given you of Him, and thus that in this your existence, because God has so apportioned it unto you, there must be enough to satisfy your heart, provided you but know how to get it out of it.

He who always looks for something else than he has; wants another house than the one in which he lives; another environment than that wherein God has placed him; another garment than what he wears; another calling than that wherein he works, is conscious at last of a *dislike* in his heart against that house, that garment, that calling, that environment. He becomes peevish and irritable with respect to it. He is unable to appreciate all this and utterly incapable of getting the relative good out of it. He draws poison from it and cannot gather honey out of it, because he sees nothing but thistles round about him and nowhere flowers.

But he who faces all this differently, think and knows: This is the life I have to live. These are the persons from among whom I must form my circle. This is the house in which I must be happy. This is the work in which I must find pleasure.... So he looks away from other and greater things, fixes his look upon what he has, and gradually comes to discover how great a treasure, and ever increasing a wealth there hides in that ordinary life which God included in it but which he failed to observe.



We Christians of the Netherlands understand this, because to us above all it was given to bring this costly gift of the quiet common home-life to a rarely high development.

In the height of our spiritual life, our Christian people did not lend themselves to foreign or un-

Reprinted from When Thou Sittest In Thine House, by Abraham Kuyper, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1929. Used by permission of Eerdmans Publishing Co. (The first part of this chapter on contentment appeared in the June 2007 issue, p. 399.)

common matters, but applied themselves to develop as richly as possible the home-life, the common calling, the everyday labor, the altogether ordinary life-circles, to cultivate taste and mind for it, and to abound in praise and thanksgiving for the uncommon treasure of both material and spiritual happiness, which is found in just ordinary human life.

Even foreigners have admired the life of our fathers, poets have celebrated it in song, and artists have lauded it in our national character, that Calvinism gave rise to that glorious, and to this day world-renowned school of painters, who most always brought upon canvas the ordinary life, and as by magic made it expressive of rich satisfaction and inward delight.

And that, in connection with this, the preacher every time puts eating and drinking in the foreground is no fault, but must be so.

For "eating and drinking" is the *family meal*, and that family meal, especially at midday, is in sooth the *crown of domestic life*. Then all come together. Together they enjoy each other's company. They are conscious of their oneness as a family. Together they enjoy

the fruit of their common labor. Together they praise and give thanks, together they pray and supplicate. And strengthened by this delight shared in common, each returns to the rich task of the common life.



And does this search after "satisfaction" in everyday life work injury to the growth of spiritual life?

Forsooth, when this inward "satisfaction" was the hallmark of our national character, spiritual life among us was strongest.

This very sobriety of everyday life fosters piety and honor, and holds the young man in bit and bridle.

It distracts less, and encourages the soul to turn in more upon itself. By less diversion outside it *creates* time and cultivates taste for sound literature. It spreads a sheen of satisfaction over every member of the family. And in this quiet atmosphere provides what is required for a *life of prayer*.

We do not even admit that that over-stimulated spiritual sense, which always seeks spiritual *extras* and pursues piety outside and enjoys nothing spiritually except

something special attends it, is of a higher cast.

On the contrary, this spirit of detachment is less pious. Spiritually it leads to over-stimulation, and renders the ordinary means, ordained of God for our edification, insufficient.


Spiritually too one then becomes nauseous of common bread, and always asks for what a proverb calls "crusty pastries."

Healthy at heart is only such a life in which the *ordinary is enough* for us, and thereby all of life is made to be one rich satisfaction.

Then there is happiness, and thanks well up in the heart. Then the usual mood of the heart is that of glorifying God. Then there is courage of life and strength of life to bear the cross, which each day lays upon us.

Then there come days indeed when we go from home to the country or seaside.

But always such that, when presently we come back, we feel, we realize again, that being on the wing was good for a few weeks, but that our real life, and therewith our real happiness in life, is hid of God in just our ordinary home.

If only in the home we might but learn to *find it*. 

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

Young Adult Activities

The "News" thanks Rev. R. Smit and a young lady who attended this retreat for providing the following summary for the readers of the SB.

The Young Adults of Immanuel PRC in Lacombe, AB, Canada hosted a retreat from June 25 to June 28 in Nordeg, Alberta. The theme of the retreat was "The Voice of God in Creation," based on Psalm 29. Psalter number 404

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

served as the theme song. There were in attendance 24 young adults from at least 11 churches from our denomination and one young adult from New Zealand.

Two discussion groups were featured during the retreat. The first, led by Rev. J. Marcus, pastor of the First PRC of Edmonton, dealt with the subject, "Stewards of God's Creation"; and the second, led by Rev. R. Smit, pastor of Immanuel PRC, looked at the subject of "Our Mission Fields and Young Adults."

Rev. Marcus gave a speech on Monday night on the topic, "Creation in six 24-hour days, 6000 years ago: Scripture's Indispensable Aid to Interpreting the Evidence of Creation."

On Tuesday, the whole group traveled along the parkway in Banff National Park through the Canadian Rockies to Banff. Once there, the group took a gondola ride to the top of a mountain, which provided spectacular and breathtaking views of the city of Banff and surrounding mountains.

Rev. Smit gave a speech on Wednesday night on the topic, "The Voice of God in Creation: Earthly Words of Heavenly Realities." Some of the other daytime activities included floor hockey (a Canadian favorite); hiking to nearby Siffleur Falls with Rev. Marcus; canoeing on Goldeye Lake; fly fishing with Rev. Smit on

Goldeye Lake; quiet walks around Goldeye Lake to hear loons or spot deer; spotting Grizzly bears, elk, moose, mountain sheep, and other wildlife in Banff National Park; evening campfires; the polar bear swim challenge; trying to stay awake into the wee hours of the morning; and many other opportunities for discussions, fellowship, and fun. The accommodations were excellent, the food delicious, and the host young adults were truly hospitable. What a privilege it was as God's children to witness and hear His voice in creation in the light of His Word and to have fellowship together with those of like precious faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Evangelism Activities

The Evangelism Society of the Southeast PRC in Grand Rapids, MI invited members of the West Michigan churches, along with the neighborhood around Southeast, to a program the evening of July 18. Rev. A. Stewart, pastor of our sister church, Covenant PRC in Ballymena, Northern Ireland, along with Rev. A. Spriensma, pastor of the Kalamazoo, MI PRC, but before that, missionary pastor to the Berean PRC in the Philippines, presented information about those churches and the evangelism efforts that have been used there to help spur growth.

The members of the Evangelism Society of First PRC in Grand Rapids, MI sponsored their annual Summer Singspiration at First Church Sunday evening, July 15. There was an hour of audience singing and vocal and instrumental special numbers. An offering was taken for the evangelism work at First.

The Reformed Witness Committee of Hope PRC in Walker, MI, hosted a summer class series on "The Biblical Teaching on Suffering." These classes were held on four Tuesdays in July. Prof. H. Hanko led the classes. Topics talked about were: "The Biblical Idea of Suffering," "The Doctrine of Suffering in the books of Job and

Psalms," and "The Purpose of Suffering (1 & 2)."

Congregation Activities

Rev. J. Mahtani, pastor of Bethel PRC in Roselle, IL, brought a group from Bethel to Grand Rapids on July 24 so they could attend the above-mentioned class on suffering that evening at Hope. Plans also called for the group to visit the new RFPA building, our seminary, and our Southwest PRC. The group planned to leave Bethel at noon and return home by midnight.

Through voting, the members of the proposed daughter congregation of the Hull, IA PRC (for the time being, designated Hull II by the "News") have narrowed down the list of church names to the following three: Calvary, Emmanuel, or Zion PRC. July 22 one more ballot was cast to determine which of those names would be used if Classis West gave the group permission to organize.

The Men's Society of the Loveland, CO PRC sponsored a two-part speech and discussion class this summer on the offices of elder and deacon. Rev. Doug Kuiper addressed the office of deacon on July 16, and Rev. W. Bruinsma the office of elder on July 30.

The council of Faith PRC in Jenison, MI granted permission to the core group to form a daughter congregation and to find a place for worship services. The group has decided to rent the music room at Heritage Christian School in Hudsonville. The first worship service is scheduled to be held there on September 9, the Lord willing.

The congregation of the Wingham, Ontario, Canada PRC was invited to a lecture by Prof. R. Cammenga on July 27. This lecture, sponsored by the Society for PR Education in Wingham, was entitled, "The Aim of Christian Education."

Mission Activities


The dedication program of the new building in Pittsburgh, PA,

being used by our Pittsburgh Mission Fellowship was held July 21. Rev. Bruinsma continued that dedication theme on the following Lord's Day, preaching from I Peter 2:5 on the theme, "A Spiritual House for Spiritual Sacrifices." The Lord willing, this will serve as a good effort to introduce our Pittsburgh Fellowship to people living, especially, in the immediate community of their newly purchased facility.

Minister Activities

Our Doon, IA PRC has extended a call to Rev. M DeVries, pastor of the Wingham, Ontario, PRC, to serve as missionary to the Philippines.

The congregation of the Edgerton, MN PRC voted to extend a call to Candidate C. Spronk to serve as missionary pastor to the Heritage PR Fellowship in Sioux Falls, SD.

We can also report that of the two calls Candidate Spronk was considering (one to Sioux Falls, the other to Peace PRC in Lansing, IL), Mr. Spronk has accepted the call from Peace, thus declining the call from Edgerton and Sioux Falls. 

Announcements

NOTICE

Annual Meeting of the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Thursday, September 27, 7:30 P.M., at Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council and congregation of the Hull PRC wish to express their sincere Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Tom DeJong following the passing of Tom's brother,

ALBERTUS DE JONG.

We find our comfort in God's Word found in Psalm 31:24: "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD."

Rev. Steven Key, Pres.
Ike Uittenbogaard, Asst. Clerk

MAILING ADDRESS CHANGE:

Protestant Reformed Church
of South Holland
P.O. Box 478
South Holland, IL 60473-0478

1894 Georgetown Center Dr.
Jenison, MI 49428-7137

THE STANDARD BEARER

PERIODICAL
Postage Paid at
Jenison,
Michigan

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 22, 2007, our parents,
DUANE and SHIRLEY GUNNINK,
will celebrate 40 years of marriage.

We thank and praise our God for His goodness through these many years and for providing these parents as His means for raising us in godly wisdom and fear. We pray that our parents may continue to experience His blessing for many years to come and may rejoice in God's blessing upon them, their children, and their grandchildren.

"But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).

✿ Dan and Shelley VanDyke

Jeff, Dylan, Jared, McKenna

✿ Kevin and Pam Gunnink

Brandon, Brianna, Allisa, Elliot

✿ Tracy and John Heys

Dustin, Randy, Cheyenne, Callie

✿ Jason and Jodi Gunnink

Danielle, Kelly

✿ Aaron and Erin Gunnink

Drew, Cristyn, Laura

✿ Carrie and Steve Huizinga

✿ Heidi and Justin Griess

✿ Rebecca Gunnink

Caledonia, Michigan

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The consistory and congregation of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland express Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Holleman, Mr. and Mrs. Andy Birkett, and Mr. and Mrs. Steve Huizenga and families in the sudden death of their daughter, sister, and aunt,

SUSAN KAY HOLLEMAN.

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).

Rev. Allen Brummel, President
Gysbert VanBaren, Clerk

Evangelism Conference

Sponsored by the

Heritage Protestant Reformed Fellowship
on September 22

9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

Oaks Hotel and Convention Center
3300 W Russel St, Sioux Falls, SD.

Ready to Bear Witness of Christ

"The Role of Individual Believers"

Rev. Jason Kortering

"Evangelism: How and How Not to"

Rev. Ronald VanOverloop

"Preparing Ourselves
as Witnesses of Christ"

Rev. Steven Key

"Excited to Testify of the Reformed Faith"

Rev. David Overway

There will be no fee for attending the conference, but we request a donation for the lunch that will be provided. If you plan to attend, please send an e-mail to heritageprf@sio.midco.net or call Gaylen Te Slaa at 605-338-2370.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Doon Young Adult Bible Society expresses Christian sympathy to fellow members Keith and Amy Zevenbergen following the death of Keith's mother,

MRS. VERA ZEVENBERGEN.

May they be comforted by God's Word in Psalm 18:2: "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength in whom I will trust; my buckler and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

Rev. David Overway, President
Jill DeBoer, Secretary

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee" (Genesis 17:7).

Our parents,

JIM and BARB HUIZINGA,

celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on June 16, 2007. We, as children and grandchildren, give thanks to God for the years that He has given to them in marriage. It is our prayer that He will bless them with many more years together.

✿ Michael and Shari Bosveld

Jared, Annica, Katelyn, Justin, Joshua,
Emma

✿ Brad and Julie Schwarz

Elyssa, Taylor, Zachary

✿ Joel and Barb Vink

Allyson, Meghan, Ethan

✿ Shon and Brenda Griess

Jesse, Amber, Quenton, Anthony

✿ Susann Huizinga

✿ Tom and Kristin Huizinga

✿ Sara Huizinga

✿ Laura Huizinga Grand Rapids, Michigan

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

It is with humble and grateful hearts that we thank God for blessing our parents,
GERRIT and MARTHA HOLSTEGE,
with 60 years of marriage on August 20.

We are thankful for the love and guidance they have given to us throughout the years. They have always been a wonderful example to us, teaching us to be thankful in all things and leading us to the cross and Christ crucified. It is our prayer that God will continue to bless them and our family in the time we have together. Psalm 100:5: "For the LORD is good, his mercy is everlasting and his truth endureth to all generations."

✿ Gary and DaVonna Holstege

Mical, Nathan, Ross

✿ Doug and Mary Jane Prince

Hilary

✿ Allen Holstege

✿ Don and Nancy Vanderlest

Russell and Nicole Thrasher and Aiden

Dan and Rachel Vanderlest

Justin, Alex

✿ Joyce Holstege

✿ Dave and Sharon Kraker

Jared, Tyler, Austin

Hudsonville, Michigan

Reformed Witness Hour

September 2007

Date	Topic	Text
September 2	"Christian Education Is Covenant Education"	Isaiah 38:19
September 9	"Marriage Is Given by God"	Genesis 2:18-25
September 16	"God's Design for Marriage"	Genesis 2:24
September 23	"God's Rule of Conduct for Marriage"	Colossians 3:12, 13
September 30	"A Dress Code for Marriage"	Colossians 3:12, 13