

The **STANDARD BEARER**



A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

What is happening in the world has helped to prove that there are many throughout the world and in almost every denomination who deeply love the truth and who are eager to join with others of like faith. Often they are lonely, for their numbers are few. Often they are tempted to despair, for there seem to be so few who care. And it is true that the Church of Christ is a hut in a garden of cucumbers, a besieged city, a very small remnant.

If it has pleased God in His great grace to use the *Standard Bearer* to bring these faithful into contact with one another; if God in mercy will continue to use the *Standard Bearer* to give help and leadership and direction to many in different lands, we can only hope fervently and pray that God will continue to keep us faithful, so that this work may be continued.

[See page 321]

MEDITATION

Rejoicing In Manifold Temptations

Rev. M. Schipper

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

James 1:2-4

It is not easy to be and to remain a friend of God!

It is much easier to be a friend of the world!

That's what the epistle of James is all about!

If you are a friend of God, if you would walk in the midst of the world as His friend, you must expect that you will have to endure many trials. You will be beset by many temptations, and your faith will be tested. And when this happens, as it surely will, don't let it discourage you and cause you to lose out of sight your relationship to God; but much rather let it be a matter which you consider a joyful experience, because God is working in you by His Spirit and grace that you may continue as His friend in the world, faithfully, unto the end.

That is the idea of the text!

Rejoicing in manifold temptations!

But isn't it strange that we should be so exhorted? Is it not true that the very thought of temptation should bring sorrow to the heart of one who is a friend of God? What does James have in mind when he exhorts us to count it a matter of pure joy when we fall into divers temptations? What are these manifold temptations of which he speaks?

Surely he cannot have in mind that we count it a matter of pure joy when we fall into sin, that we should rejoice when we fall for the enticement to become friends of the world, that we give in to the lust and passions of a corrupt and evil nature which is always inclined to evil and which easily succumbs to the enticement to sin. Would not James then rather say: Count it a matter of intense sorrow of heart, my brethren, when ye fall for the temptation into sin? Indeed, he would! Surely then he would say: Repent, and turn from your evil way! One who is a friend of God never rejoices when he, being tempted, falls into sin!

Notice, however, James does not say, count it all joy when ye fall into sin; but, count it all joy when ye

fall into divers temptations!

That is quite different!

These temptations are manifold, not so much because they are many in number, but rather that they are of various kinds.

Of them the world is full. And the brethren, the friends of God, are surrounded by them. The world as it develops in godlessness, and as it operates under the power of the prince of darkness, stands in enmity against God. It has also an intense hatred of all who would be the friends of God. And it also has a way of offering to them her friendship, if they will but become the enemies of God. It offers gifts, power, position, honor and glory; it will give you a livelihood for you and your family if you will but deny one of your principles. It will let you buy and sell, if you will only receive on your forehead or on your right hand the token of her friendship. She offers to provide you with culture and art, the benefits of science and invention, the treasures of her wisdom. She will take care of you when you are sick, and provide for you when you are old, — if — you will bow only one knee to her image, and keep quiet about your God. O, that world will go very far with you. It will allow you to worship your God if only you also worship in her temples. She does not want you necessarily to become atheistic; it's perfectly all right to be religious, provided that you remain friendly to her and respect also her religion.

But that is not all!

These manifold temptations are such, that if you would maintain that you remain a friend of God, and have no friendship whatever with the world, then she will tempt you to leave your position by persecuting you to the death. She has the power to close your churches and schools. She can deny you the right to buy and sell. She can make you and your family to go hungry. She can put a sword to your throat, and put you on fiery crosses to burn you to death.

And don't say, this is unthinkable in this day and age! Nor conclude that this may have been true in a more uncivilized age, but would not happen today!

It is precisely this that James has in mind when he speaks of divers temptations. And mark well, what James wrote some twenty centuries ago, yea, what God said then, is still true, and will be true until the end of the world. This is not an isolated passage of Scripture, applicable only to a certain age of martyrs; but all Scripture speaks, and prophetically so, — in the world ye shall have tribulation! The situation in James' day will obtain also today, when you walk in the midst of the world as a friend of God.

Falling into divers temptations implies that you do not seek them. You do not go out into the world with the sickly, mystical, spiritual attitude that would foolishly tempt the world to bring temptations upon you. Rather, because you know your own weaknesses, and your natural inclination to seek the friendship of the world, you fear, and you pray: Father, in heaven, lead me not into temptation! You know that in your own strength you cannot remain standing for a moment. No, you do not go out looking for temptations. But the temptations come upon you and you are surrounded by them. Like the man who was on his way to Jericho, and fell among thieves, so the friends of God find themselves encompassed by manifold temptations. Not only does the world wait to pounce upon the friends of God, but God Himself leads us in His providence and grace in such ways that we are beset by divers temptations.

It is precisely because of this that we ought also to count it a matter of pure joy!

You see, God, our covenant Friend, has a way of making these temptations to work for our salvation!

It is not the intention of the Word of God here to leave us with the impression that it is a matter of joy when we fall into divers temptations. The mere fact that the child of God falls into divers temptations can not of itself be a source of joy, — only of sorrow and pain.

Only when we know that the temptations are a trial of our faith, and that the trying of our faith works patience when it is perfected in us will make us perfect and entire, only then is the falling into divers temptations a matter of joy.

This joy, to which we are exhorted, is not a mere passing emotion which whelms up in our soul for a moment, and then fades away as the passing of a shadow or the lifting of a fog; it is not like the elation of Peter who, when invited by the Lord to walk on the water, rejoiced, but then lost his joy as soon as he saw the waves splashing against his legs. Rather, it is a joy which is founded upon the certain spiritual knowledge that temptations into which we are fallen

are all under God's control, and so wisely governed by Him that they must serve our salvation.

Counting and knowing go together, and in such a way that the latter is the result of the former.

When you count it all joy, you have looked at those temptations in their proper assessment. They are not merely traps set for you by the world to lead you away from God's friendship, but they are ordered by God, our covenant Friend, to work for our good. Counting means to appreciate, place the proper assessment upon, to evaluate correctly the significance, to esteem it a matter of joy when we are surrounded by temptations; and so come to know that He makes the trial of faith to work.

In the temptations it is your faith that is being tested. Your faith which has been implanted in you as a gift of grace, is being activated by the temptations, so that its tried character comes to the fore, in order that God may approve of it.

That faith is sound, and is working well when it produces and works out patience.

Patience is that virtue, according to which we are able to bear up under the weight of the trials and testings. It is a virtue of grace which God gives to His people as the God of patience (Romans 15:5), but of which you never read in the Scripture that He exercises it. He is said to possess the attributes of longsuffering and forbearance, but not patience. This grace, however, He freely gives to His people, and tries them in such a way that their tried faith works out to the end this virtue of patience. And so, they possess a faith that endures, does not go down in the time of testing.

No wonder the child of God can rejoice with great joy when he falls into divers temptations! He knows by experience that the tried faith works out the grace of patience. He has a faith that has the ability to endure not only, but he sees that His God is with him in the trial, working in him both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Consequently also he is desirous that this patience may work itself out to the end, in order that he may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

How differently it all turns out for the children of God than the world planned!

The world with the prince of darkness planned through the temptations to make them its friends, no longer to be friends of God. And when this does not succeed, the world seeks to destroy them. It never seeks for their good, but always for their destruction.

But God, Who is rich in mercy, and who in His eternal love has in His counsel chosen them in Christ Jesus, by Whom also He redeemed them, and by His eternal counsel directs their path unto eternal glory,

so that nothing comes to them by chance — He allows them to fall into divers temptations, in order that His work of grace in them may be perfected. This gives them abundant reason to joy even in the midst of manifold temptations.

Understand well, however, that this joy cannot be our experience when we do not heed the last part of the text.

But let patience have her perfect work!

It you would always experience the joy, based on the fact that you know your patience is the proof of an approved faith, your entire life and walk must be characterized by patience. In the measure your patience fails, in that measure you will not experience this joy. On the other hand, your joy will be full when you do not cease to be patient. If during the trial of your faith, you cease to be a friend of God and make friends with the world, you do not remain steadfast, and your joy is gone. So it ought not to be! Always, so we are exhorted, are we to be patient, that is, bear up under the weight of temptation, watch and pray, struggle constantly that we do not go down, — and the joy will also be constant.

And so, what James says further in the text, will also be true, — that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

That means simply that each moment and throughout our entire life we manifest ourselves as

friends of God, and enemies of the world. It means that it becomes perfectly evident that we are the children of light, not of the darkness.

Impossible, you say? Where is the child of God, you ask, who always bears up under the siege of temptations, who never falls? Is not the Word of God replete with examples of the strongest saints who faltered in the way, you continue. Is it not true, you ask, that the very best of saints in this life have but a small beginning of new obedience? And you continue to ask: Was there not only One in respect to Whom it could be said that patience had her perfect work? And, Who, besides Him, would dare to say that he is entire, lacking in nothing?

And we must agree! Anyone who knows himself, knows also that he falls far short of what he ought to be. But be very sure that we do not hide behind this fact as an excuse to make friends with the world. He that would be a friend of the world must needs be an enemy of God! Rather, let this knowledge of our failures be the occasion for fleeing to the cross, confessing our sins and short-comings, pleading for more grace, that we may stand and fight the good fight of faith, faithfully unto the end.

So shall the Word of God in our text be realized in us!

Joy in the midst of manifold temptations!

QUESTION BOX

About Matthew 23. 37-39

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Question

Before answering this question I should point out that this is not one of the questions handed in at the question hour after my recent lecture in First Church on "Why Are We Protestant Reformed?" My plan is to try to answer all of those questions in the June issue. The present question is one which has been in the Question Box for some time. It, along with some others, came from a reader in Jenison, Michigan who informs me that he had a discussion about this passage. The passage occurs at the end of the chapter in which the Lord Jesus pronounces woes upon the scribes and Pharisees. It reads as follows: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often

would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The question concerns especially the words, "how often *would I* have gathered thy children together . . . and *ye would not*."

Reply

We cannot very well confine ourselves to these particular words, but must say something about the whole passage.

1. There is suffering expressed in these words on

the part of the speaker. It is not, however, the suffering of wounded and rejected love, as is erroneously claimed by those who see here proof that the will of man is victorious in opposition to the will of God, who see in this text proof that God would gather, but that man successfully opposes Him. The nature of the suffering is expressed by the figure of the mother-hen and her chicks. The figure is one of a watchful mother-hen who spies the enemy about to destroy her young ones. She raises her wings and calls her chicks to seek refuge under them. But as her chicks hear her calling voice and would run for safety, a third party intervenes and would not that they should flee for refuge under the protecting wings of their mother. Hence, the suffering is not the suffering of a wounded love of that enemy that prevents her from gathering together her young ones, but of an awful anxiety lest her chicks be destroyed! Any love involved is a love of the *chicks*. Thus it is with the Lord Jesus. The Speaker is pictured in that hen. The chicks are the children of Jerusalem. And Jerusalem is the enemy that interferes and would not that the children of Jerusalem should be gathered under the wings of the Messiah. For this reason she always killed the prophets and stoned them that were sent unto her. For this she shall be left desolate: for the cup of her iniquity is full, and the vials of wrath are about to be poured out upon her.

2. Jerusalem is the very center of the church of the old dispensation, the Old Testament Church Institute, with throne and temple and king and priesthood and altar and sacrifice — designed to foreshadow the Christ, Who would gather the children of that Jerusalem unto Himself, that they might be saved from sin and death. All through the old dispensation, through all the shadows of the old dispensation, Christ stood in the midst of Jerusalem, calling Jerusalem's children unto Himself, even as a hen gathereth her chicks under her wings. This accounts for it, too, that Christ here says "How often . . ." He is not merely referring to His own, brief, public ministry. Moreover, it was the calling of Jerusalem's king and priests and prophets to minister unto the

Christ of the shadows, in order that the children of Jerusalem might come to Him.

3. Jerusalem's children are the seed of the covenant. They are not merely the citizens of earthly Jerusalem; nor are they children because they dwell in the Holy City. But they are the true Israel of God, the holy seed according to the promise, those whom the Father gave to Christ. Them Christ purposed to gather together: for them He loves. And remember, too, that it is the Father's will that He should lose none of them.

4. But Jerusalem *would not*. Notice that the Lord does not say: "How often I would gather *you*, and ye would not." But: "How often would I gather *your children*, and ye *would not* that I should gather them." The Lord is addressing wicked, apostate Jerusalem, whose spiritual name is Sodom and Gomorrah. For due to that fact that not all is Israel that is called Israel, due to the fact that the carnal element gains control of Jerusalem's throne and priesthood and temple and altar, etc., Jerusalem becomes Sodom and Gomorrah. And always its wicked kings and priests and prophets take away from the children of the covenant the Christ of the Scriptures. They would prevent the chicks from finding refuge under the wings of their anxiously calling mother. Notice that this plainly the idea of Jerusalem in the text: it is the Jerusalem that kills the prophets and that stones them that are sent to her, and that presently would crucify the Christ.

5. Finally, we must remember that the text does not teach that the children are not gathered; nor does it suggest this. Christ's will, which is the will of the Father, certainly prevails — even when presently they crucify Him. In fact, their very crucifixion of Him must serve ultimately the gathering of Jerusalem's children, the seed of the covenant.

These are a few condensed thoughts as to the meaning of this passage. I hope they will serve to indicate to my questioner the line to be followed in understanding the passage.

Know the standard and follow it.

Read the STANDARD BEARER!

EDITORIAL

About That Step Toward A New Confession In The GKN

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

We had intended to write a rather exhaustive critique of the Unanimous Testimony of Faith drafted by Dr. G. C. Berkouwer and Dr. Herman Ridderbos as a possible step toward a new confession for the *Gereformeerde Kerken*. We may still do this at a later date if it should prove necessary and feasible. However, there have been some significant and rather surprising developments with respect to this document in the Netherlands. And in reporting these developments we can at the same time furnish our readers with a condensed critique of this Unanimous Testimony of Faith and point out some of the important flaws in it. Besides, as you will learn presently, these surprising developments serve to show that the criticisms which we have and which we share with some Dutch critics are correct and justified: for they have been confirmed by one of the authors of the document, although he, of course, does not agree with the criticisms, but considers the very points that are criticized to be the strong points of the document which he helped to prepare.

For our American readers who are not well acquainted with the church situation in the Netherlands a little background information is necessary in order that they may understand this tale.

You will recall that the Unanimous Testimony met with an enthusiastic reception at the Synod of the GKN. The vote on the lengthy decision of the Synod was unanimous. And while there is indeed criticism of the document from within the GKN, especially by the Concerned Ones (*Verontrusten*), apparently there was no criticism of it at the Synod. One can well imagine that the two authors were rather pleased about this, and that because they came away from their own synod so pleased, they were the more dismayed and irritated at the reception their Testimony received elsewhere, as reported below.

Berkouwer and Ridderbos were delegated by their Synod to present this same document to the Synod of the *Hervormde Kerk* and to request that Synod also to refer the Testimony to their churches for consideration. The *Hervormde Kerk* is the so-called State Church in the Netherlands, the denomination

out of which the GKN came forth by way of the reformations of 1834 and 1886. And there is a movement toward eventual reunion of these two denominations afoot, a movement which is called *Samen Op Weg* (Together On The Way). In connection with this movement there has already been a joint meeting of the two synods, among other things. It was in the interest of this inter-denominational cooperation, of course, that the Testimony of Faith was also presented to the Synod of the *Hervormde Kerk*. In fact, it is fair to say that the document was composed at least partly with this budding ecclesiastical friendship in mind.

In the State Church there are three definite wings, or modalities. There are the *Vrijzinnigen*, or outright Modernists. There are the so-called *Midden-Orthodoxen*, probably best described as middle-of-the-roaders, or moderates. And there is a strong and well-organized orthodox wing, the men of the *Gereformeerde Bond*. This is a group which is more orthodox even than many so-called conservatives in the GKN. They have their own official paper, *De Waarheidsvriend* (The Friend of the Truth), which we have lately been receiving on an exchange basis and which we have read with much appreciation. It is sometimes alleged that this is simply a stick-in-the-mud conservative group that is against any and all change as a matter of principle and that simply wants to keep that which is old for its own sake. And although we are always critical of the fact that this group continues under one ecclesiastical roof with out and out liberals, we do not agree with the above allegation. And the story we are about to relate shows plainly that there is a goodly amount of sound Reformed principle in the *Gereformeerde Bond*. In fact, they put the Synod of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* to shame by their stand; and those two leading lights of the GKN, Berkouwer and Ridderbos, ought to feel rather thoroughly chastised. We emphasize these things concerning the *Gereformeerde Bonders* because there are already reports circulated which belittle their criticism on the ground that this group always wants to stick to the old just because it is old. You see, there are some who

want to neutralize criticism of this group because it is such telling criticism. But the facts of what happened will show that they indeed had some sound and very telling criticism of the very Testimony of Faith which was so enthusiastically received by the GKN. And the reaction of Berkouwer and Ridderbos to that criticism simply confirms its validity, that is, confirms it for any soundly Reformed man.

What happened when Berkouwer and Ridderbos appeared at the Hervormde Synod with their testimony?

They were met with a veritable storm of criticism, especially from the two opposite wings, the liberals and the orthodox. And the Synod rejected the proposal to refer this Testimony of Faith to their churches, with 32 votes against it.

We are not much interested in the criticism by the liberals. For them the proposed confession was not sufficiently liberal, especially because it was not "open" enough. The liberals want a confession which raises many questions but does not furnish many answers, a confession which embodies a questioning stance.

But the criticism by the orthodox element was very significant.

First of all, before the Synod met, a certain Rev. K. Exalto wrote a comparatively brief, but very pertinent article of criticism in *De Waarheidsvriend* of Feb. 21, 1974. This article voices many of the criticisms which were expressed on the floor of the Synod also. The Rev. Exalto makes several good points.

In the first place, he mentions some characteristics which a confession ought to have as far as its origin and nature are concerned. And while he grants the possibility that also today a new confession could be drawn up, he points out that a confession should meet these requirements, which we briefly summarize:

- 1) It should arise out of *need*. All Reformed confessions in the past were born out of the need for the church to react against error. The fathers were concerned to preserve their heritage, to maintain and defend what is sacred and precious to the church.
- 2) A confession serves to bind together what belongs together. The confessions draw boundaries; they exclude and they include.
- 3) A third characteristic of the classic Reformed confessions is their maintenance of continuity. They are lacking in all pride, as though the truth was only discovered recently. They reach back, first of all to the Word of God itself, the real source of the knowledge of the truth of God; and then they reach back to the ancient church. And Ds. Exalto illustrates

how this is true of our Three Forms of Unity.

The writer pointedly asks whether the Draft of a new confession answers to these requirements.

Then he raises and answers the question whether this proposed new confession is Reformed? For he rightly claims that in a Reformed church none but *Reformed* confessions have a right of existence.

The Rev. Exalto goes on to point out that Reformed confessions always have certain distinguishing marks, such as the doctrine of double predestination from eternity, the doctrine of total depravity, the doctrine that the Holy Spirit alone is able to bring the sinner to Christ and to salvation, the acknowledgement of the absolute, divine authority of Scripture, inspired by the Spirit. He mentions the doctrine of atonement through satisfaction: Christ has borne the wrath of God against sin, has atoned for the guilt of His own, a guilt which dates from paradise. No confession can call itself Reformed which does not set forth these truths clearly and unequivocally. If it fails to do so, then there is a different understanding of the Gospel at stake, even if it be only through silence about these matters.

And then Exalto makes a comparison of the Proposed New Confession with these criteria. At best, he says, there is here and there a *vague* reference in the direction just mentioned; for the most part there is a total silence.

Is there then an opposing of definite modern errors? No! The need of the church is completely absent in this document. The need of the world is on the foreground. Exalto can well conceive of it that the revolution-theologians are pleased with this confession because it creates room for them to continue on their chosen path within the church. Exalto calls the document a typical middle-orthodox piece of work — a passage-way to a more liberal confession. It does not as such represent the theology of Kuitert and Wiersinga, but it gives them room; and it creates the possibility that still more Kuiterts and Wiersingas will come into the church; it creates a breeding-ground for them.

Is there continuity in this confession, he asks. Yes, but not with the classic Reformed confessions (of which it was supposed to be only an up-to-date condensation! HCH); rather with the universalism of the Remonstrants. All that faintly smacks of the particularity of salvation is completely absent. Exalto can only call this confession completely *un-Reformed*!

The Rev. Exalto then goes on to detail his criticism of this Draft Confession with respect to the doctrine of Scripture: Scripture is nothing more than a word of men who therein interpret God's Word. And

besides, Scripture is time-bound, not only as to form but also as to content. Thereupon Exalto spells out his sharp criticism of Article 9, entitled "Church and World." He claims that this article furnishes a basis and a stimulus for the horizontalism of modern theology. It gives salvation unmistakable humanistic traits. And Exalto claims that especially today a new confession might be expected to speak out clearly *against* the errors which threaten the church: horizontalism, the humanizing of Christendom and church, the secularization of faith and life. He concludes by stating that the acceptance of such a confession would be nothing less than a denial of what the church, on the basis of the Word of God entrusted to it, through His grace and Spirit, might confess in the past and should still confess today.

We are in complete agreement.

On the floor of the Synod many of the same criticisms were voiced, to the irritation of Ridderbos and the dismay of Berkouwer.

What was the reaction of these two representatives of the GKN?

Ridderbos (*De Waarheidsvriend*, Feb. 28) is reported to have said that in reaction to Exalto's article: "With such a man I am not together-on-the-way." Enough said!

But Berkouwer's remarks are more enlightening.

1. He freely admitted that there were three different ideas of confession in collision at the Hervormde Synod: the liberal idea, the idea of Ridderbos and Berkouwer — after all the tensions in the GKN, and the view of those who want to cling to the old confessions uncurtailed.

2. He pointed to the fact that the Genesis-question in the GKN has been caught up with, and that thereby the view of Scripture was also determined. At last the GKN had had the courage to revoke "Assen" (the reference is to the Synod of Assen, 1926, which

insisted on the sense-perceptibility of the garden, the tree, the serpent, etc., in the Geelkerken case). This means that the historicity of paradise and the fall are no more accepted.

3. Berkouwer proposed that with respect to the last judgment (another issue touched on in the debate) there are all kinds of incisive problems. He suggested that the confession concerning the future could best be left open.

4. Finally, he pointed out that double predestination was consciously omitted from the New Confession. He said: "We say no over against double predestination, for God is merciful."

Seldom has Berkouwer been more open about his stand and that of the GKN.

But notice that this last remark of Berkouwer alone is sufficient to justify the criticism of Exalto and the *Gereformeerde Bonders*.

And what is more, it is sufficient to *damn* the proposed new confession for any Reformed man!

* * * * *

One last thread in the story of this new draft-confession.

According to a report by the Committee for Inter-church Relations of the Christian Reformed Church, their official representative in the Netherlands and others judge that this very same "Unanimous Testimony of Faith" is "a very pure document." (*De Wachter*, April 23, p. 11)

And who is this representative who can judge that a document which consciously omits that characteristically Reformed doctrine of double predestination is "very pure?"

None other than a seminary professor, Prof. John Stek!

The GKN are far down the trail of apostasy.

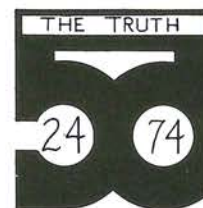
But how far (or: how close) behind them is the Christian Reformed Church?

Subscribe Now to
THE STANDARD BEARER
use the convenient envelope enclosed in this issue

ALL AROUND US

Anniversary Thoughts

Prof. H. Hanko



The committee which was responsible for preparing this anniversary volume of the *Standard Bearer* wanted an article from each of the departing writers which would, on the one hand, be fitting in some respect for an anniversary commemoration, but which would, on the other hand, somehow fit with the general topic of the rubric for which the writer was responsible.

I was on the committee at the time these plans were drawn up; and the idea seemed to me to be an excellent one; I wholeheartedly endorsed it. But now the time has come for me to write my "anniversary article", and the hard realities of following the committee's (and my) ideas have to be faced very concretely. (This is, perhaps, a good experience for everyone: to have to carry out, at least in part, the fine plans which committees prepare often far removed from the realities of execution. It tends to make one a bit more reserved on committee meetings. It is one thing to come up with all kinds of ideas of one sort or another. It is quite another thing to bring to realization what some committee has decided.)

One is tempted on an occasion such as this to make some sort of a survey of the ecclesiastical world which is "all around us", and attempt some sort of analysis of current trends in ecclesiastical history. One could, if there were still space left, include a kind of a survey of world events from the viewpoint of an editor of an ecclesiastical paper. This would not be all that difficult to do. One could, for example, analyze the current status of the ecumenical movement. This might even be worthwhile, for, at least temporarily, the steam seems to have gone out of ecumenism. It hasn't quite turned out to be the utopia in the ecclesiastical world that some dreamed it would be. One could go on and point out at length the disturbing fact that almost all the denominations in this country and abroad are beset by serious problems. One could put forth some effort to analyze these problems. And if one did, one would find that at the root of the problem lies a departure from the Scriptures. Forsaking the Scriptures, leaders in practically every denomination have begun the road that leads to a denial of the fundamental doctrines of the faith. Although this takes on many forms, the general direction seems to be a drift into social

involvement. More and more, even in Reformed Churches, there is increased emphasis on the "social" implications of the "gospel". Even in Reformed circles, increasing problems of a social nature attract the Church's attention. There are serious theological implications in all this. But, in general along with an increasingly vehement denial of the faith those who teach such things seek the kingdom here upon earth.

There is a reaction. There are those who are troubled by all this. And so the times have produced many movements of "concerned" people. But the ecclesiastical posture which these concerned people take varies widely from one place to another. There are those who are content to remain in their denomination and seek a "polarization" or a "modalities church". There are others who turn to various sectarian movements such as Pentecostalism to fill the void left by departures from the truth. Then again, secession is stirring up renewed interest, and the whole question of the right and method of secession is a burning issue. Some have followed the road of secession. But here, too, lies a danger. For there are many who base their secession on a lot of negative criticism of the parent denomination. On the basis of such negative criticism, they are content to move their secessionist group back to some historical point in time where the errors of liberalism have not yet sapped the lifeblood of the church. They forget that secession, if it is to be genuine church reformation, must be a positive commitment to and a positive development of the historic faith. The result is that oftentimes secession movements themselves are weak and hold little promise for the future.

If, on the other hand, one would turn to an analysis of world events, one can also find a great deal to write about. Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus that it was urgent to redeem the times, for the days were evil. If this was true when the apostle wrote his letter, it is all the more true today. One could write about Watergate, about the current shortages in food and natural resources, about the pollution of the environment. One could turn to the evils of immorality and the legalizing of sin in gambling and abortion. No doubt one could spend considerable time with a great deal of profit speaking of the sharp

increase in superstition in our scientific age. In fact, this reminds me of an interesting quotation I came across just today in Herman Bavinck's book *Bijbelsche en Religieuze Psychologie* on this very subject. He writes:

If some people, in their lofty scientific development, have driven religion out the front door, it enters again by the back door in the form of superstition and magic. Our times show this very clearly. Along side of and in the very circles of unbelief, superstition revives in the crassest of forms. Materialism and spiritualism often go hand in hand. There is not a single heathen superstition of practice of magic which is not at present resurrected in the very middle of Christian society.

And this was written in 1920.

But all of this is based upon a disregard for God's Word and a rejection of all authority. God's law is abandoned, and the inevitable result is that lawlessness prevails.

Yet an analysis of all that is happening about us is the task of this column from issue to issue. And while we could perhaps spend the time summarizing, it would not yet bring us to what is specifically an anniversary article.

There must be a recognition of the fact that our *Standard Bearer* has been in existence for nearly fifty years.

As I was pondering this article today, I went back into the old issues of the *Standard Bearer*, way back to volume XXV, twenty-five years ago, when this rubric first appeared (though under a different name) to see what had been written throughout the years. It was rather striking that the problems which we face today, though not in such exaggerated form, were much the same problems which appeared in the Church for the last two decades and a half. But what was even more striking was the fact that the *Standard Bearer*, in commenting on these things, has consistently taken the same position.

Our editor remarked a few issues ago that it was reason for great gratitude for him that our Churches, in the course of their history, had not changed as far as their confession of the truth is concerned. This is reflected in the past volumes of our paper, and particularly in the writings which have appeared in this column. There are some who charge us with being stagnant and grounded on deadcenter. There are those who are critical of this very fact. They insist that the times demand change. And they mean by this that the confession of the Church itself has to be changed in order to meet the pressing needs of today's world. We are not convinced of this. There is, of course, a basic view of Scripture which is involved in such an assertion. That view, in brief, based upon a denial of Scripture's infallible inspiration, is that the

Scriptures contain no objective truth either in the area of faith or life. We repudiate this position. The epistle to the Hebrews (in chapter 13:8) speaks of the fact that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is the same because He is God Who is eternally unchangeable. But it follows from this that the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is also the same yesterday, today and forever. Happy is that Church which confesses that unchangeable truth.

There is profound reason for gratitude here. At the very heart of the truth which we confess is the doctrine of sovereign grace. Among many other things, this means that the Church which steadfastly maintains the truth over a period of five decades does so only because God preserves that truth in her. There is absolutely no other explanation for this. We, too, must say with the prophet Jeremiah: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

This may never be a mere matter of formal acknowledgment of a truth which we know so very, very well. Should it ever become that, it becomes a hypocrisy of the worst sort. The truth of it all must pervade us, so that it remains the profound confession of our heart and of our lips. Anything less than this will only mean that the days when the *Standard Bearer* occupies this position in the church world which it presently does are numbered.

This ought to call us to some serious self-examination. I do not refer only to those who are busy from week to week putting this *Standard Bearer* in the homes of its readers. They, too, are called to this. But this self-examination is required of all of us, for in a very real sense, our paper is possible only because of the steadfastness and faithfulness of its reading public. The *Standard Bearer* can be no stronger spiritually and doctrinally than those who support it and read it.

It is relatively easy to engage in an analysis and criticism of what is happening elsewhere. It is extremely difficult to be critical of one's self. Nevertheless, often with shame, we shall all have to admit that the evils which are so prevalent in the world are evils which have affected us and had their influence in our lives. There is no sin which is foreign to us. I repeat: the *Standard Bearer* can never be any stronger than those who support and read it. An anniversary ought to be a time for renewed commitment and dedication to the cause of the propagation of the truth of the Scriptures. And it must begin with a renewed dedication to that truth in our own lives.

There is one more thing.

What is happening in the world has helped to prove

that there are many throughout the world and in almost every denomination who deeply love the truth and who are eager to join with others of like faith. Often they are lonely, for their numbers are few. Often they are tempted to despair, for there seem to be so few who care. And it is true that the Church of Christ is a hut in a garden of cucumbers, a besieged city, a very small remnant.

If it has pleased God in His great grace to use the *Standard Bearer* to bring these faithful into contact with one another; if God in mercy will continue to

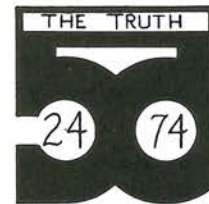
use the *Standard Bearer* to give help and leadership and direction to many in different lands, we can only hope fervently and pray that God will continue to keep us faithful, so that this work may be continued.

We cannot tell what the future holds for us. In general we know that the Lord is coming — and quickly. All events seem increasingly to point to the nearness of the end. The gathering of the Church is one of these events.

Let us then be faithful in our calling.

The Standard Bearer In Retrospect

Rev. G. Van Baren



In this season of tornadoes and terrible havoc wrought by them, another meditation of the late Rev. G. Vos comes to mind. He wrote about another tornado which struck the Grand Rapids area some 18 years ago. Those who were there still remember it distinctly. The Rev. G. Vos, in his unique way, brought that devastating disaster into proper perspective. . . . Yet how soon we forget!

“Visited by Majesty on High”

“Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.”

Ps. 46:8, 10, 11

Our village received a very special visit by the Lord Christ.

It was a visit of the Majesty on High.

What we really received is a little foretaste of the end of the world.

Some of us went to heaven in the process of that visit. Others are in the hospital because of that visit. Some of us had a brush with death. All of us were deeply impressed by that visit.

God came to us, and He roared: I have never yet heard a voice such as we heard around supper time, Tuesday evening, April 3, 1956. It sounded as though a thousand express trains were traversing the sky.

His footsteps were seen; He walked from the Southwest to the Northeast, skirting our village:

everyone was aware of His august presence.

And we were afraid: many cowered in the basement of their homes, while God ravaged their properties (?). He flung houses and barns far and wide. Such debris was mixed with black muck and the dust of the earth. He snuffed out the lives of some of us, broke the bones and the flesh of others: they were left moaning in His wake.

Oh yes, no one can dispute it: God walked among us; His Christ paid us a special visit; He left desolation, death, pain and misery.

But also awe, the awe of the childlike fear of Jehovah.

One man said: My Jehovah was beautiful in His raging! And that man lost half of his worldly goods,

and his life was in jeopardy.

Yes, I have seen Him too.

His pathway through Hudsonville was about 3 or 4 city blocks from my dwelling.

* * * * *

But in it all is a terrible accusation.

We have paid attention to this little walk of God, a walk whose results are still among us in many ways. We have paid marked attention to that little walk. Both the good and the bad, the saints and the wicked, the church and the world have seen Him, heard Him, and marked His works. The blue-coats of the State Police are still among us, as are the members of the State Guard, or National Guard. Life has still not returned to its normal beat.

Everyone is still talking about that little walk of Jesus through Hudsonville, visiting us. He is constantly among us. From the time when Zacharias sang his song of salvation until now, Jesus and the God of our salvation has His march among us, and He always speaks, shouts, beckons and calls to us His people.

Zacharias sang: THE DAYSPRING FROM ON HIGH HATH VISITED US!

And He is still with us.

He promised: And Lo, I am with you alway!

And He kept His word.

Jesus is constantly walking through Hudsonville.

And He is constantly singing His song of the eternal Covenant of God's grace.

He sings that song as a lullaby at the cradle of the Covenant babies. He sings and He speaks of the everlasting love of God when we are very young and as we gather as little boys and girls in catechism and Christian schools. His speech and His works become plainer to us as we grow up. Oh, how wonderful is His voice from the pulpit Sunday after Sunday, year after year.

His song of the Covenant: I love you so much that I died for you on the accursed tree.

And you can hear it in Hudsonville, both in the home and from the pulpit.

And His footsteps drop with fatness. He leaves in His wake regeneration, conversion, faith, justification and sanctification. But also glorification when Hudsonville's children go to heaven.

Last Tuesday He left in His wake a picture of the desolation of hell. After I saw it for the first time I grew very still. It was awful.

But when Jesus is conducting Business As Usual,

He leaves in His wake the glories of the Christian, the blessings of salvation, and we are blest.

Now here is the terrible accusation: we can see Christ in His Usual Business day after day and night after night, year after year and life-time after life-time, and we stay calm and orderly.

"How are things?"

"Oh, so-so!"

After all, His daily and nightly walk through the village is much more beautiful than His special visit last Tuesday, is it not?

Everyone wanted to get into Hudsonville. It took hundreds of special blue-coats and guardsmen to keep the crowds from hindering disaster cleanup. Last Sunday afternoon I had me a time getting out and getting back into my village.

But we do not need the cops on Sunday!

How easily we leave our place empty on Sunday during worship of God Who is in our midst day and night?

How easily do we fall asleep during the service, skip the reading of God's Word after a meal, and a prayer or two?

Tuesday He came and said: "This is the way of My final coming, when the heavens and the earth shall be destroyed by fire, tornado and earthquake, and then the hearts of men shall fail them because of My terror!"

We heard it and paid attention. Oh, how we paid attention!

But, every waking and sleeping hour He is in our very midst and says: "I love you with an everlasting love, and all My endeavour is to get you with Me in the new earth and the new heaven. I move the heavens and the earth and the depth of hell to get you away from the world, the devils and the powers of sin. I send angels and My Holy Spirit of grace Who explains and applies My precious Word so that you may eat and drink spiritually and be satisfied. I am a flaming wall of fire around you and your children so that no harm may come near your dwelling. I suffer no man to do you wrong. I give men for thee and nations for thy salvation. Oh, I do love you and your seed and I have unutterable salvation in store for you. Listen to Me, My people: I, the eternal God am thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms!"

That is what God, what Jesus, what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches.

And do we pay as close attention to it as to last Thursday's tornado?

There is our accusation.

* * * * *

Yes, I do know that the tornado came so that the wicked will have no excuse in the day of His final coming.

I know, too, that this tornado came as a sign of His final coming so that the church might take courage and know that her deliverance is nigh.

But I also am persuaded that the tornado came to shake the church awake, to direct us to His more beautiful Voice of the Gospel, to remind us of His daily and nightly Presence among us.

The church was crowded Sunday morning. And they tell me that such was the case in the other churches in our little village.

The tornado calls us to a rededication, to a reconsecration.

It did that to me.

We have given our answer to God's visit in our communal prayer.

And we tremble at His presence now.

For God says: "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

God desires to be exalted. And, let us never forget it, He *will* be exalted. Therefore He walked through our town on a bias: on a line from the Southwest to the Northeast. And even the dogs saw Him and trembled.

And He was exalted. Even by the reprobate, although they will not admit it. Some of them took time out to insult Him: I saw a headline in a daily paper which called it a "brutal" tornado! It carries the proof with it that God was exalted. It was the wicked's answer to His footsteps. When God says in their hearts: I am God and there is no other God; then they say: There is no God!

Did you note that the daily papers did not connect the tornado with God and His Christ?

But we are still, Father!

We know that Thou art God.

And we exalt Thee, even while we cower in the Southwest corner of our basements.

* * * * *

Yes, we are still.

And we are going to listen as never before. That is our promise to Thee.

On our plea for grace to keep our promise.

And we are reassured, for Thou continuest: "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our

Refuge!"

God was seen for a few minutes.

He was clothed in black, the black swirls of dust, muck, planks, and bodies of men and animals.

We saw Him for a few minutes such as He will be seen again in the clouds of darkness of the final tempest, the final tornado of the last Day, the *Yom Jehovah*.

But He is still with us, even though we have often forgotten.

He is still with us in His dear Son.

He was in a hurry to come on Pentecost: the sound of a fiercely driven wind.

And He never left us.

He is so intimately close to us that the theologians are still fighting about the two natures of Christ. Oh, God is very close to Man.

Do you realize that the sentence: "The Lord of Hosts is with us" is a name of Jesus?

Immanuel means: God with us. Well, for the name of God in the sentence, my text has: The Lord of Hosts.

He came well nigh two thousand years ago, and united Himself with man, and henceforth we are Zion, the city of God. His finger touched the earth; it was the greatest Tornado the world has ever seen. It was dark too. It was the Son of God dying on the accursed tree. There God embraced us with all our sin and guilt.

And then the Tornadoes of God began to howl. It was an eternal Tornado of wrath of Almighty and Holy God.

And when the tornado was over, it became still.

It was very still in the garden of Joseph.

The stillness of the peace of God that stole over and within the church of God.

That stillness shall last through all eternity.

That is our Refuge.

The papers say: get into the basement. They even say and specify the exact corner which is safest: the Southwest. Or under a table or a bed if you have no basement. I have no quarrel with the scientist. We must use the means.

But there is a Refuge that is better, far better.

We hide in the shadow of the Cross of our Jesus.

And all is well. Amen. Hallelujah!

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

“Hyper-Calvinism” and the Call of the Gospel (2)

Rev. David Engelsma

The first article in this series dealt with the use of the term, hyper-Calvinism, to attack Calvinism itself. The second article pointed out that there has been a doctrinal error that might be called hyper-Calvinism, and found it to consist of the denial that God calls everyone who hears the preaching of the gospel to repent and to believe in Jesus Christ. The previous article also began to show that the hyper-Calvinistic denial of the call of the gospel is not Biblical, Reformed doctrine. This will be concluded in the present article.

What the Reformed faith, genuine Calvinism, confesses concerning the call of the gospel is set forth plainly in the Canons of Dordt. The promise that believers have eternal life and the command to repent and believe must be proclaimed “to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of his good pleasure sends the gospel” (II,5). God Himself “unfeignedly,” i.e., seriously, calls everyone who hears the gospel. He does this through the gospel itself. As He calls, He “most earnestly and truly” declares that it is “acceptable” to Him that “all who are called, should come unto Him” (III, IV, 8). One result of this serious call of the gospel is that many “refuse to come, and be converted.” This is not the gospel’s fault, nor Christ’s fault, nor God’s fault, but it is their own fault, for they wickedly reject the word of life (III, IV, 9). However, there is also the result that some obey the call of the gospel, and are converted. This is not due to free will or any ability in them “whereby one distinguishes himself above others,” but it is due to the sovereign grace of God alone. The reason why some come to Christ is that God efficaciously draws them by His Spirit. And He draws them, in distinction from others, because He has eternally elected them, whereas He eternally reprobated the others (III, IV, 10. cf. also I,6).

The Canons powerfully refute the Arminian charge that the doctrines of predestination, limited atonement, total depravity, irresistible grace, and perseverance of saints hinder, if they do not

altogether nullify, the lively preaching, especially the gospel-call. What is so striking is the Canons’ refusal to react to the Arminian heresy by denying the call of the gospel to everyone, or even by becoming timid and hesitant concerning this call. They show that the Reformed faith will not allow Arminianism to drive it into the opposite error of hyper-Calvinism. This, however, was exactly what happened to those who denied the call of the gospel to all who hear the preaching.

Those who denied the external call of the gospel out of the fear that this compromised Calvinism were mistaken on two counts. First, they erred in supposing that the call, or command, to unregenerated unbelievers would imply the ability of the unregenerated to do what God required, namely, repent and believe. They argued that for God or for the Church to call everybody to believe on Christ would imply the false doctrine of free will. That this was the error of the hyper-Calvinists is evident from Article 33 of the confessional articles of the Gospel Standard Churches: “to address unconverted persons . . . calling upon them to savingly repent, believe and receive Christ . . . is . . . to imply creature power . . .” Oddly enough, this is the very same mistake that the Pelagians and Arminians have always made: to suppose that the exhortations and demands of Scripture imply the ability of man to fulfill the demands. The Pelagians and Arminians have always argued that, since God commands men to believe, men must have the ability to believe. The hyper-Calvinist, on the other hand, agreeing that the call to believe would imply free will, denies the call. The error of both is their failure to see that the call of God to sinners in no way presupposes the ability of sinners to heed the call.

Luther exposed the error of the notion that a command of God implies a corresponding ability in man in his controversy with the Pelagian, Erasmus, over the bondage of the will. Responding to Erasmus’ defense of a free will on the ground that God calls

men to choose, turn, repent, etc., Luther wrote:*

"... by the words of the law man is admonished and taught, not what he can do, but what he ought to do."

"How is it that you theologians are twice as stupid as schoolboys, in that as soon as you get hold of a single imperative verb you infer an indicative meaning, as though the moment a thing is commanded it is done, or can be done?"

"The passages of Scripture which you cite are imperative; and they prove and establish nothing about the ability of man, but only lay down what is and is not to be done."

Question 9 of the Heidelberg Catechism teaches, in regard to the demand of perfect obedience that God makes in His law, that God does exactly require of men that which they are incapable of doing. The same thing holds true for the command to repent that God makes in the gospel to the unregenerated. The call does not imply, nor is it based on, the free will of man. Rather, it sets forth man's duty, and shows man what it is that pleases God.

The second error of the hyper-Calvinistic denial of the call of the gospel was the fear that a call of the gospel to the unregenerated wicked would jeopardize the doctrines of election and limited atonement. This is evident in Article 33 of the Gospel Standard Churches, quoted above, which continues: "... and ... to deny the doctrine of special redemption." This would indeed be true if the call to the reprobate expressed God's love for him and manifested a desire of God to save him. But such is not the case. When God sends the gospel forth into all the world, presenting Christ crucified to all who hear the preaching and calling all who hear to repent of their sins and believe on that Christ, His purpose is to save the elect and the elect only. The love that sends forth the gospel, like the love that sent forth Christ in the fullness of time, is the love of God for the elect Church. This love is sovereign love. As the call to repent and believe goes out, God the Holy Spirit *works that repentance and faith in the hearts of the elect in the audience*. He gives us what He calls for, and He gives it by the calling. "Come!," He says, and that sovereignly gracious call draws us irresistibly to Christ. This is the confidence of every preacher when he calls men to repent and believe: God will make it effective in the elect. With regard to the others in the audience, the call comes to them also, *seriously*. But the call does not express God's love for them, nor does it imply that Jesus died for them. By the call, God confronts them with their duty, and shows them what will be pleasing to Him. But His purpose with the call to them is not a saving purpose. On the

contrary, it is the purpose to render them inexcusable, and to harden them (Romans 9:18. cf. also Matthew 11:25-27). There is always a two-fold outcome of the preaching of the gospel, including the serious call of the gospel to all who hear, according to the sovereign purpose of God *with this preaching and call*: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" (II Corinthians 2:14-16)

The practical effects of the hyper-Calvinistic denial of the call of the gospel to all and sundry and of the attempt to limit it to the reborn elect are disastrous. Basically, the effect is nothing less than the loss of the lively preaching of the gospel, first in the sphere of missions, and then, inevitably, within the church herself. The classic example is the well-known response of J. C. Ryland, close friend of John Gill, to William Carey's plea for mission societies to preach the gospel in India: "Sit down, young man. When God pleases to convert the heathen He will do it without your aid and mine." Apart now from the fact that mission societies are wrong and apart from the fact that old Ryland may have seen a mission spirit corrupted by Arminianism, his notion that God's sovereignty in salvation makes preaching unnecessary was false. Applied consistently, this notion would rule out, not only preaching to the heathen, but also all preaching. The Biblical rejoinder, and the Reformed confession, is: the sovereign God is pleased to save His people through the preaching of the gospel.

To strip the call from the preaching is to do violence to the gospel itself. The call to believe is not an appendage of the gospel, to be tacked on awkwardly at the end like the proverbial tail on the donkey. It is an inherent part of the gospel itself. Whenever and wherever the gospel is preached, the call to repent and believe is sounded to all who hear, whether explicitly or implicitly. Usually the apostles made the call explicit: "Repent!, Believe!" Sometimes, the call was implied, e.g., in the sermon at Pisidian Antioch, recorded in Acts 13. Paul did not explicitly say, "Believe." But his statement in verse 39 that justification comes only by faith in Christ, not from the law, and his warning in verses 40 and 41 against refusing to believe sound the call loudly and clearly: "Believe on this crucified and risen Christ!" The message proclaimed in the gospel is not something that may ever merely be received for

**The Bondage of the Will*, tr. by Packer and Johnston (London: James Clarke & Co., Ltd., 1957), pp. 151 ff.

information, nor does it ever leave anyone with the impression that God is satisfied with that. The message of the gospel is the message of God's Son in our flesh, crucified and risen for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. The gospel must be believed, and the Christ presented in the gospel must be believed on — *today*. Nothing else will do. Therefore, the gospel *calls* those who hear the good news.

Also, the attempt to limit the call to the regenerated is a hopeless task. It sets before any minister an impossible task. Before he may call a sinner to repent and believe, he must determine that the sinner is born again. Even if a person reveals some sorrow for sin, he ought to determine whether the

sorrow is godly sorrow or the sorrow of the world. The result will be that a man, fearful of compromising Calvinism by calling an unregenerate, will call almost no one. This is to reverse God's operations. For the sake of the elect, God has the Church call all who hear the preaching; lest it call a reprobate, hyper-Calvinism tends to call no one.

Condemnation of hyper-Calvinism does not touch the Protestant Reformed rejection of the "well meant gospel-offer." Between the serious call to all who hear the gospel and the well-meant offer of the gospel, there is a vast gulf fixed, the gulf that separates the historic Reformed faith from Arminianism.

(to be continued)

FEATURE

The Relationship Between The Truth And Life

Rev. Ronald J. Van Overloop

To achieve a proper understanding of the truth, it is first of all necessary that we understand that God is Truth. He is truth in and of Himself. All truth is in Him and in God there is no lie. Therefore God determines what is true, i.e., what is right and what is wrong. That truth God has revealed to His people in the holy Scriptures. Those Scriptures contain within them the entire revelation of that truth. The Scriptures are the fulness of the revelation of God. They are not the revelation of the fulness of God, for they are the creation of God and cannot contain Him. But as the fulness of the revelation of God they are complete, lacking nothing, most perfect. At the center and heart of that truth which is revealed in the Scriptures is Christ. All truth abides in Him, Who is the perfect revelation of the Father, for He is the way, the truth, and the life.

Out of God's revelation, the Church of God, which is the Body of Christ, develops the truth. The Church beholds that truth of God in His Word and develops that truth into a systematic form. Immediately at the closing of the canon of Scripture, the Church began to develop the individual truths out of the Word of God. That development had to be out of God's Word

because the Scriptures are not a dogmatics. They do not give us in outline form the whole body of truth. But the Church, being led by the Spirit of truth given at Pentecost, sees the Scriptures as a whole and out of them appropriates the individual dogmas which they behold in their particular place within the organism of the truth. By means of faith, the Church consciously appropriated these truths out of God's Word. Therefore it can be said that the Church does not determine what the Scriptures say, but the Church says what the Scriptures and the Spirit have taught her to say. In that way the Church appropriates consciously the whole body of truth.

Historically that conscious appropriation began with the Being of God Himself. The Church developed terms to describe Scripturally the God-head, which terms have been used throughout all the history of the Church. They described the Triune God as being three Persons in one Being. They described Christ as having two natures in one Person. And so as history progressed, the Church continued to develop those individual truths out of and on the basis of God's Word. They developed the truths concerning predestination, depravity and its totality,

the truth concerning the guilt of all men in Adam. Slowly the truths of regeneration, of God's counsel, of the church, of the sacraments, of the covenant, and so on were consciously appropriated by the Church.

In our previous article we saw that this development took place under certain circumstances. This development and appropriation of the truth occurred under the incentive and guidance of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth. They were appropriated because of the thirst of the regenerated heart for the knowledge of God in Christ. This appropriation took place in the sphere of and by the mutual operation of believers under the preaching of the Word. And they were appropriated under the influence of the necessity to defend and formulate carefully the truth against heresy.

But all of these individual truths which arise out of Scripture are not without connection and relation. God, according to His infinite and inscrutable wisdom, has ordained and ordered all things in such a way that all of these individual truths are intimately related and connected so that a discussion of one will inevitably lead you into a discussion of other truths. For example, one cannot talk of the depravity of man without speaking of original guilt and corruption and then of the atonement and cross of Christ which covered all of that depravity.

The divine reason for this intimate relation of all the truths to one another is that all of the individual truths together form one body of truth. Together they make up the truth. Why the truth is one is because God, Who is Truth, is one. That this is true can be seen from the fact that this body of truth developed organically. The truth is an organism. The Church did not have only a part of the truth, as a slice of a pie, early in its history. It possessed the whole body of truth. The conscious appropriation of the truth by the Church was a spontaneous and a principle appropriation. The Church immediately had the whole truth, but only in principle. We must think of it in terms of a sapling and a full grown tree. The early Church had the truth in sapling form, while the Church of today possesses the truth in the form of a full grown tree which is still growing. The same is true of a child. He says and believes, "Jesus loves me." In that confession that child has the truth, but none of us would say that he perfectly and completely understands all of the implications of what he said. He has it all principally, but the accuracy, extensiveness and depths of his knowledge of the truth is limited.

That the truth we believe is an organic unity has much significance for the life of the child of God. What he believes determines how he lives. Let us examine that relationship, considering some errant

doctrines and how they affect life, as well as how a proper conception of God's Word affects the life of the believer.

We have already seen what the truth is. Now what is life? Life is our walk in this world; it is our attitude towards the world in which we live. Now what does the body of truth which we believe, have to do with our attitudes towards the things of this world? Scripture shows us that it has a lot to do with it because what man believes, he believes with his heart. Solomon says that out of the heart flow all the issues of life. (Prov. 4:23) Therefore as the heart is so is the man. None of us would deny that man himself is an organic unity, containing a heart, mind, soul, and strength. That that unity exists, that there is a very intimate relation between that which I believe with my heart and that which I do and say, is shown from Proverbs 4:23. Not one of us would say of someone who has committed the act of murder that the mind and heart of that man was not also involved in that act. Man is an organic unity which has as its center his heart. Therefore it can be said that that which is revealed externally is simply an expression of that which is internal.

Also let us turn to James 2 and consider specifically verses 14 and following. James is talking to those who hypocritically say that they are justified by faith only and then proceed to walk in sin. They use the fact that they are justified by faith alone as an excuse to do what they please. James says to them, "Oh no. You say you have faith? If you do not reveal it, you are a liar. That faith is no faith; it is dead, for real faith is manifested in works." Notice that James' point here is that faith is of the heart; it is something we believe experientially. (Heidelberg Catechism, q. and a. 21) The faith that they SAID they had, was not of the heart, only of the mouth. "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" Faith is the root, the principle, and good works are the fruit and evidence of that faith.

Further proof that doctrine and life are inseparable is seen from Romans 6:1 and from the Heidelberg Catechism, q. 64. In Romans 6 Paul shows us that a belief or confession requires a certain kind of life. He very emphatically denies that it does not make any difference what kind of life we lead, by showing that a careless and profane Christian is an impossibility. In fact, it is a contradiction. The power of the cross of Christ in him bears the fruit that he abhors sin and fights against it with his all. He is not only redeemed from sin, but also is delivered from it and renewed unto a life which is the life of Christ. By a true and living faith the Christian is legally and organically united with Christ. How can he that is dead to sin,

live any longer therein? Living out of Christ, he is in principle liberated from the dominion of sin through the Spirit of Christ that dwelleth in him (Rom. 8:2). Sin is still present in him, but all that is within him according to his inner man hates and abhors it.

More proof can be found in the Heidelberg Catechism, q. 28. In that question the catechism speaks of the confession and walk of those who declare themselves unbelieving and ungodly. Listen to what Rev. H. Hoeksema says, concerning this question, in his exposition in *The Triple Knowledge*, vol. II, p. 671. "There is a most intimate relation between these two, confession and walk. A true confession reveals itself in a sanctified walk. And the latter is based on and motivated by the former." Let us interrupt here and notice that the relationship between confession and walk, between doctrine and life is a mutual relationship. It is a reciprocal relationship, going both ways. What I confess determines how I live. However, it is also true that if I want to live in a certain way, then that will affect what I believe. Rev. Hoeksema continues, "A false confession is motivated by the desire to cover up and to justify a walk according to the flesh and according to the world, and the former gives rise to the latter. It is certainly utterly false to maintain that it matter not what we believe, if only we do something in life. Principle and practice are most intimately related. Doctrine and life are inseparable. The Scriptures therefore everywhere emphasize the necessity and obligation of the church and of the individual believer to maintain true doctrine. And everywhere the Word of God warns against heretics and false teachers . . . The false prophet is one that deliberately speaks lies in the name of the Lord and that to entice and deceive the people to wickedness and idolatry."

There is, then, a very close and intimate relation between what one believes and how one walks, between his doctrine and his life. To show that this is true historically, let us examine a few false beliefs or doctrines and see how they affect the lives of those who believe those false beliefs.

First of all, let us consider that of the evolutionist.

The evolutionist believes that the lower forms of life developed in the course of time into higher forms. Somehow life arose out of dead material and developed into higher forms of life. Therefore as time goes on, things get better and better, from a biological sense of the word. Things are always improving. Slowly and surely there is a development and progress that ultimately will lead to a perfect man in a perfect world. Such a belief is a denial of God, of Christ and, of course, a denial of Scripture. As to their life, the evolutionists would necessarily believe that men must pull together. There is a brotherhood of man and together we will always try to attain that perfection in life. We will always try to get rid of all sicknesses and diseases and all imperfections so that we can have a perfect man in a perfect world.

Another example of this intimate relationship between one's life and belief is seen in the view of post-millennialism. Post-millennialism teaches that the second coming of Christ shall take place after the millennium. This millennium is a period of 1000 years in which the church has gained the complete victory over the world and has established herself as the power that is triumphant. The point is that there is a continual evolution in the world's history. The evolution is not biological, but in a social sense. As history progresses, this world becomes better. The result is that all the difficulties are resolved in the world as the world comes under the influence of the church. Sin is even banished from the councils of man and a utopia of peace and prosperity arises. Heaven is on earth and the kingdom of Christ is victorious here in this present time. The calling of the post-millennialist is to make the world a better place to live, to christianize everything. There is very little concern for the coming of Christ at the end of time and far more concern for the cares and troubles and social ills in this world. Every attempt is made to attain peace on earth, and religion in politics. The basic error of such a belief is that it is a denial of Christ's rule over the world. Christ rules over the world, sovereignly controlling their actions. The danger of this belief is that at the end of time there

**Have YOU responded
to the "One Thousand" Drive?
If not, do so today!**

will be a Kingdom of peace, which will be of Anti-christ, but the post-millennialist will identify it with the kingdom of Christ.

Another example of how a false doctrine results in an errant conception of life is that of common grace. The doctrine of common grace, by its very nature, speaks of the life of the Christian in the world. The second point of the three points of common grace teaches a restraint of sin by an inward operation of the Holy Spirit on all men. The Holy Spirit operates on man so that man does not sin as much as he otherwise would. The result is that the natural man is capable of performing many good deeds which are good in God's sight. This is the third point. Then man is capable of moral and civic good and righteousness. He lives a good life in which he contributes much toward the benefit of his fellow man. Thus the natural man can meet with God's approval and satisfaction.

What then is the view of life of one who holds to the doctrine of common grace? That one begins to hate the antithesis of the church from this world and he begins to hate the narrow confines of his existence in the church. The child of God alone possesses the grace of God which can save, yet he is in a world of men who are in many respects as good as he is, as far as his deeds are concerned. He is in a world of wicked men who do the same good he does, seek the same goals he seeks and usually are better qualified to do anything in science, art, music, politics, etc. Because he sees much in the world and outside of the church with which he can agree, he decides that the world is the place for him. The result is that he joins in worldly organizations, enters into fellowship with them, adopting their goals and approving their works. And so he enters into the world as Lot did, at first very carefully and later abandoning all caution. He finds out that he cannot protest against the wicked, for all that the wicked do is marked by a measure of good. If he should protest, then he runs the risk of criticizing that which is the fruit of God in that man. Then one can join a labor union because it seeks the good of the worker. Then all movies are all right, because there is some good in them which was produced by common grace. Very briefly, the world is good. We can enter into the camp of the enemy to make common cause with them. Any kind of antithesis is completely wiped out. Soon the goals of the world are adopted in opposition to the cause of the kingdom of heaven.

What one believes determines how he walks. But we must also beware lest false doctrine is developed, motivated by the desire to cover up and to justify a walk which is according to the flesh and according to the world. It can be said that *essentially* every step of apostasy down the road of false doctrine is a

justification of what and/or how we want to live. We can see that in ourselves. We always want what we do or say to be justified. We come up with all kinds of excuses for our sins. Common grace is a justification of world-mindedness. The truth of the Word of God directs the child of God to a proper walk. While he pursues his pilgrimage in his world, the Word of God informs him what his life and belief must be. All the principles of the life of the believer are set down in Scripture. Therefore, we can say, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." (Ps. 119:105) Scripture is not specific, but the truth of God's Word as it has been developed implies exactly what our walk must be. Therefore one must not separate doctrine from practice. Doctrinal preaching is practical and practical preaching is doctrinal.

But now, what are the truths of God's Word on which we must base our life? First of all, there is the truth that God is sovereign. This sovereignty which God possesses is due to the fact that he is God alone and the Creator of all. All things are dependent for their life and existence on Him. Because of that sovereignty, God is the sole criterion and standard of what is right and what is wrong. Thirdly, because God is sovereign and free, He is the divine ruler of all. He rules over all He has created in order that the purpose for which it was created might be realized. This purpose is the glory of His name through Jesus Christ Who came in our flesh to suffer, die and rise again for our sins and guilt.

Therefore the sovereignty of God is a sovereignty which is revealed and exercised through Christ. God chose a people to be His and placed them in union with Christ. Christ defeated the power of sin over God's chosen so that they are citizens of the kingdom of light. He establishes His throne in their hearts and they become His willing subjects. This is not always and is not completely true in this life, for they only very imperfectly recognize this and direct their life according to this principle. But they cling in faith to the cross where all of their sins are washed away. With all their heart, mind, soul and strength as that is governed by the new man in Christ, they hate and abhor all that is sinful in them. They seek to be holy even as He is holy.

Fifthly, there is also a sovereignty of Christ over the world. Satan enlists the aid of man in his opposition against God to set up his own kingdom. In Adam's fall into sin all men became totally depraved, sinning in all that they do. With all the things that are his and with which he lives, man only increases in iniquity. When he can sin as much as he wants and yet avoid the dire results of sin, then he will have attained his goal. But this can never happen, for God still rules as sovereign. Christ rules supreme NOT in spite of all wickedness, but He rules supreme, using

all things to do the will of God.

What is our calling on the basis of these truths? Our conception of the order in God's counsel is a truth or tradition passed down to us. This truth which teaches us that God ordained all things to give Himself the glory, shows us that man in every aspect of his life has the calling to glorify God. The truth of God's Word tells us that the child of God is a regenerated saint, born again, not unto this life, but unto an heavenly kingdom. He is born unto a hope, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. He is born unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. The result is that the child of God is incorporated into the army of God and marches under the banner of Christ. By that second birth, he is no more a member of this world, but is a pilgrim and stranger. He is a citizen of the heavenly kingdom with the calling to glorify God in every aspect of his life. That means that he must submit to the government and to his employer. He must be a proper wife and a proper husband, being of one mind, having compassion one of another, loving as brethren, being

pitiful and being courteous; not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. Therefore he has the calling which demands that he cannot and may not be a partner with the world. (II Cor. 6:14-18) He has the calling that he must let his light so shine that God may be glorified.

All that the child of God has in regard to the riches of salvation are literally in Christ. Christ is the Head, from Whom flows all the fulness of grace and salvation. Just as a tree strikes its roots into the soil, to seek nourishment, so the believer has roots that strike themselves into Christ, in order to seek all the nourishment it needs out of Christ. Therefore we can see how dangerous it is to tolerate false doctrine. As soon as one departs from the truth of Scripture, one leaves Christ and the roots of the soul go into the wrong soil.

Hence doctrine and life are inseparably connected with each other. False doctrine leads inevitably to a life of corruption and sin in the world. But a belief which clings to Christ will be a life which goes on growing in sanctification.

May our beliefs be based solely on God's Word so that our life in the midst of this world likewise reveals that it is rooted in that same Word.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Hebrews 11:32, 33

Rev. G. Lubbers

We now come to consider the faith of Jephthah, the mighty man of valor, in the days of the Judges. We will consider this judge a bit more in depth than we did both Gideon and Samson. He is blazoned on the pages of Scripture in Hebrews 11 as a man of faith, who subdued kingdoms by faith, and yet this man of God is often misunderstood in his greatness and spiritual stature in the days of the shadows. Let us attend to the teaching of Scripture concerning this giant in Israel.

JEPHTHAH, THE MAN (Judges 11:1-3)

Jephthah was a man of humble, yea, of sinful origin. He was really a bastard son of Gilead by a

woman, who was a harlot. He was the son of a harlot, born out of wedlock, and therefore an illegitimate son. He bears this stigma in his father's house, and is expelled by the later-born children, who are legitimate sons of their mother, a wife of Gilead. Evidently Jephthah must flee from his father's house for his life from the face of his brethren. They would have killed him. He is an outcast!

Yet, he is a man of parts. We read "there were vain men who were gathered to Jephthah," just as later there were such men gathered to David when he flees from Saul as an "outlaw." He must have established a reputation with the men of Gilead, the country on the east side of Jordan.

He is also a man who is versed in the history of Israel. He is a man who believes in the covenant mercies of the Lord. At a time when Israel is departing from the Lord in serving Baal and Ashtorah, serving the gods of all the nations whom the Lord had conquered under Moses and Joshua, this man of God is studying Israel's history, and he knows the history very accurately. Vagabond and outcast though he be, he seeks his strength in the knowledge that Jehovah hath given Israel the land, and that the Ammonites and the Philistines are "alien nations" which must be subdued. He is not a rash semi-heathen, who would give human sacrifices on the altar of God, literally to sacrifice his own daughter as a burnt-offering to the Lord! He is a Godfearing man, who puts his entire life in the service of the LORD! He walked by faith!

THE ARENA OF JEPHTHAH'S FAITH

(Joshua 10:1-9)

To understand the greatness of Jephthah's faith we must look carefully at the times in which the LORD himself raised him up to be a judge, a deliverer of Israel. It was a time of spiritual crisis in Israel. The deep truth of Israel's history comes to stand in sharp focus here. After the death of Gideon (Jerubbaal) Israel once again fell into sin. Through the period of the judges Tola and Jair, a period of some 40 odd years, Israel dwelt in peace from the enemies. However, now Israel departed from the Lord in a very grievous way. The sanctuary at Shiloh was forgotten!! Israel served all the idol gods of the nations in their midst; they served no less than the gods of seven nations. So the Lord gave them over into the hands both of the Philistines on the southwest and into the hands of Ammon on the East. Fact is, that Ammon even invaded the territory west of Jordan, even against Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim! And the Ammonites were in the land for eighteen long years. And the wrath of the LORD was hot against Israel. Surely, it was a time to return to the law and to the testimony. And Jephthah evidently did this, judging by his accurate knowledge of the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy.

This must have been the time about the end of the days of the Judges. Jephthah evidently was a contemporary judge with Samson. And it was at this time that Israel turned rather fundamentally from their idol worship and adhered to the place where the LORD placed His name, even in Shiloh. There was a basic return to the Lord! It was true the Lord tried Israel in a pedagogical way and told them to go and call upon the gods which they had chosen. It is then that Israel "said to the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day." And then we read the important notice, "And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the

LORD: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." (Judges 10:16) The LORD looked down from heaven in pity upon the inheritance of Israel. And in such circumstances Jephthah must be raised up. He was raised up in the mercy of God. God was merciful and full of pity also upon Jephthah, the disinherited one by his brethren. He may have no inheritance in Israel, but was treated like one rejected of the LORD.

Small wonder that Jephthah turned his gaze upon the pages of the law of God. All his life this had been a problem; before and after his rejection from his father's house. But now the Ammonites are challenging Israel's very right to the land, the land which had been given them as promised by inheritance to Abraham of old. They desire to take the inheritance of Israel from them, from Arnon to the Jabbok river. That is the bone of contention.

And now the disinherited Jephthah is recalled to Gilead by the leaders. It is Jephthah who understands really what the issue is. He has studied the Scriptures and the meaning of the inheritance of Israel in the land; he understands that it was a gift of sovereign grace from Jehovah to His people.

First of all Jephthah will have it straightened out about his own place and status in the land. The reward he asks is not simply a place in the inheritance of his father's house, but a place at the head of Gilead, the highest place in the land. For that he will go to war. Says he, "If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the LORD deliver them before me shall I be your head?"

Secondly, he will contend with Ammon, first of all, by the word of the mouth, the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. Such is his faith. He trusts in God who awards those who diligently seek Him. He sends messengers to the heads of Ammon, saying, "What hast thou to do with me that thou art come to me to fight in my land?" Ammon is on Israelitish soil, and has been there for eighteen years!

Jephthah will not simply subdue kingdoms, but he will do so by "having wrought righteousness," and thus "receive promises." He will wage a holy battle in the name of the Lord. The arena of battle is before the face of the Lord and in His name. It is a holy battle; it will be the sword of Jehovah that he will wage. In view of this holy battle in the arena of faith, it is rather clear that Jephthah refutes the claim of Ammon as having right to the land, and that Israel has stolen the land some three hundred years before under Moses, the man of God. Jephthah points out the following salient points of history, which are indisputable.

1. That Moses asked Edom to pass through their land peaceably. (Num. 20:14), and that Edom came to fight against Israel.

2. That Moses asked Moab also to pass through their land, but Moab would not consent. (Numbers 20:1)

3. That Moses requested the king of Amorites, Sihon, to pass through their land on the way to their inheritance in Palestine, and that Sihon came out to fight against Israel. It was then that the LORD gave all the land in question, from the river Arnon to the river Jabbock to Israel. If the LORD gave it to Israel who will take it from her? And the LORD has maintained this *status quo* for three hundred years. Will the LORD now allow the Ammonites to take the land away from Israel?

In this arena of faith Jephthah wages the battle of the LORD. The disinherited illegitimate son argues the case of the well-born children of God. Behold the faith of Jephthah, the mighty man of faith! He uses the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit.

JEPHTHAH'S VOW AT MISPAH

(Judges 11:29-31)

The climate of Jephthah's vow was the climate of faith and the mighty exhibition of this faith, for the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah. Here Jacob of old and Ishmael had vowed too: the Lord keep the watch between us. Here Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD! And he vows a mighty vow to the LORD, after the Spirit of the LORD came upon him to march forth at the head of Israel in the battle to clear the Ammonites out of the land.

The Lord will hold Jephthah to his vow. It will be a severe trial of his faith and consecration to the Lord, and a sign and testimony in Israel forever. The Lord will give the victory to Israel by faith, and the inheritance of Israel shall be secure against the Ammonites. He smites Ammon and takes twenty cities, unto the plains of the vineyards, even a very great slaughter! By faith he subdued kingdoms and wrought righteousness, this Jephthah!

But he does not slaughter his daughter as a

sacrificial victim. The LORD himself forbade such a sacrifice. (Lev. 18:21) That would be like letting the children pass through the fire for Moloch. God did not even allow Abraham to kill Isaac. He only received him again in a figure. It is, as Edersheim remarks, that this only happens under such evil kings as Ahaz and Manasseh. It was such a sacrifice which caused Israel to retreat from the battle-field against the king of Moab in the days of Jehoshaphat. (II Kings 3:26 f.f.)

Jephthah could not have made a vow in which he anticipated a human sacrifice. His vow is to Jehovah and it must therefore be a vow in spirit and in truth. The fact is that the daughter, when she hears of the vow, accepts it; it is a vow of such a nature that she goes to bewail her virginity. She shall not be married but shall go childless in Israel. And as such she is a sign of the Lord's victory in which the inheritance is made secure. It is a picture of the barren and unfruitful to have a possession in the land in hope. Jephthah dies really without a son. He can have no inheritance in Israel; he is disinherited by his father's house. He dies really childless in his generations. He who had championed in faith the right of Israel's inheritance will have it in a better country. He did not receive the promise. He lived in faith and looked for a better country.

If the vow of Jephthah was "rash" then it was done in that boldness of faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Such faith sees greater things than to have an earthly inheritance under the shadows and promises. It seeks with Abraham a better country from which no enemy can dislodge the church, where the saints shall no more sin, where the gates shall not be closed.

And so the name of Jephthah is decked in gorgeous colors in that catalogue of saints mentioned in Hebrews 11. He is one cast out from among men of whom the world was not worthy. And he is in the cloud of witnesses who encourage us to great acts of faith, and to pay our vows unto the Most High.

NOTICE!!!

According to the decision of the Synod of 1973, the Consistory of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, was appointed the calling church for the 1974 Synod. The Consistory of Hope Church hereby notifies the churches that the 1974 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America will convene, the Lord willing, on Wednesday, June 5, 1974, at 9 AM, in the Hope Church. The pre-Synodical service will be held Tuesday evening, June 4, at 8 PM in Hope Church. Rev. John A. Heys, President of the 1973 Synod will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the consistory before the service. Delegates in need of lodging should contact Mr. Arnold Dykstra, 1663 Moelker, SW, Grand Rapids, MI, 49504.

Arnold Dykstra, Ass't. Clerk.

TEACHERS AIDE NEEDED

Hope School will need a Teachers Aide (no teaching certificate required) to work with the fifth grade during the 1974-75 school year. Those interested should contact the school.

Clare Kuiper, Sec'y.

CHURCH DEDICATION

We are thankful to our God that He has given us a new place of worship. The Lord willing, we will dedicate our new church building to His service on Friday, May 24, 1974, at 8:00 p.m. We hereby invite our fellow saints to join with us in Randolph for this happy occasion.

The Dedication Committee
Mrs. Gary Buteyn, Sec'y.

News From Our Churches

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST

April 3, 1974

Hope Prot. Ref. Church

Classis East met in regular session on April 3, 1974 in Hope Church. Each church was represented by two delegates. Rev. Van Overloop and Rev. Veldman were absent due to work in Prospect Park, New Jersey and Skowhegan, Maine respectively. Rev. C. Hanko led the classis in opening devotions and after the classis was constituted, Rev. R. C. Harbach took the chair.

Four elder delegates attending classis for the first time had the privilege of signing the Formula of Subscription.

The reports of the Stated Clerk and the Classical Committee were received and the usual committees were appointed. Elders J. Bishop and T. Nelson

served on the Finance Committee for this session. Expenses of \$178.67 were reported and authorized for payment. Elder M. Vander Ploeg was appointed to thank the ladies of Hope for their catering services.

The greatest amount of classis' time was spent on a letter from Holland's consistory. Holland requested the classis to declare that its previous decision to declare Holland's request for help out of order on the basis of Article 30 of the Church Order was not in harmony with Article 31 of the Church Order. Holland further requested classis to instruct the church visitors to ask specifically about CLA

(continued on back page)

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 22, 1974, the Lord willing, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. MEINDERT GAASTRA hope to commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren, are grateful to our covenant God for their example of faith and godliness.

It is our sincere prayer that the Lord may continue to sustain them with His grace through their remaining years so that they, and we may confess — "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children." Psalm 103:17.

Mr. and Mrs. Philip Lindeman
Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Gritters
Mr. and Mrs. Ray Gaastra
Mr. and Mrs. Otto Gaastra
and 17 grandchildren

Redlands, California

IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, express their sincere Christian sympathy to its members, William, Cornelius, Marinus and Louis Kamps, and to Gilbert Schimmel, sons and son-in-law, of MR. GEORGE KAMPS, SR., who, after a lingering illness passed away at the age of 83 years, on Good Friday, April 12, 1974.

May the family find consolation in God's Word as recorded in Isaiah 25:8 — "He will swallow up death in victory and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it."

Joe King, Pres.
P. Koole, Sec'y.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its heartfelt sympathy with two of its members, Mrs. John Bodbyl and Mrs. George Kamps, Jr., in the death of their father, MR. GEORGE KAMPS, SR., who, after a long and lingering illness was delivered to be with Christ in His glory. "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness." (Psalm 17:15).

Mrs. J. B. Lubbers, Sec'y.

IN MEMORIAM

On April 12, 1974, the Lord called home our beloved husband, father and grandfather, GEORGE KAMPS, SR., at the age of 83 years.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Psalm 116:15

Nellie Kamps, wife
Mr. & Mrs. William Kamps
Mr. & Mrs. John Bodbyl
Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert Schimmel
Mr. & Mrs. Cornelius Kamps
Mr. & Mrs. George Kamps, Jr.

Mr. & Mrs. Marinus Kamps
Mr. & Mrs. Nelson Kamps
Mr. & Mrs. John Kamps
Mr. & Mrs. Louis Kamps
Rev. & Mrs. Marvin Kamps
Mr. & Mrs. Leon Kamps

Sixty-eight grandchildren
Eleven great-grandchildren

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, on behalf of our congregation, wishes to express its sympathy to our pastor, Rev. M. Kamps, and his family, in the loss of his father, MR. GEORGE KAMPS, SR.

May the Lord comfort them in their bereavement.

"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." (Romans 14:8).

Larry Huiskens, Vice Pres.
Edwin Gritters, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The members of The Men's Society and the Mary-Martha Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, wish to express their heartfelt sympathy to our president, Rev. M. Kamps, and his family in the death of his father, MR. GEORGE KAMPS.

"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." (Romans 14:8).

Mr. John Feenstra, Sec'y.
Mrs. Bernie Meelker, Sec'y.

membership in the churches of Classis East and to inquire whether these members were being treated. In regard to Holland's first request, Classis decided to maintain its former decision on the grounds that classis itself had requested response from the consistories to the CLA Study Committee Report and that the matter was not finished since final adjudication of the matter did not occur until January 3, 1974 meeting of classis. Holland was informed that with regard to its request to instruct the church visitors to ask about CLA membership, the church visitors already have the right to ask not only about CLA membership but about any matter which they deem pertinent.

Church visitors elected for this year are Rev. J. A. Heys and Rev. C. Hanko. Rev. H. Veldman was selected as alternate.

In other voting, Rev. Hanko was elected to a three-year term on the Classical Committee.

The delegates *ad examina* submitted a copy of their report to Synod re the examination by Classis West of Candidate M. Hoeksema. The delegates advised Classis West to recommend to Forbes congregation that they proceed with ordination and installation. This Forbes has already happily done and Candidate Hoeksema is now addressed as Rev. Hoeksema.

Prospect Park requested classical appointments. Rev. M. Joostens and Elders P. Letterman and H. Kuiper proposed and classis adopted the following schedule: PROSPECT PARK: April 21, 28 - Rev. Harbach; May 5, 12, 19 - Rev. Van Baren; May 26, June 2, 9 - Classis West; June 16, 23, 30 - Rev. Joostens; July 7, 14, 21 - Rev. Veldman.

At the conclusion of the session, the questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and satisfactorily answered. In his closing remarks, the chairman thanked the classis for their cooperation in conducting the day's business and for the fellowship enjoyed. He further wished God's blessing upon the delegates and churches.

Classis adjourned just prior to noon and will next convene on July 3, 1974 at Southwest Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Huisken
Stated Clerk

THE STANDARD BEARER

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August.
Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.
Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

Editor-in-Chief: Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema

Department Editors: Prof. Robert D. Decker, Mr. Donald Doezeema, Rev. David J. Engelsma, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman Hanko, Rev. Robert C. Harbach, Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. Jay Kortering, Rev. Dale H. Kuiper, Rev. George C. Lubbers, Rev. Marinus Schipper, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Herman Veldman

Editorial Office: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema
4975 Ivanrest Ave. S.W.
Grandville, Michigan 49418

Church News Editor: Mr. Donald Doezeema
1904 Plymouth Terrace, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

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 Question-Box Department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be neatly written or typewritten, and must be signed. Copy deadlines are the first and the fifteenth of the month. All communications relative to the contents should be sent to the editorial office.

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

Business Office: The Standard Bearer
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.
P. O. Box 6064
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Business Agent for Australasia: Mr. Wm. van Rij
59 Kent Lodge Ave.
Christchurch 4, New Zealand

Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$7.00 per year (\$5.00 for Australasia). Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order, and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

Advertising Policy: The *Standard Bearer* does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$3.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business Office and should be accompanied by the \$3.00 fee. Deadline for announcements is the 1st or the 15th of the month, previous to publication on the 15th or the 1st respectively.

Bound Volumes: The Business Office will accept standing orders for bound copies of the current volume; such orders are filled as soon as possible after completion of a volume. A limited number of past volumes may be obtained through the Business Office.

CONTENTS:

Rejoicing In Manifold Temptations	314
About Matthew 23:37-39	316
About That Step Toward A New Confession In The GKN	318
Anniversary Thoughts	321
The Standard Bearer In Retrospect	323
Hyper-Calvinism and the Call of the Gospel(2)	326
The Relationship Between The Truth And Life	328
Exposition of Hebrews 11:32, 33	332
News From Our Churches	335