

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

## **Protestant Reformed Seminary GRADUATION**

... the work of the preaching of the Word. It is to that work that our graduates look forward and for which they have been prepared and trained. In their future ministry they must concentrate all their abilities and labor on that task: the preaching of the Word of the Lord Jehovah. And their attitude must be that of the prophet Amos as expressed in the striking comparison of the words of Amos 3:8: "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"



*Class Of 1979*

See "Seminary Commencement Address" — Page 418

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman Hanko, Rev. Robert C. Harbach,  
Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. Meindert Joostens, Rev. Jay Kortering, Rev.  
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James Slopsema, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Ronald Van Overloop,  
Rev. Herman Veldman, Mr. Kenneth G. Vink.**Editorial Office:** Prof. H.C. Hoeksema  
4975 Ivanrest Ave. S.W.  
Grandville, Michigan 49418**Church News Editor:** Mr. Kenneth G. Vink  
1422 Linwood, S.E.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507**Editorial Policy:** Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of  
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## MEDITATION

## The Vaunting Axe

Rev. M. Schipper

*"Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood."*

Isaiah 10:15

One of the most beautiful and comforting doctrines of the Christian faith is that of the Providence of God. And perhaps no more beautifully and comprehensively expressed is this doctrine than in our Belgic Confession.

Here the truth is set forth that God, after creating the world, did not forsake it, as the proud Deist would have it; nor did He leave it to fortune and chance, as the fatalist or determinist maintains. Rather, so the Article stresses it, He rules and governs

the same according to His holy will, so that nothing happens in the world without His appointment. He even executes His work in the most excellent manner when devils and wicked men act unjustly, restraining the devil and all our enemies, that without His will and permission, they cannot hurt us; so that not a hair of our head, nor a sparrow can fall to the ground without His will.

Though this article of faith does not claim to comprehend all the profundities involved in the relation between the restraining power God exercises over rational moral creatures and their response, even cautioning not to curiously pry into those things which surpass human understanding, and to be content with that only which He has revealed in His Word, it nevertheless makes two things abundantly clear. God neither is the author of, nor can He be charged with the sins these rational creatures commit; while at the same time it is evident that He so governs them that they serve His purpose. Moreover, they are so under His restraining power that without His will they cannot hurt us. This restraining power of God must not be understood as a fruitage of a certain 'common grace' toward the wicked, as some have explained. There is nothing in the article that remotely suggests such an idea. Rather, what is so beautifully stressed is the Scriptural truth that the devil and all our enemies are so completely under God's providential government that they can do only what He purposes for them to do. It is this truth which is so clearly demonstrated in the Scripture to which our text now calls our attention.

In the tenth chapter of Isaiah the vaunting, boasting axe is the kingdom of Assyria. Notably the prophet speaks of the boasting axe, the self-magnifying saw, and the rebellious, self-exalting rod, not with the intention to dwell on the subject of three distinct instruments (axe, saw, and rod), but to demonstrate with emphasis the element of boasting which is mentioned in connection with each instrument. When we speak of the vaunting axe, therefore, all that is said regarding the saw and rod may be subsumed under the figure of the vaunting axe.

All these instruments are in themselves dead instruments, used for the purpose of cutting down, humbling the trees of the forest. Naturally dead instruments do not talk, nor do they act by themselves. They simply lie on the ground or wherever they are placed by the user of them. The axe is capable of hewing the tree only as it is manipulated in the hand of the feller. However, in the text as it is set in the context of Isaiah 10 the axe is said to react overagainst the one who wields it. As was said the axe is the kingdom of Assyria which is made up of wicked men inspired by the devil who proudly vaunt themselves overagainst Jehovah, the God of

Judah, and overagainst the nation of Judah which is about to be brought into captivity.

Assyria is commissioned of Jehovah God to fulfill a certain work. He must marshal all his forces against Jerusalem. The kingdom of Judah, like the kingdom of Israel, had at this time made itself ready for judgment, having made full its measure of iniquity. But unlike the kingdom of Israel, it was not to be completely destroyed, but brought into the captivity of Babylon. In the siege against Jerusalem, the city and temple are to be laid low, while its citizens were to be ruthlessly removed from their land. According to verse six, it is the Lord's purpose to show His wrath on Judah, a hypocritical nation. "I will send him (Assyria) against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him in charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets." Indeed, Jehovah will send the rod of His anger and the staff of His indignation, and that rod and staff is none other than the kingdom of Assyria. Jehovah will surely chastise His nation for their sin and iniquity; but He will use the reprobate nation of Assyria to accomplish this purpose.

And Assyria will indeed acquit himself well of his task. With great ambition he will go about to bring havoc on Jerusalem. All that Jehovah desires of him he will do. Unwittingly, of course, he goes about his work; that is, he does not really know that Jehovah is using him. He does it all as if it is in his power to do what he will with God's people. And in the process, he exalts himself. He asks himself the question: are not my princes altogether kings? He boasts that Judah is no different from the other nations he has conquered, nor were the gods of those nations different from the God of Judah. Shall he not, as he had done to Samaria, do also to Jerusalem? (Vss. 8-11). Indeed, Assyria is the vaunting axe which boasteth itself against the God of Judah Who heweth therewith!

Such is the vaunting axe also throughout the history of the world.

To get the full picture we must go back to the beginning. In the beginning of the creation of the world man was made king-servant by His Creator. Created was he in the image of God, in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. By virtue of that image man stood in a covenant relation to his God. He could rightly know Him, love Him with his whole being and will, . . . but only as a friend-servant. He had dominion over all things earthly, but his reign was to be in accordance with God's will. All things must serve him in order that he might serve his God.

But this friend-servant through his fall into sin and corruption became actually a friend-servant of the

devil. He not only lost God's image, but the image turned into its opposite. His knowledge became darkness, his righteousness became rebellion, and his holiness became corruption. He became not only the devil's ally, but slave. Mind you, all this while he retained his relation to the creation. O, indeed, he lost much of his original gifts, but he was still the king of the world. He ever since employs all his powers and resources to oppose the living God in the spiritual-ethical sense of the word. He serves the devil, who is in Scripture designated the prince of the world and the prince of darkness.

Naturally, therefore, this fallen man in his generations stands opposed to God's cause, His covenant, His people in the midst of the world. However, God remains God, and maintains His covenant, His counsel, and purpose. Never is He frustrated, brought to nought by the powers of darkness. He anoints His Son to become King in Zion. He causes Him to become the root of a new humanity — the elect — the seed of the woman. And this covenant people is delivered by Him from the slavery of the devil. They walk in holiness after the image of God in which they are recreated. They constitute the party of the living God in the world overagainst the power of the fallen king and his kingdom. Not naturally but spiritually they differ radically from the wicked world, developing from the spiritual principle of regeneration, while the vaunting axe develops from the principle of sin and darkness, employing all its powers to establish and maintain a wicked world kingdom. The latter includes the devil and his angels and all the wicked in alliance with them. And so we see the antithesis between Babylon and Jerusalem, between the world and the church.

Assyria, therefore, the vaunting axe, was but an individual manifestation of the antithesis, of the wicked seed of the serpent (Gen. 3:15) which always manifests itself in the world. So from the beginning there is opposition between the seed of Cain and that of Seth, between the builders of the Tower of Babel and the children of Shem, between Egypt and Israel. All through the old dispensation we find the antithesis in the successive powers of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. And in the new dispensation this antithesis manifests itself in the power of Jew and Gentile, Scribe and Pharisee, Pilate and Herod, all foaming out their rage against the Holy Child Jesus. We find it in the false doctrines and vain philosophy of the world and apostatizing church. And it culminates in Gog and Magog, and the Antichrist who shall appear in the last days. The vaunting axe may differ in appearance in history, but always it stands in opposition to God's cause and covenant in the world. Not in the dualistic sense does this opposition assume its place, for God really has no opponents. Even the

powers of evil must serve His purpose. For God is God.

Always the highest purpose of the Divine is His own glory. And this purpose is realized in His covenant in Christ. Not only is this purpose realized in a general way, so that when Jerusalem is assailed the elect will cry to Jehovah for deliverance, and when Christ is crucified to save His people, Judas, Herod, and Pontius Pilate must cooperate. But this is also true in the personal salvation of God's people. Then Paul must have an angel of Satan to buffet him. Then God purifies His saints in the crucible of affliction, brought on by the wicked. Then heresy must and does serve for the development of God's truth. Then all things, even the evil, work together for good to them that love God.

In this service the axe then is not a dead instrument. O, in the spiritual sense of the word Assyria is also dead, dead as the natural man in trespasses and sins, and therefore incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all evil. But Assyria also belongs to the category of the rational, moral creatures. Assyria, therefore, acts responsibly, and being motivated from within Assyria thinks, counsels, has purposes of its own: always, you understand, in opposition to God, and all that is holy. Assyria purposes to destroy Jerusalem, the last standing vestige of the work of God. Everything that smacks of God's covenant must be annihilated. That is Assyria's purpose. But in the carrying out of Assyria's purpose God realizes His own purpose. So Assyria is the axe in the hand of Jehovah, and He hews with it to realize His own eternal counsel.

Thus we see that God has a work for the reprobate to do. And this gives new meaning to the whole idea of reprobation. The latter is not simply the passing by of some in distinction from the election of others. But reprobation serves the election of grace; as the shell serves the walnut, as the chaff serves the kernel of wheat. As was said, unwittingly Assyria works, unaware that it serves God's purpose. Never does Assyria mean, when it destroys Jerusalem and brings Judah to Babylon, to bring God's people to repentance and salvation, nor, when it makes rubble of the city of Jerusalem, to cause the people of God to look for Jerusalem that is above and which must presently descend out of heaven. Indeed, Assyria means only to destroy all the cause of Jehovah and boast itself in that destruction. But Jehovah uses the vaunting axe to destroy the type so that the fulfillment may appear. His purpose is to destroy the typical temple and sacrifices in order through the sacrifice of Christ the temple of God may be realized in His people gathered out of all nations. Judah must suffer loss, that the faithful may look to the Lion of Judah's tribe for deliverance. Nothing may frustrate that

Divine purpose. Even reprobate Assyria, appearing as the boasting axe, is used of God to glorify His covenant.

The vaunting axe attains temporary success only because Jehovah hews with it to accomplish His purpose. Not for a moment would Assyria be able to lay one finger on Judah had this not been the case. But Assyria succeeds because God wills it. And so they will gather the spoil. For a small moment they will exalt themselves over the cause of Jehovah. And this explains how Nebuchadnezzar becomes great in the earth, and is brought to boasting. This explains how Judas succeeds in betraying the Christ, and the enemies rejoice in His crucifixion. This also explains how in the future even the Antichrist succeeds for a while, sitting in the temple and boasting that he is God.

But remember this success leads only to greater rebellion against the Most High, and therefore the greater condemnation. Assyria can only heap to himself greater treasures of wrath. And so the apparent success only leads to bitter failure. This is

the folly of the world whose wisdom is made foolishness by the Most High.

The ultimate reward of Assyria and all who boast themselves against our God is everlasting desolation in hell-fire. Because they stood in rebellion against the living God, theirs shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

All the vain boasting will have its end in this that the boasters will be brought to clearly understand and acknowledge that their vain purpose only served to accomplish God's counsel, Not only is God God, but He must be acknowledged as such. Eternally the Word of God to Assyria, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, to the raging nations, and to Antichrist will be: for this purpose have I raised thee up to show My power in thee. And from the consciousness of desolation they will reply: Yes, indeed, Thou art forever the only true God!

And God's people now and forever will say: Amen!

Glory, honor, praise, and dominion be unto our God, Who is the God of our everlasting salvation!

## Editor's Notes

**Guest Article.** In this issue you will find an interesting and significant article by the Rev. Eugene C. Case, of the First Presbyterian Church (PCA) of Woodville, Mississippi. Be sure to read it. And: Thanks, Pastor Case!

\* \* \* \* \*

**Report on Synod-1979.** This year's Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches made several significant decisions. In fact, in more than one respect it was a significant and forward-looking synod. The official report will come several weeks from now in the *Acts*. In this issue you will find an unofficial

report and summary from the pen of Rev. G. Van Baren, who was president of this year's synod.

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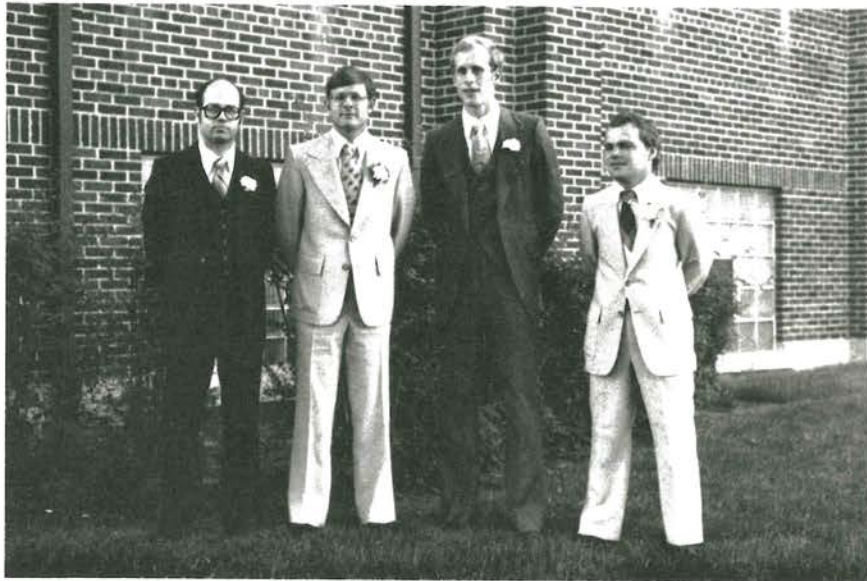
**Question Box.** At our recent annual Staff meeting, it was called to my attention that *Question Box* has appeared only once in the current volume. It stands to reason that our *Question Box* editor, Rev. C. Hanko, can hardly furnish answers if he receives no questions. Please send in your questions to our editorial office. Remember the rule: all correspondence must be signed, though we do not publish the names of questioners.

Know the standard and follow it.  
Read **The Standard Bearer**

*EDITORIALS*

## Seminary Graduation, 1979

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*



L to R: Candidates Steven R. Houck, Ronald L. Cammenga, Ronald H. Hanco, Carl J. Haak

On Tuesday evening, June 12, a large audience nearly filled the main floor of the auditorium of First Church, Grand Rapids, to witness the graduation of four candidates for the ministry in our Protestant Reformed Churches. These four young men – Ronald Cammenga, Carl Haak, Ronald Hanco, and Steven Houck – had successfully “weathered” their examinations by Synod the previous week. An appropriate and enjoyable program accompanied this graduation, and after the formal program the candidates received a multitude of congratulations and good wishes at the coffee-hour downstairs.

There are several items of note concerning this year’s graduates. In the first place, if memory serves correctly, this is the largest graduating class since the 1930s. In the second place, some of the members of this class – and this is the first time this has happened – have been at our school for a full seven years: four

pre-seminary years and three seminary years. In the third place, one of the candidates will, the Lord willing, represent a third living generation in our ministry. Candidate Ronald Hanco received his diploma from the hand of his father, Prof. Herman Hanco, and his grandfather, Rev. Cornelius Hanco, the president of our Theological School Committee.

Needless to say, after several years of close contact with these young men we of the faculty will miss them at school.

We congratulate our candidates, give thanks to our covenant God for them, and pray that the Lord will soon confirm their call by giving them a place in our churches.

A transcript of my commencement address will be found elsewhere in this issue.

*SPECIAL ARTICLE*

# Report on Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches 1979

*Rev. G. Van Baren*

The synod of our churches began at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, June 6. The preceding night the customary prayer service was held at First Church in Grand Rapids – the convening church for synod. The president of the synod of last year, Rev. J. Heys, addressed the gathering from the passage of Scripture found in I Kings 21:3, “And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.” In his inimitable way, the Rev. Heys reminded synod that Naboth lost his life in his desire to maintain his inheritance. Nor was this desire to be attributed to stubbornness or to the desire for material wealth, but from the sole desire to maintain that inheritance which God had given his forefathers. That inheritance God had commanded must be kept within the family in their generations. It was a type of that inheritance of God’s people in Christ – an inheritance also continued in the line of generations. The synod and the gathering were reminded that we, too, have the urgent requirement to maintain that inheritance which God has given to us. That may not be relinquished at any cost. The message was very appropriate for the synod as it began its labors.

There are at least three things which stand out as one recalls the events of the two weeks of synod. There was the impressive examination (and subsequent graduation) of our four seminary students;

there was the action of synod dealing with important mission matters; and there was the decision of the synod extending the length of seminary training from three years to four. Many other items were also treated – but these three stand out above all.

Always impressive is the examination of students. Rev. C. Hanko, one of the delegates to synod, recalled that these examinations began almost exactly 50 years ago – and he ought to know, for he was in that first class which was examined (in the same building in which this present examination took place). The examination begins with a sermon from each of the four students – given consecutively on Wednesday afternoon. The sermons already indicated to the synod the ability of the students. The following two days, days of careful questioning by the three professors, confirmed the impressions received while listening to the sermons. The students showed excellent ability in quoting proof-texts and in explaining and defining the doctrines of Scripture. No, they did not answer every question; yet synod was duly impressed by the many and often difficult questions which they did answer. The students were noticeably tense on Thursday, but by Friday they appeared far more relaxed. The pressures of prior preparation, and the strain of sitting before a gathering of the “learned fathers” of synod, had its effect on the students. Yet the synod fully sym-

pathized with the students — and on Friday afternoon, without doubt or equivocation, decided unanimously that these four, Ronald Cammenga, Carl Haak, Ronald Hanko, and Steven Houck, should be declared candidates for the ministry of the Word and sacraments. They become eligible for call after July 6. The graduation of these candidates took place on Tuesday, June 12, in First Church. A large audience witnessed this happy event and heard Prof. H. C. Hoeksema remind the candidates of their calling based upon the Word of God found in Amos 3:8, “The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?”

The second week of synod was occupied largely by a discussion of mission activities. This was a joyful fact — yet very awesome. Never, I believe, in the history of our churches have we acted so extensively and positively. Some have already said that the synod may have gone “overboard” and decided too much on items which prove too costly for our churches. Yet those who were at synod, who heard the cries for help, could do no otherwise than decide to help as best we can. Though the decisions on all of these important mission matters was unanimous, this was not because it was a “rubber stamp” synod. The requests were carefully considered, the cost and available manpower were discussed, then decisions were made. Before God, the synod could do nothing else.

First came the request from Singapore. Urgently, a large group of young people there had requested the help of a missionary. They desired assistance in organizing a Reformed church in Singapore. These are literally “babes” in Christ — having been converted to Christianity only in the past few years. They want more instruction. Also the possibility of mission work in that area of the world beyond the confines of Singapore was pointed out. Synod heeded the urgent plea and appointed Doon, Iowa congregation to be the calling church for this missionary. Let us earnestly pray the Lord of harvest that this important position for a very truly foreign missionary may soon be filled.

Another urgent request came from Christchurch, New Zealand. Rev. J. Heys had just recently returned after serving there for some eight months. He had conveyed to our synod and the churches the greetings from the congregation at Christchurch and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. The church of Christchurch had requested already several years ago a minister who could serve them for a minimum of two or three years. Again they came with this request. They want ministry of the Word in their midst, instruction, and help in preparing young men there for service within their denomination. Synod was again impressed by the cry for help — and

heeded the cry by appointing Hudsonville the calling church for a minister who could serve that distant congregation.

A third cry came from Jamaica. Annually, for more than sixteen years, synods have faced the need in Jamaica. There have been frustrations, questions, doubts. But again the need is real. The cry for help continues. Stop-gap measures of tape instructions and periodic visits of emissaries obviously are not enough. Synod approved the request of the mission committee to instruct them to prepare for the calling of a missionary to Jamaica after the synod of 1980. First Church was appointed as eventual calling church and to take over supervision of that field in conjunction with the mission committee.

Finally, there were requests, urgent requests, from various places in our own country. Synod received the information that the Rev. R. Van Overloop had accepted the call of our South Holland, Ill. congregation to serve as missionary to Birmingham, Alabama. He expects to be there with his family perhaps by the end of July. The information was cause for real joy — especially since this same synod received also information concerning the retirement soon of our only other home missionary, Rev. R. Harbach.

But other, and urgent, requests were heard. The mission committee and Lynden, Washington congregation reported interest in the establishment of a Protestant Reformed congregation in an area 40 to 100 miles south of Lynden. Here, too, the need could not be ignored. Synod appointed Lynden calling church for a missionary to labor in that area.

And, finally, there was the cry from the East Lansing-Charlotte area. Services have been conducted there since January of this year. But more work is required. The labors of a missionary seem necessary. Synod appointed our Hope church to call a missionary to serve there.

At this synod too, the reports indicate that soon the labors in Victoria in Canada will cease. The families with whom Rev. R. Harbach were laboring, expect to move near one of our other churches.

Concern has been expressed by some (not present at these meetings of synod) concerning two things: do we have enough “manpower” available to fill these positions? and, can our small group of churches bear the tremendous cost of all of these extra labors?

Taking all of these things into consideration, synod had to face the question: does God indicate that He would have us to labor in these various places? Again, before God, hearing the cries for help, synod had to answer: “Yes!”

As far as available men are concerned, we have the four graduates (very capable young men), so that



there will likely be no more “vacancies” in our churches than that which we presently have. Probably all of these calls will not immediately be answered – so that we will not immediately have five or six men in the mission field.

The question of cost is also important. However, there is real danger in raising such a question: can the call of God go unheeded, perhaps because we decide this is too costly for the church? What is “too much” in connection with the work of the kingdom? If God were to require us to give up our vacations, our luxuries, our cars – would that be “too much” for the cause of God’s kingdom? Which is first: the kingdom of God – or our own pleasures?

Having said all of that, let it be noted well that the sacrifice, if it be such, is hardly as great as suggested in the former paragraph. The budget adopted by synod requires \$304 per family per year for 1980 – from the \$228 for the current year. This indeed represents an increase. But it must be kept in perspective. In 1977 the assessments were \$243. Since that time they have *decreased*, and that, while the inflationary rate was more than 7% per year. Had we increased assessments only at the rate of the inflation, and using the base of 1977, the assessments would be higher than \$304.

No, \$5.85 per family per week is hardly sacrifice. On the contrary, what a tremendous bargain all of this is! Did you ever think of it? For only \$5.85 per family per week, our small group of churches are supporting a theological school of our own, with its own building, and with three professors. Our churches are helping the smaller congregations of our number so that they can continue as church with ministers of their own. Our churches pay for regular meetings of classes and synods. Our churches continue to assist the ministers of our number who have retired from the active ministry. Our churches propose an extensive mission program as outlined above. Our churches pay for radio broadcasts, publication of literature, regular “church visitation,” and many other lesser things. At the end of synod, I could not but be amazed that for only \$5.85 a week we might have all of this! Whereas we ought to be willing to sacrifice even our lives for the sake of His

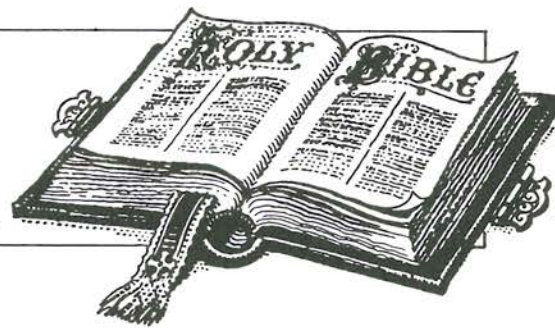
kingdom, God requires now only \$5.85 – probably much less than I have to spend for one good meal for my family at home (and much less than one might have to spend for only one meal in a restaurant). For many, probably most, less than an hour’s wages is required per week for this aspect of the work of the kingdom. Where else can one find this much gospel for so little material cost?

One other major matter was on the floor of synod. There was a proposal from the theological school committee to revise our present pre-seminary and seminary program. In the pre-seminary program, our professors were relieved of teaching three subjects (which will now be obtained from neighboring colleges). It was reported that in the future it will likely be possible for our pre-sem students to receive a college degree. Neighboring colleges seem willing to receive for credit the courses taught in our pre-sem department, and with some additional work at the college, the student can receive his diploma and degree. The seminary program especially was changed. All the present subjects will still be taught. But because the present work-load is quite great, and because the professors desire to expand and improve our seminary offerings, the seminary training will require four instead of the current three years. The students presently in the seminary or in last part of their pre-seminary training will be unaffected by this change.

Much more could be added to the report. Many other decisions were made. Consideration of all of this must wait, however, until the Acts of Synod are printed. Normally these are available sometime in the fall of the year, and each family in the denomination is entitled to a free copy. Be sure to read and study it carefully – for it concerns you, your church, your confession. It is important that you keep up with developments and decisions within the churches.

Finally, my wish and prayer can only be that the harmony and unity exhibited at the synod might also be seen within our churches and each congregation during the coming year. Let us together thank our God for all the opportunities and privileges He has given – solely out of His grace and tender love for His people for Jesus’ sake.

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## SEMINARY COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

# Jehovah's Word and the Lion's Roar

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Class of 1979, Brethren of the Theological School Committee and of the Synod, Brethren and Sisters gathered with us:

In my remarks, which are addressed chiefly to our graduates but in the presence of you all, I wish to concentrate on the chief work of the ministry to which these young men look forward: the work of the preaching of the Word. It is to that work that our graduates look forward and for which they have been prepared and trained. In their future ministry they must concentrate all their abilities and labor on that task: the preaching of the Word of the Lord Jehovah. And their attitude must be that of the prophet Amos as expressed in the striking comparison of the words of Amos 3:8: "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spokèn, who can but prophesy?"

It is not my intention this evening to preach a sermon on this text in its context; that would go far beyond the purposes of this gathering tonight. But I wish to call your attention to a few pertinent thoughts in connection with this passage of Scripture.

### I. A UNIQUE WORD

It is plain, first of all, that both the lion and the Lord Jehovah are recognizable from their sound. This is the first point to be noticed in the comparison of this text. The lion hath roared: there is no other sound like that lion's roar, so that the lion may be

and is recognized from his roar. The Lord Jehovah hath spoken: there is no other speech like that, so that the Lord Jehovah may be and is recognized from the unique sound, the content, of His speech. Hence, there is reference here to what God says, what He speaks, that is, to the words of God and to His Word.

What is that speech of God?

It is, in the first place, the Word which God speaks in eternal perfection in His Son. It is the Word which God speaks as the Triune God; of the Father, in the Son, and through the Holy Spirit, God speaks eternally of Himself, concerning Himself, to Himself. But here, obviously, the Word to which Amos refers is the Word which God speaks outside of Himself, in His revelation. It is the Word which God speaks of Himself, concerning Himself, in His Son, through the Holy Spirit, *to His people*. Also that Word, remember, returns to God Himself: it returns through His people to Himself in praise and adoration.

The Lord Jehovah has spoken His Word which consists of *many words*. Scripture speaks not only of the Word of God — singular — but also of the words of God — plural. This is because there are many aspects, many sides to the one Word of God and manifold riches of salvation and grace expressed by the various words of the Lord. But all those words together are nevertheless one; they are the bearers of the one Word of God: the revelation of the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. And if you ask

what the content of that revelation is, the answer is that it may all be summarized in the one Word: "I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT." Everything that belongs to the Word of God concentrates around that: "I will establish My covenant with My people in My Son Christ Jesus." And this is emphasized, too, by implication in the text. This Word is the speech of the Lord, Adonai, the name of God which emphasizes especially that He is the Sovereign of heaven and earth. When He establishes His covenant, He does so as the Lord! He has no need of any creature. He establishes His covenant all alone! It is *His* covenant with *His* people in *His* Son Jesus Christ. And it is *His* Word by which *He* establishes that covenant as the God Whose counsel shall stand and Who will do all His good pleasure. Further, this Word is the speech of Jehovah, the I AM. He is the Self-sufficient One, the Independent One, the Immutable One, the unchangeably faithful covenant God, Who keepeth covenant and mercy.

It is around this one Word of God, "I will establish My covenant," that all the other words of God concentrate. It is for this purpose that Christ is ordained. It is for this purpose that a people is elected. Yes, it is for this purpose that there is sovereign reprobation: it must serve – and even the reprobate must serve – the purpose of the realization of that covenant. It is for this purpose that His elect people are delivered, liberated, justified, sanctified, and glorified – even unto God's everlasting tabernacle in the glory of the new heavens and the new earth.

It must be stressed, too, that these words are emphatically the words of GOD! They proceed from God. They speak centrally of God. And therefore they are eternally true and stand immovably firm.

This speech of God is centrally in Christ. He is the Word become flesh, so that God immediately and directly speaks His Word in Him. For in Christ in the unity of the divine Person the human nature is united to the divine nature. And from Christ, that Word of God proceeded forth through patriarchs and prophets, through types and shadows in the old dispensation already. It proceeded forth in the fulness of time through the very speech of the Word made flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ. And after His exaltation it proceeded forth in the new dispensation through apostles and evangelists. Moreover, we have the complete and objective record of that speech in the Scriptures. For such is the content of the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation and in their entirety: they are the record of the speech of God in Christ!

Now we have already noted that the lion's roar and Jehovah's speech are unique. This is implied in the comparison in Amos 3:8. The reference is to that peculiar roar of a lion immediately before he strikes his prey. In all the animal kingdom there is no other

sound like it. One does not have to inquire whether that sound of a lion was perhaps the bark of a dog or the peep of a mouse or the trumpeting of an elephant. That roar is unique and is immediately recognized. Thus it is with the Word of Jehovah. There is no other speech like it in all the universe. One does not have to inquire what sound, whose speech, whose word that is. It is peculiarly and uniquely the speech of the Lord Jehovah: "I am the Lord, the absolute Sovereign of heaven and earth. I am Jehovah, the self-existent, independent, eternal I AM, the Immutable One, the unchangeably faithful Covenant God!"

The Word of the Lord Jehovah, therefore, is spontaneously recognized, even as is the roar of the lion. When a lion roars for his prey, one does not have to go through a reasoning process. He does not have to think and say, "This is true, and this is true, and this is true, and therefore I conclude that this is a lion roaring for his prey." In fact, to do so would be fatal! No, one recognizes that roar of the lion immediately and spontaneously and intuitively; and he responds at once in trembling fear.

Thus it is with the Word of the Lord Jehovah. This is due, of course, to the inward operation of the Spirit of Christ. The prophets and the apostles of old did not have to inquire and to reason and thus come to the conclusion when the Lord spoke to them and revealed His Word, "The Lord Jehovah has spoken." No, they knew immediately and spontaneously that the Lord had revealed His secrets to them. The same is true of us today. We do not start from a position of ignorance or skepticism, in order to go through a reasoning process and arrive at a reasoned conclusion concerning the Scriptures and at last declare: "This Bible is the very Word of God – plenary, organically, verbally, infallibly (or: inerrantly, which is the same thing) inspired." In fact, if you follow that method of skepticism and rationalism – as so many preachers and learned theologians do today – you will inevitably reach the opposite conclusion and deny that the Scriptures are the Word of God, the written record of the speech of the Lord Jehovah. No, that the Lord Jehovah has spoken is recognized with the spontaneity of faith. That is why even a very little child and even the simplest child of God, as well as the trained minister and the learned theologian, can and do recognize that speech and say, "The Lord Jehovah has spoken!"

## II. A SPONTANEOUS AND INEVITABLE REACTION

The prophet Amos emphasizes that prophesying on his part is the inevitable and spontaneous response to the speech of the Lord Jehovah. Notice how he puts it: "The Lord Jehovah hath spoken, who shall not

prophesy?" And this stands parallel with: "The lion hath roared, who will not fear?"

What is it to prophesy?

Without going into all the details of this concept, I wish to emphasize three important items in this connection. In the first place, to prophesy implies being a *servant*. This is plainly expressed in verse 7 of the same chapter: "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Prophets are *servants*. And a prophet, or a preacher, is not first of all a servant of the congregation; he is that, too. But he is primarily a servant of the Lord Jehovah! A prophet is not a lord; he is not one who does his own will. But he is a servant of the Lord. And the chief characteristic of a servant is that he always asks, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" In the second place, a prophet is a servant who serves strictly in the capacity of speaking in behalf of another — the Lord Jehovah. Whether he speaks by direct inspiration and revelation, as did the prophets and apostles of old, or whether he speaks by means of and in connection with the Scriptures, as do preachers today, that makes no principal difference. What must be emphasized is the truth that a prophet delivers not his own word, but the word of his Sender, the Word already described above. In the third place, a prophet is a servant who speaks not on his own authority, but on the authority of his Sender, the Lord Jehovah. When he speaks, therefore, he does not say: "This is what I think. This is what I have discovered. This is what I have concluded on the basis of these and these considerations and after much study." All of these have nothing to do with prophesying. A prophet says only, "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah!"

Such prophesying is your calling, members of the Class of '79. Your task as future preachers is not essentially different from that of the prophets of the old dispensation. It is to be servants of the Lord. It is to speak in behalf of the Lord Jehovah, to speak His Word. And it is to speak on His authority, to say, "Thus saith the Lord!"

To sum it all up, your calling is to preach *prophetically*.

There are many, many things that can be said about that. They need saying, too! We have tried to say them to you during the three years of your seminary training. But this evening permit me to stress a few things which may well be stressed not only for you, my young brethren, but for all of us. For one thing, you must never, never preach a vague, ill-defined sermon; but always you must preach clear, well-defined sermons. For another, you must never preach dull sermons, but always sharp sermons. For another, you must never preach general,

non-distinctive sermons. You must never preach sermons of which it could be said, "Well, that sermon could have been preached in any church of any denomination." No, you must always preach specific, distinctive sermons. Preaching must be in bold, black-and-white, sharp lines; it must not be in fuzzy, gray, indistinct lines. Preaching must be antithetical. Preaching must not be theoretical and abstract, but concrete. Preaching must not be dogmatical. This is not to say there must be no doctrine in your sermons; a sermon without doctrine is a sermon without solid content and without a good basis. But remember: when you are in the pulpit, you are not in the dogmatics classroom. Preaching must be the living Word; it must be concrete. Moreover, preaching must not be *at* God's people. It must not merely be *about* God's people, must not simply be in the third person singular or plural. I dislike the word "confrontation"; it has nuances, I think, which should be avoided. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that the preaching of the Word must be direct. There must be address in preaching. It must be personal. It must demand and call forth the response of faith and repentance.

All of these things, and many more, may be summed up in this: you candidates — and we all — must always preach so that the congregation senses unmistakably and says, "We have heard the Word of the Lord Jehovah."

Now notice the structure of the text in Amos. There are two rhetorical questions posed, that is, questions to which the answers are obvious and implied. The answers to both questions are, "No one!" Further, these two questions are parallel to one another: "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord Jehovah hath spoken, who will not prophesy?"

The implications are plain.

As to the lion's roar, the response to it, in the first place, is spontaneous, intuitive, instantaneous. That lion's roar instantly, unreasoningly fills a man's soul with fear. In the second place, the response to this roar is sure; it is inevitable and exclusive. No one who hears it will ever respond otherwise than in trembling fear. One would never think of responding, for example, by saying, "Ha, ha, ha! A lion roared!" All this is strongly emphasized by the rhetorical question, "Who will not fear?" Fear is the one and only and spontaneous response to the roar of a lion.

Thus it is with the Word of Jehovah. Such is the attitude that is expressed here by the faithful prophet Amos. For remember: this is the expression of his attitude — and the attitude of any faithful prophet-preacher — when he has heard the Lord Jehovah speaking: "Who will not prophesy?" What does this mean? In the first place, it means this: "As spontaneously as a man responds in fear to the lion's

roar, so spontaneously do I respond in prophesying to the Lord Jehovah's Word. I can do nought else. Necessity is laid upon me." In the second place, it implies this: "As surely as the inevitable response of a man to a lion's roar is that of fear, so surely and inevitably do I respond to Jehovah's Word by prophesying. Woe be unto me if I preach not the gospel of Christ."

### III. A SERIOUS RESPONSIBILITY

But there is a difference between responding to the roar of a lion and responding to the Word of Jehovah.

This is plain from the fact, in the first place, that not everyone who occupies the office of prophet-preacher truly prophesies. There were false prophets already in the old dispensation. They were men who occupied the office of a prophet, but who refused to speak the Word of Jehovah. And there are many such instances today: men who refuse to speak the Word of Jehovah when they preach, or men who say, "Thus saith the Lord," when the Lord has not spoken. In the second place, we must remember that while the response of fear to the roar of a lion is an unreasoning (though not unreasonable) and non-deliberative response, the response of a prophet-preacher to the Word of the Lord Jehovah is a deliberate, conscious, rational-moral response of the believing heart. There is one outstanding exception to this in the Old Testament. That most abominable hypocrite of the old dispensation, Balaam, was apparently compelled by the Lord to speak just as was his ass. But that exception in this instance only serves to emphasize the rule.

Hence, there is a very serious responsibility laid at the door of every prophet-preacher.

That responsibility is, in the first place: LISTEN! Listen not to men. Listen not to your own reason and your own wisdom. But listen to the Word of God, the Scriptures. If you do anything in your ministry, take care that you *immerse* yourselves in the Scriptures. Discipline yourself to do this. Insist on it. Insist on reserving time for this in your ministry. You must make certain that you hear the Word of the Lord Jehovah. Your attitude and your prayer must be, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

And then, in the second place, PROPHECY!

Yes, orate when you preach. I like some oratory in a sermon. A sermon must not be delivered a dry, didactic manner. But remember: if your oratory is not subservient to the Word of the Lord Jehovah, it is like sounding brass and a clanging cymbal. Indeed, speak in a warm and personal and conversational tone when you preach. But if that warm, conversational tone is not subservient to the Word of the Lord, it is hollow. When you preach, apply to your sermonizing all your intellectual acumen and logic. For there must be a line in a sermon; no one can follow it if there is no line in it. But remember: without the Word of the Lord Jehovah your intellectual acumen and powers of reason and logic can produce nothing but worldly words of man's wisdom. Yes, be pious and godly in your preaching; but remember that if your piety and godliness do not have as their content and their basis the Word of the Lord Jehovah, they are empty and vain.

In a word, preach so that all your preaching is the medium of the Word of the Lord Jehovah to His people!

May God give you, our candidates for the ministry, grace to be faithful to that calling. And may He soon give you a place in the ministry of His Word!

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## CONTRIBUTED ARTICLE

# Come Ye Apart

*Rev. Robt. C. Harbach*

He restoreth my soul. The soul needs restoring, refreshing, renewing. The constant pressure of labor in one's calling must at some regular intervals be interrupted by a pause that refreshes. Our Lord

Himself, in His infinite wisdom, so counseled: Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile. This He deemed necessary because of the incessant stress of coming and going with no leisure

so much as to eat. Hence, there are times when in our busy round of toil and care we must take care to come apart and rest awhile or we may come apart. The needed rest, one, a grey-beard, finds in twenty minutes of running three times a week. But since life today is so characterized by hurry, why, it may be asked, take up running to gain that needed refreshing? Why not, rather, take the time to notice the flora and fauna, to smell the flowers? Even though creation's glorious characters are large enough so that he that runneth may read, much is missed in the flurry and scurry of life. The world is a beautiful place; as Moses wrote in Genesis One, very beautiful. But in the mad pace of our Western life-style we are all too often heedless of the beauty fashioned by the divine artisan. Then we feel guilty when we give it some regard. But since the human mind is more intricately wonderful than the most complex computer and the most expensive and fastest high speed lens camera, not much time is needed to mentally photograph refreshing images, the restoring influences of which remain for long times to come. This is especially so when there is a regular renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2).

Then what blissful relief there is in the unforgettable glimpse and momentary visit of wild Yellow-billed parrots in the back yard trees, while out front the trees are full of Streamer-tailed Hummingbirds and tiny Vervain Hummers, smaller than a huge black native wasp! A little farther along the road, some Smooth-billed Anis bring delightful surprise. Come ye apart and see how He sendeth the springs into the valleys, how they run among the hills, how that beside them the birds of the heaven have their habitation, and from them these ethereal sprites wet their throats and whet their tongues to sing among the branches. How beautiful and refreshing; and all in less than an hour!

*He causes the springs of waters to flow  
In streams 'mid the hills and valleys below;  
Beside them with singing the birds greet the day,  
And there the beasts gather, their thirst to allay*

Another, a hoary head, gets away from it all to rest awhile in the regular relaxing activity of swimming. How refreshing to body, mind, and soul this is, only the swimmer himself can appreciate. But an indoor pool can be so boring. Not so a swim in the sea with an indispensable face mask. Then lovely vistas of the undersea world amaze the adoring eye. There, close, schools of tiny tropical fish of iridescent purple or delicate saffron speed by. Without a snorkel, there's a tendency to hold the breath too long with so much to see; so, not getting sufficient oxygen and the hot sun beating down, a sickish feeling develops. The opposite of refreshment, it might be thought, but the memorable recall of it all refreshes over and over. So

the sight of a triple brace of sea-lions in another ocean, or a lone cavorting sea-otter entertaining with comical antics, are all rewarding spectacles.

*To see a world in a grain of sand  
And heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand  
And eternity in an hour!*

— William Blake

There is this great and wide sea wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. These wait all upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them their food in due season. So nature, providence, and the holy and divine Scripture teach us to wait on the Lord in prayer for our daily bread, for our spiritual food in the preaching of the Word and the sacraments within the confines of the true church, where we may expect our spiritual nurture.

And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide. A quiet evening, a lovely field is an ideal place for getting off alone, for walking alone and sitting alone to meditate, pray, and acquaint ourselves with God. How pleasant to drink in the wide expanse of the darkening heavens, to listen to twilight prairie song! The Lord provides His own unique doses of refreshment and entertainment to relieve the fatigue and burden of the day. There in the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul. For then the presence of God is so much enjoyed. The field itself is full of wild-life, the sky above full of glory. In (the view of) His temple, the whole of it (i.e., the entire universe) is declaring, 'Glory!' (Ps. 29:9, Heb.).

One wonders whether Isaac's field could be described as follows. "Texas is so varied that a birder simply cannot know all the good birding places in it. It is bigger than life. Too varied, too complicated, it is necessary to pick and choose from the enormous wealth of places where birding is excellent or unique or secret." There the prairie sings with myriads of Canada and Snow Geese, Cattle and Common Egrets, Turkey and Black Vultures, Marsh and Sparrow Hawks, Sandpipers, Snipes, Long-billed Curlews, Crows, Red-winged Blackbirds, Boat-tailed Grackles, Killdeer, Avocets, Louisiana Heron, Loggerhead Shrikes, the Meadowlark, Mockingbirds and the Yellow-legs. With all this, a bird-lover all but goes out of his mind, so much it is to take in in one day; and this is but a small dot on the gigantic Texan segment of God's glorious creation! Of all this, what do motor bike riders know? what do they see? what do they hear? What do they esteem of the book of nature who never sense the *feel* of it?

Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ. That is to have a very high aim — the highest. Some birds are intriguing and well-known imitators, as the

Mockingbirds, the Catbirds, and the Brown Thrashers. Catbirds with voice pitched low can sound like the distant piping of the Flicker. However, the Song Sparrow's "Quick-quick-quick! Emergen-cee-ee!" is inimitable. But, would you believe it, Starlings are also apt imitators! Just outside the dining room window a pair of Starlings perch, one with beak almost vertical and spread wide open to pour forth its repertoire of imitations of Robin, Cardinal, Catbird, in fact a song so catbirdish you would surely have taken it for a Catbird, and then closing with sounds something like the Mina bird's whistle. Occasionally one is privileged to witness a unique display of bird behavior. But imagine a shabby, speckly, black robber imitating a Cardinal! So some pretty low sinners hypocritically cloak themselves in the pompous piety of a prelate. Christ alone is a model without blemish. Imitate Him and all who closely follow Him.

Not nature itself, not anything of the world, but the spiritual gift and ability to read parables divine revealed in the creation do comfort the soul. So field or Kleinstückwald in snow-laden winter becomes a haven from the strife of tongues and the crashing din of sin in the world. The woods ring with the crow of the cock pheasant; Black-capped Chickadees twitter high aloft; the noisy Titmouse proclaims its presence; the Redpolls and Purple Finches make it a red letter day; a Tohee scratches on the leafy forest floor; Pine Siskins appear, then vanish; a small flock of Cedar-birds eats its way through the winter berries lading the bushes, while ubiquitous Juncos lead the way on our path! The death of winter teems with life! Ask the birds of the air and they shall tell thee. But He

maketh us wiser than the birds of heaven. The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed time, and the turtle-dove and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but My people know not the judgment of the Lord. The birds observe the approach of winter: do we the winter of judgment? O how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all. The earth is full of Thy riches!

Of all the many references made in the Bible to nature, the singing of birds is mentioned only three times. Yet in the loud and lovely song emitted from their tiny throats, we think miracles have not ceased. It must be most glorious music that is reserved for the saints in heaven, since the Lord allows wicked men such music on earth! For although the birds sang before man was created, man will sing glory to God when those birds are no more. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord. Psalm 104 is the great oratorio of creation and ends with a prayer for the new creation of the New Heaven and the New Earth: Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul, Hallelujah!

*Rejoicing in God, my thought shall be sweet,  
While sinners depart in ruin complete;  
My soul, bless Jehovah, His Name be adored,  
Come, praise Him, ye people, and worship the  
Lord.*

Scripture references used in this article: Mk. 6:31; Gn. 1:31; Ps. 104:10, 12, 24, 25, 27, 33-35; Gn. 24:63; Ps. 94:19, Job 12:7; 35:11; Jer. 8:7.

## GUEST ARTICLE

# Arminianism Under a "Reformed" Flag

*Pastor E. C. Case*

In the middle of the last decade, at which time it had long since become apparent that the denominationally controlled theological seminaries of the Presbyterian Church in the United States

(commonly referred to as the Southern Presbyterian Church) were irreversibly apostate, a group of conservative leaders in that denomination began to lay plans for the establishment of a seminary which

would train men for the Gospel Ministry in the Biblical Faith. Those plans led to the founding of what is now known as the Reformed Theological Seminary, located in Jackson, Mississippi.

As is implied in the name, the Seminary claims a place within the Reformed camp. And, on paper that claim looks pretty good. The doctrinal standards of the institution are "the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms as originally adopted by the Presbyterian Church in the United States." (Quoted from the Seminary Statement of Purpose.) The faculty is made up of men from a variety of Presbyterian and Reformed denominations and these men are required to sign "A Statement of Belief and Covenant" each year, declaring their adherence to the Reformed Theology taught in the Westminster Standards as "the system of doctrine taught in Scripture."

History has shown, however, that what looks good on paper, in these matters, often does not pan out in practise. And, this seems to be the case also at Reformed Seminary. There has been a good deal of concern, over the past few years, that Reformed is moving toward a more broadly evangelical, less distinctively Reformed stance. Particularly among the alumni has this concern been raised, as is evident from the questions asked by Alumni President, the Rev. Charles R. Young III, in an interview with Mr. Robert C. Cannada, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the Seminary, which was published in a recent Alumni newsletter. In that interview, Rev. Young asked Mr. Cannada whether there was a drift away from a distinctively Reformed position, at the Seminary, toward broad evangelicalism. Mr. Cannada denies any such drift. He also denies that there is any tension between being Reformed and being evangelical. He agrees that there are such points of tension between the Reformed position and "certain elements of Evangelicalism." But he limits those elements to two: the denial of Biblical inerrancy by some so-called evangelicals, and the charismatic movement. Nothing is said relative to the differences between the Reformed and those in the evangelical camp who deny sovereign predestination, the covenant, and so forth. Mr. Cannada, a lawyer by trade, obviously evaded the real issue.

Of course, it may be that Mr. Cannada does not agree that there is a difference between the Reformed Theology of the Westminster Confession and the blatant Arminianism of evangelicals like Billy Graham. Or, like the blatant Arminianism of a little pamphlet which was recently sent out by the Seminary as part of a series ironically called "Living Truths." This little pamphlet, entitled "Back to God," written by the Rev. Frank M. Barker, Jr., one of the Ministerial Advisors of RTS, and Pastor of the

large Briarwood Presbyterian Church in America in Birmingham, Alabama, is evidently being put forth as an example of what the Seminary means when it says that "Fundamental in the concept of theological training held by Reformed Theological Seminary is the dynamic union of the doctrinal strength of the Reformed Faith with the warmth of Evangelistic passion. . . ."

What this pamphlet does, however, is emasculate the Reformed Faith. What is left may be called passionately evangelistic. But, it is by no stretch of the imagination Reformed.

There are a number of things that may be said of this little pamphlet.

In the first place, it does not differ essentially from the canned evangelistic approach of the "Four Spiritual Laws" booklet put out by Campus Crusade for Christ. This pamphlet is longer, but the message is basically the same. There is even a prayer to pray, toward the end, and on the basis of that prayer and the sincerity of his commitment, one is to be assured of salvation. In other words, it is not the promise of God's Word, but the act of the sinner, and the sinner's own "feelings" that are the ground of assurance.

The second general observation we can make about this pamphlet is that it assumes that men are earnestly seeking salvation and just waiting for someone to come along and tell them how to be saved. The idea of total depravity and inability is ignored. The fact of sin is acknowledged, but the impression is left that men are naturally concerned about their sin, worried about the wages of sin, namely, death, and scouting around for a way to get God to forgive them. Something else that is interesting in this connection is the fact that Barker seems to conceive of this wage of sin as one that is yet unpaid as far as the natural man is concerned. His whole emphasis is that of a future condemnation. Nothing is mentioned concerning the truth that the natural man is already dead in trespasses and sin (Ephesians 2:1). But that, of course, would be an admission of depravity and inability incongruous with the basic assumption of the pamphlet — the assumption that men are interested in God's salvation.

The most disturbing aspect of this pamphlet, however, is the section which is subheaded, "Conditions." This section follows the one on "Christ" in which our Lord's atonement for sin is discussed, concluding with the words: "... Christ paid every cent of the penalty for all our sins, even the sins we will commit in the future."

Does Barker then believe that Christ made full atonement for the sins of His people? Read what he



says in the section on "Conditions," which we quote in full:

Does that mean everyone in the world is forgiven and does not have to worry about sin anymore? Not at all! When Christ paid the penalty in full, He paid it conditionally. The Bible tells us that there are certain *conditions* we have to meet before we are actually forgiven.

Let's return to the judge and the courtroom to understand these conditions. Suppose – when I paid your fine for robbing the bank – that I paid it in full but I attached a condition: the judge was not to set you free until he felt that you meant business about not robbing any more banks. You, as the guilty law breaker, would have to meet that condition before you received the benefit of the payment. (This is in reference to an illustration used earlier in the pamphlet. ECC)

When Christ died for us He did something similar. He has attached two conditions for all sinners to meet: repentance and faith.

Now, it should be remembered that Barker, Reformed Seminary, and Presbyterianism in general in the South, have not passed through the same controversies which have contributed to the distinctive stand of the Protestant Reformed Churches. And this means that you are apt to hear terminology in our circles which would not be acceptable in your own – terminology which, nevertheless, would not necessarily imply any departure from the Truth. One might be heard to speak of "conditions," for example, in the sense that it is certainly true that no one is saved who does not

receive and exercise the twin graces of repentance and faith – the two conditions which Barker mentions.

But note how Barker approaches this whole business. Repentance and faith are not graces, imparted to the elect through the operation of God's Spirit working with the Word, as indicated in Questions 86 and 87 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. It is evident, both from the section quoted above, and from the two following sections on "Repentance" and "Faith," that Barker regards these two "conditions," as he calls them, as works which the sinner must perform. This, of course, again shows the lack of emphasis on depravity and inability. But even more importantly, it makes the efficacy of the work of Christ dependent upon the work of man. And this means, too, that Barker, in effect, teaches a universal atonement. What he really says is that Christ paid the penalty in full, or Christ did the work of salvation, up to a point. At that point, the will of man must take over in order for the process to be complete. So, you wind up with a Saviour who really does not save. You have salvation contingent upon the will of the flesh, the will of man.

Pure Arminianism!

And that under the auspices of "Reformed" Theological Seminary!

Mr. Cannada's assurances to the contrary notwithstanding, it is evident that Reformed Seminary has thrown over the Reformed Faith. It must, therefore, be obvious that those who desire a ministry trained in the pure Reformed Truth are going to have to look elsewhere.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

# Exposition of Galatians

*Rev. G. Lubbers*

### THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY (Galatians 5:14)

Paul quotes here the sum and substance of the whole law. This is briefly stated in, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." James calls this the "perfect law of liberty." We are to walk in our liberty in Christ

to which we have been called efficaciously out of darkness into God's marvelous light of grace, wherein God proclaims in the Ten Words, "I am the LORD thy God, who hath delivered you from Egypt's (sin's) bondage." (Exodus 20:1) I have made you children

of Sarah, Jerusalem above, born of the Spirit; I have given you the Spirit which cries in your hearts: Abba, Father. (Gal. 4:6, 7) Ye are no more servants but only sons. (Gal. 4:7)

No, we are not *under* law any more! Our relationship to the law of God has changed. We are under the ministry of righteousness, which has a glory of grace which far exceeds the ministry of condemnation and death. (II Cor. 3:7-10) For now the law is not written any more with ink upon tables of stone, but it is written by the ministry of righteousness upon the fleshy tables of the hearts by the Spirit of the living God! (II Cor. 3:3) Yes, we do have much to do with the law; a Christian is not antinomistic in his very spiritual nature! He does not live by the dictum: let us abide in sin that grace may abound! God forbid! The law is still the guide to our feet; but it is the guide to our *willing* feet. And the law, as we know it now, as the new commandment in Christ's blood, is not grievous; it is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. Into this law we gaze, look; upon it we meditate day and night. (James 1:25; Psalm 19:7-13) We now serve the Lord not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit, as Paul writes in Rom. 7:6, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead (dead to) that wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of letter."

There really is the wonder of God's transforming and quickening Spirit whereby we are metamorphosed from glory unto glory; we are brought in the way of daily conversion, progressive conversion, to be conformed more and more after the image of God, in the putting off of the old man, and the putting on of the new man. And this putting on of the new man is to be understood as the Heidelberg Catechism states it so very clearly and scripturally, when it calls it, "*a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works.*" (Ques. 90) Here is the *must* of performing, of doing good works; it is the *must* of the being a "new creature," "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before prepared that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10) This is not the "must" any more of the "letter which kills," but it is the "must" which is ours because we have looked at the glory on Moses' face, and have seen the end of the glory of the Old Covenant which perishes in that greater glory of Christ's transfiguration on the mount. We have seen the "exodus" which Christ fulfilled on the Cross and heard by faith the full implication of the "it is finished." (Exodus 34:33, 35; II Cor. 3:12 f.f.; John 19:30) The vail has been taken from our hearts when we read the law; we see Christ the "end" of the law for righteousness to every one who believes. (Rom.

10:4) This is the "Finis" of the law for righteousness to every believer!

We have, indeed, been called unto liberty!

In this liberty we must stand, unmoved, from the hope of the Gospel. We must stand in our liberty when we read the law and walk in liberty of putting on of the new man in Christ. For the law is the law of *liberty*. The law does not terrify our consciences in Christ. It is the great incentive to run the race set before us, and to enter into the strait gate and the narrow way. (Matt. 7:13) Few there be that find this gate of "liberty." It is the gate of grace which sanctifies the filthiest sinner, and cleanses the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. (Heb. 9:14)

Twice our fathers warn us definitely to flee these dead works wherein our conscience is not cleansed.

We refer, first of all, to Article 23 of the Belgic Confession, where we read,

"... and verily if we should appear before God, relying on ourselves, or on any other creature ever so little, we should, alas! be consumed. . . ."

Secondly, we refer to Article 24, where we read,

"... moreover, though we do good works, we do not found our salvation upon them; for we do no work but what is polluted by our flesh, and also punishable; and although we could perform such works, still the remembrance of one sin is sufficient for God to reject them. Thus we would always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences continually vexed, if we relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior."

We do well to take these warnings to heart. We have been called unto liberty in Christ. We must indeed put on the new man also, and *not merely* continually put off the old man. Even in putting off of the old man we walk in our liberty of justification, when we have "a sincere sorrow of heart, that we have provoked God by our sins; and more and more (the longer the more) hate and flee them." (Heid. Cat., Question 89) We stand in relationship to the law as unto the *law of liberty*. Let us not allow all the powers of hell to remove us from this great liberty.

Yes, the law is the *perfect* law. (James 1:25) Paul calls the law elsewhere, "the good, the acceptable, the perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:1, 2) The law of God is perfect in that it converts the soul in such a way that we "begin to keep *all* of God's commandments." Thus we are an acceptable sacrifice unto God. Conversion is not piece-meal, now this commandment and then that commandment. That is also the approach here by Paul when he says that "all the law is in one word: *thou shalt love thy neighbor as*

*thysel.*” (Gal. 5:14) It is the characteristic of the legalistic mind to count commandments. The Jews were past-masters in this art of counting the commandments. “The scribes declared that there were 248 affirmative precepts, as many as the members of the human body; and 365 negative precepts, as many as the days in the year, the total being 613, the number of the letters in the decalogue.” (Vincent) But this did not make for edification. They really did not learn to see what was the “great commandment.” They did not see the spiritual *nature* (*poia entolee megalee en tooi nomooi*) of the first and great commandment. They could really never see the perfection of the law requiring all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. The way to Jewry is not long!

Paul here cites only the second table of the law, it would seem. He quotes only Leviticus 19:18 verbatim; however, by implication he is also quoting Deuteronomy 6:5; He that spoke Leviticus 19:18 also wrote Deuteronomy 6:5. For the second commandment is like unto the first commandment. (Matt. 22:39) That is Jesus’ interpretation of this second great commandment.

Such is the perfect law of liberty wherein we stand, and which has been inscribed in the tables of our *reborn, fleshy hearts*.

#### ALL THE LAW FULFILLED IN ONE WORD. (Galatians 5:14b)

The Bible does not make the way of obedience in Christ difficult. We do not need to memorize the names of many saints and popes to be obedient. And we do not need to ask after greater and lesser commandments and fall into moralistic and legalistic casuistry (case studies). When we have made the count as did the rich young ruler and exclaim, “all these things have I kept from my youth,” then Jesus gives us the backward view of the tenth commandment and teaches us the great lesson of the sin of sinful “lusts.” (Matt. 19:20; Mark 10:20; Luke 18:21; Acts 26:12) The sin of the lust after money, the deeply ingrained sin of idolatry which does not trust and love the Lord was his. Jesus taught him the law in one pin-pointed word. The Bible surely makes the mirror of the law easy to see, so that we see our “natural face in a glass.” It is rather difficult not to remember who we saw in that mirror! We saw the man and the woman, the imperfect sons of liberty, in the perfect law of liberty, and we saw that we all are still imperfect by the “standard” of the law of liberty, which law is fulfilled in one word: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself! Thus Jesus interprets this law also in Matthew 7:12, “all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

Now the law “is fulfilled” (*pepleerootai*) in one

word. There is not one single commandment in either table of the great decalogue, which does not receive its full jot and tittle under this formula. The last drop of water fills the pail in each case. Nothing need be or can be added. Paul placed this formula on the foreground here. When the Galatian brethren and sisters will take a look into this law of liberty they will detect with what spiritual shackles of sin, all legalizing conceptions of the law binds them. They may then boast of being “under law,” but they are not standing in the law of liberty, the perfect law which makes them break radically with their sins. They boast: all these things we are keeping. They are rich and enriched, and do not know that they are wretched, poor, blind, and naked. They never taste the sweetness of having Christ come and sup with them. They do not experience the fellowship of God’s new covenant of grace. The love of God is not perfected in them. (Rev. 3:17-20; I John 4:17, 18) Does not Paul say in Rom. 13:8, 9, “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth (*is loving*) hath fulfilled the law”?

This is the *royal* law of the kingdom of heaven! Only those who keep the royal law of the king shall inherit the Kingdom of God. He who promulgates this law in the New Testament is the one who says: But I say unto you. He is the Lord of glory. He judges righteously according to the law of liberty. He asks: did you walk in the liberty of Christ? We must not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. One is our Lord. There is no respect of persons with this King of His law!

All is fulfilled in one word! This one Word is held before our face each Sunday morning when the Decalogue is read. And that Decalogue says that God does not desire works which are founded on our imaginations, or on institutions of men, but that they must be works which proceed out of true faith in Christ, receiving all these works from Him, and which are according to the royal law of liberty in Christ, and which are all to the glory of God’s sovereign and mighty grace!

The  
STANDARD BEARER  
makes a thoughtful gift  
for any occasion.

*TRANSLATED TREASURES*

## A Pamphlet Concerning the Reformation of the Church

*Dr. A. Kuyper*

(In his discussion concerning the ideal form which the church of Christ ought to take on this earth, Kuyper has discussed the fact that a congregation is made up of believers and their seed, that the church receives into her fellowship members from other churches, that the church must also be busy in the work of missions. In the following paragraphs he discusses the question of authority in the church.)

### 18. Where Authority Resides in the Visible Church.

Not all authority is the same. A Reformed church may desire political rights in order to be recognized, supported, and protected by the magistrate. In this respect, authority also over the church rests with the magistrate of the land. In like manner, a Reformed church can exercise civil rights through the acquisition of property, administrative deeds, buying or renting, or the closing of contracts. In all these matters it comes under the authority of the civil judge. It is subject to the sentence of that judge in differences concerning contracts with other churches if no court of arbitration or other relief is stipulated in a way binding upon both sides. All such authority, meanwhile, is not the authority which belongs as such to the sphere of the church.

There is a church conceivable, and there were churches like, e.g., the Churches Under The Cross, which possesses neither constitutional nor civil rights and even lacks a certain confederation, yet is a church. Where one speaks of authority in the church of Christ, one means exclusively that peculiar authority which is exercised in its own sphere over

matters affecting her essence. A church which is once formed is an institute in which authorization to issue commands and to exercise authority stands alongside of the duty which proceeds from that authority. This is a duty to obey and to give honor. The question is, now, where that authority resides. And, granting that it does not reside in the invisible church in a mystical sense, where does it reside in the visible ecclesiastical institute?

To that question it must be answered: authority in and over the church resides in her King and Lord to Whom it is given by God Triune. This only King and Lord exercises His glorious and sovereign authority directly by His Word, i.e., by the Holy Scriptures through His Spirit Who works in the hearts of His people and through the experiences of weal and woe which He determines for His church on earth. No man possesses the right to command and the right to exercise authority as sovereign among men. There is in the church no other magistrate than her King and Lord. And neither metaphorically nor in a manner of speaking may it be said of anyone that it is due him to have the oversight over the church of Christ. Indeed, mention can be made of ecclesiastical oversight in the sense in which our fathers served with honor as members of parliament, as representatives of the people, and the officebearers as "inferior magistrates." But now in our days this use of the name "magistrate" has entirely disappeared. Every mention of "ecclesiastical magistrate," if one referred to a definite man, has become absurd. To seek

sovereign oversight and magisterial power (as our elders said) in the church among men is to deny that Jesus is King, or that He lives or also that He directly exercises power on earth.

All authority exercised by persons in the church is therefore always the opposite of the magistracy; i.e., it is characterized by service. Just as an officebearer exercises very definite authority, but never in any other way than in the name of, by order of, by virtue of the supremacy of his King and as responsible to him, so also is all authority which is exercised in the church never anything else but the official authority of service by which the one who exercises it is nothing while the King is everything. The authority exercised in the church is therefore also holy because it never originates by agreement with earthly sinful power, but it flows directly forth from that separate realm of the kingdom of heaven over which the Son of God as Mediator sways His scepter.

This official authority of service is mentioned here as applicable to our circumstances under the new covenant so that we do not consider here the earlier privileges of Israel's tribes, nor the authority of a priest or prophet in days of old, nor the authority of David's descendants upon the throne in Jerusalem. David does not continue to live in our kings, but lives on in Christ. And because the church in her present form came out of the extraordinary and preliminary Old Testament church it must now be asked: through which persons this King now exercises His authority. The answer to this question is twofold: there is a basic or essential authority through the office of all believers, and there is that authority which concerns the organization and operation of the church through the appointed ministers.

Without denying for a moment the bond between Christ and His church, it must now be established that authority in the church resides in the church itself, but is exercised through special officebearers. The church is a strictly spiritual monarchy, a kingdom under the absolute kingship of Christ; in her visible form decidedly democratic, but aristocratic in her organization. However, one must not conclude from this that the gathering of believers receives the mandate of authority from the King in order then to transfer this authority to the officebearers. No, both the believers and the officebearers receive their official calling directly from the King. Thus the office of believers and the office of officebearers are completely equal. The congregation is not over the officebearers, nor are the officebearers over the congregation, but Christ is over both — Christ Who establishes a mutual relation between both and binds both to the authority of His Word. If the congregation attempts to bring pressure to bear upon the officebearers which is outside of the Word of God or

against it, then the authority of such a congregation is of no worth and does not concern the officebearer. And in like manner, if an officebearer attempts to exercise authority over the believers outside of or over against the Word of God, then this authority falls away completely, is no longer authority, but becomes pure arrogance. Then the balance of this authority is lost. It is only properly divided where both the believers and the officebearers remain strictly with the Word and act only by the authority of that Word. But if the congregation departs from the Word, then the Godly authority of the officebearers is imposed on her. And in like manner, if the officebearers forsake the Word then the Godly authority of the congregation is imposed on the officebearers. At last, the church which entirely forsakes the Word loses all her authority. And in like manner, officebearers who depart entirely from the Word can no longer pretend to have any right of authority. The difference between the authority of magistrates and ecclesiastical authority is thus clear. The civil magistrate retains its authority even when it goes against God; and for that reason even a Nero must be obeyed. But this is not the case in the church. In the church obedience becomes a sin and respect becomes guilt before God when the person who enjoins and asks respect departs from the Word.

Those who, strangers to the first principles of church polity, speak in this respect of revolution, express only the perversity of their hearts in the matter of obedience which we owe to Christ our King.

Revolution is to resist the authority of the King. Not he who punishes the apostate officebearer resists that authority, but just the other way around, each believer who upholds and respects the unfaithful officebearer resists the authority of Christ.\*

#### 19. What Systems of Church Government Have Been Tried.

Five systems of church government have been devised for the churches of Christ in her visible form which we, for the sake of clarity, shall distinguish as Romish, Lutheran, Reformed, Independent, and Collegiate.

These are the four characteristics of the Romish system: 1) that it allows only one government for the entire visible church on earth. 2) that it divides

\*At this point in the discussion Kuyper does not discuss the all-important question: who decides whether the officebearers or the members of the congregation are right. Officebearers may consider themselves to be right, and a group of people from the congregation may insist that they are right while their officebearers are wrong. Within the Reformed system of church polity, these matters are adjudicated at broader ecclesiastical assemblies. Kuyper reserves a discussion of this for a later paragraph in the pamphlet.

the church into two classes: spiritual and laical; and, further, excludes the laity from the government of the church; 3) that it is in principle strongly monarchical; and, 4) that it sets up the supremacy of the church over the state. The Romish system desires one government for the whole world-church, looses itself from the national realm, represses the vital variations of national languages with one dead language (Latin) which is the same for all, and thereby loses most of her spiritual character. She does not trust the organic unity of the church in Christ and therefore attempts to guarantee this unity by an external bond.

Her second mark rests on this first mark. She makes a distinction between clergy and laity, which distinction is used to declare her laity a minor. Rome does this because the laity bring national distinctions into church government. Not the laity but the clergy can be placed outside all national relationships, something which is done through the introduction of celibacy. Thus this spiritual class, loosed from all the national relationships of society, forms a distinct order which lives exclusively for the church. And exactly by this means, Rome brings into existence a world-church.

Hence the Romish church, in the third place, had to develop as strongly monarchical. People did not readily accept this, and Rome's popes had to fight a

stubborn fight before they had suppressed the republican idea of sovereign control in the hands of the bishops. But the consequence of the principle worked in their favor. In spite of all episcopal opposition the profound idea of a monarchy, understood by Hildebrand and his papal school, now pervades the Romish ecclesiastical system. The conciliar system is powerless to express the unity of the world church; only the papal system is capable of this. In the councils, after all, national divisions always reappear and only in the pope do all national distinctions fall away. Finally, the bond of union with Christ is never to be found in the council; that bond appears only in Christ's viceregent on earth. From this also is to be noticed, as a fourth mark of this system, the supremacy which the Romish system aims at over the state. Because the church is conceived as identical with the kingdom of God and organized independently under the pope as viceregent of Christ, Rome can tolerate no power over her, because this would be a power of the secular magistrate which would destroy her unity. In like manner, this would permit an entirely independent power alongside of her which would compel her to withdraw from life so as to be busy only with spiritual matters. The theory of two swords is thus at least no one-sided exaggeration, but only the logical development of what is hidden in the false idea of one unique church.

## Book Review

**STUDIES IN PROVERBS**, by William Arnot; Kregel Publications, 1978; 583 pp., \$10.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

Good commentaries on the book of Proverbs are difficult to find. This volume may, in some respects, fill the void. It was written in the Nineteenth Century by a man who was part of the Free Church Movement in Scotland, and has therefore, much of the value which older books have.

It is not, strictly speaking, a commentary; it is more like a book of meditations. Yet, in the nature of the case, it also explains those passages which it treats. It could almost be described as somewhere between a commentary and a devotional book. Far from subtracting from its worth, however, this

enhances its value.

Not every verse in the book is treated. The author picks key verses out of each chapter and treats them in some detail. The interpretation is basically sound: the author does not find in Proverbs a kind of handbook for the moral life, but sees in it the revelation of God in Jesus Christ for His people.

It is filled with many practical illustrations taken from the author's own time — but illustrations which nevertheless, are pertinent to our own day.

It is highly recommended both as a book of fine devotional reading and as a help in the study of the book. It will be a worthwhile addition to anyone's home library.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Isabel, South Dakota on September 5, 1979, at 8:30 AM, the Lord willing. Material for the Agenda of Classis must be in my hands thirty days before the convening of Classis. Delegates in need of lodging or transportation from an airport should notify the clerk of the Isabel Consistory.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk

## NOTICE OF APPRECIATION

"A motion is made that Synod on behalf of our churches express appreciation to our seminary professors for their faithful and diligent labors in the seminary as is again witnessed in the recent examination of the students. - Adopted"

Synod of the Prot. Ref. Churches  
Rev. M. Joostens, Stated Clerk

## NOTICE RE CANDIDACY

After proper examination, the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches is pleased to announce that Ronald Cammenga, Carl Haak, Ronald Hanko, and Steven Houck have been declared candidates for the ministry of the Word and sacraments in our churches. The candidates are eligible for a call from the churches after July 6, 1979.

Rev. M. Joostens  
Stated Clerk of Synod

## ANNIVERSARY ANNOUNCEMENT

On June 29, 1979, our parents MR. & MRS. JOE KING, celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary. We are grateful to our heavenly Father for sparing them for each other and for us, their children and grandchildren. It is our prayer that God will continue to bless them in the years to come.

"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

Roger and Phyllis King  
Cheryl  
Marcia  
Michael  
Lori  
David

## ANNIVERSARY NOTICE

On May 22, 1979, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. MEINDERT GAASTRA celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary. We, their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are thankful to our covenant God for the years they have had together, for His care over them and us, and for the covenant instruction we have received. It is our prayer that our Heavenly Father will continue to bless them and keep them in His care.

"For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations." Psalm 100:5.

Mrs. Anne Lindeman  
Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Gritters  
Mr. and Mrs. Ray Gaastra  
Mr. and Mrs. Otto Gaastra  
17 grandchildren  
4 great-grandchildren

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

June 21, 1979, our beloved parents, FRED AND MARIAN ONDERSMA, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. We are very thankful to our Heavenly Father for His gift of covenant parents. They have taught us in the way that we should go and we pray that God will bless and guide them in their remaining years.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children:

To such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them." (Psalm 103:17, 18).

Their thankful children and grandchildren

Bob and Kaye Moelker  
Arlene and Amy  
Gary and Rose Moelker  
Michael, Scott,  
Todd and Tami  
Larry and Judy Meulenberg  
Jeremy, David  
and Marianne

Grandville, Mich.

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 23, 1979, our parents, MR. AND MRS. HERMAN KUIPER, celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary. We thank our heavenly Father for our parents and for the covenant upbringing they have given us. We are grateful to Him for preserving them these forty years, and it is our prayer that they may experience the joy and peace of Zion in their remaining years together.

Bill and Ruth DeKraker  
Linda and Mark  
Bob and Barb Kuiper  
Randy, Vicki and Julie  
Ken and Eunice Kuiper  
Jonathan  
Kathy Spaman  
Rick and Melissa  
Brian and Lori Kamminga

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society "Ruth" of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church (Walker, MI), expresses its sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Dick Kooienga, in the loss of her sister, MRS. BEN STEGINK.

"Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me." (Psalm 66:20).

Rev. R. Van Overloop, Pres.  
Mrs. P. Zandstra, Sec'y.

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The members of the Priscilla Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, extends heartfelt and sincere Christian sympathy to their fellow member, Mrs. Jennie Veltman, in the passing to glory of her husband, MR. HENRY VELTMAN. May God comfort her by His Word and Spirit.

"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory." (Psalm 73:24).

Miss Jessie Dykstra, Pres.  
Mrs. Roselle Ezinga, Sec'y.

## News From Our Churches

Rev. David Engelsma declined the calls extended to him by Southeast Church in Grand Rapids and the congregation of our church in Hull, Iowa.

From a trio of Rev. Arie den Hartog, Rev. Marvin Kamps, and Rev. Bernard Woudenberg, Southeast has extended a call to Rev. den Hartog.

Hull formulated a trio of Rev. den Hartog, Rev. Dale Kuiper, and Rev. Ronald Van Overloop. The call was extended to Rev. Van Overloop. Rev. Van Overloop had also received a call from our South Holland, Illinois congregation to serve as home missionary in the Birmingham, Alabama area. After a trip to Birmingham for a first hand look at the field and after meeting with the council of the South Holland church, Rev. Van Overloop accepted the call. It can probably be assumed that the call from Hull was declined.

The consistory of our church in Loveland, Colorado, has informed each of the churches in the denomination that their pastor, Rev. George Lanting, "has been dismissed from his ministerial duties in the Loveland Protestant Reformed Church according to Article 11 of the Church Order." The notice continues with the information that "Rev. Lanting is now eligible for a call in our churches." This action was approved in a special meeting of Classis West held in Loveland in early May. The Loveland consistory has scheduled a special congregational meeting for Monday, June 11, to call a minister from a trio consisting of Rev. Marvin Kamps, Rev. Jason Kortering, and Rev. James Slopsema.

Pulpit supply for Loveland has been scheduled by Classis West as follows: Rev. Rodney Miersma on May 20 and 27, Rev. Kortering on June 10 and 17, Rev. C. Hanko for July 1, 8, and 15, help from the seminary for the six Sundays of July 22 through August 26, and Rev. Wayne Bekkering on September 2 and 9.

Sometimes news from a source close at hand comes in from a bulletin of one of our churches located over 2,000 miles away. The summer schedule of our seminarians was published in the Redlands, California church bulletin. Assignments as of the end of May were as follows: Carl Haak to Victoria, British Columbia, to work with home missionary Rev. Robert Harbach. Ronald Hanko to Loveland, Colo-

rado during July and August. Ronald Camminga to Hull, Iowa for the summer months. And Steve Houck to work in the Charlotte, Michigan area where our churches have been conducting mission work for the past several months.

The congregation of our church in Holland, Michigan has scheduled a special program in their church on Tuesday, July 3 at 7:30 PM to commemorate the 50th anniversary of their congregation. Holland's pastor, Rev. John Heys, personally extends to all *Standard Bearer* readers to meet with the Holland congregation on this joyous occasion. Rev. and Mrs. Heys returned on May 31 after spending the past several months on the other side of the globe as 'minister on loan' in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Redlands recently completed a solicitation for money for their new church building. \$80,100 was raised. This generous support will permit the church building committee to proceed with the preparation of detailed plans for the auditorium and social hall with meeting rooms. In addition, permits must be obtained from and plans approved by the City of Redlands. It is estimated that, the Lord willing, actual construction of the new church could begin in early 1980.

At the end of April, the Pella bulletin carried this appropriate announcement: "Catechism is over for this season as well as society meetings. It is very easy for us to forget about study of the Bible. But let us not neglect this spiritual exercise in which we grow in the knowledge of our Creator and of His salvation for us in His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Daily study of the Scriptures is a must for every child of God."

In order to provide an opportunity for Bible study and spiritual refreshment, our church in Hudsonville is scheduling a "Summer Society" to meet every other week during the summer months. They plan to begin with a discussion of Genesis 1. The first meeting also featured an after recess program presented by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema in which he presented practical guidelines and suggestions for profitable study of Scripture. This 'summer society' idea sounds like a good idea - especially during a season of the year when most church activities scheduled during the week are in recess.

K.G.V.