

The STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

*The Staff of the Standard Bearer
extends to our readers its earnest desire
for the richest blessings
of the Lord our God in the New Year.*

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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MEDITATION

The Changeless Christ in an Everchanging World

C. Hanko

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today, and forever”. Heb. 13:8

Come, join me for a few moments as the sun settles down to rest beyond the horizon, marking the end of another day.

Just another day, and yet not. This is the last of three hundred sixty five similar days, reminding us that God in His providence has cared for us throughout another year.

Leafless trees cast long shadows over the fields. The evening glow spreads its multi-colored rays far to the north and to the south. A quiet peace settles over the landscape beckoning us to a few moments of serious contemplation.

Those rose-colored clouds, emitting rays of light, do add to the beauty of the evening, don't they?

What would life be without its sorrows and disappointments, and its poignant grief? God never seems nearer to us than in those hours of anxiety when we need Him most. Much of the past year is already forgotten, but the hours of need, of crying for help, of being drawn under the protection of the Everlasting Arms will never be forgotten.

Even this constant recurrence of morning and evening, of day and night, of yesterday gone by and today steadily moving toward tomorrow, reminds us that life is far more than a treadmill of repetition. We move onward day by day, from week to week, from year to year, from time into eternity.

Where have those three hundred sixty-five days gone? It was but as yesterday that we stood before this new year. Then it spread itself so far into the future before us. Then it was pictured as a babe in diapers, now already it is presented as an old man bent under the weight of his scythe. Time like an ever rolling stream . . .

Yet Jesus Christ remains the same, yesterday, and today, and even into endless eternity.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son.

How thankful I am for that assurance that my God is my Jesus.

God tells us that in His own inspired revelation concerning Himself. He draws away the veil to show us that He is our Savior — Jesus, the Christ. He tells us of the mystery of godliness, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." I Tim. 3:16.

That is what gives the cross its infinite value as the complete atonement for all of our sins. For it was none other than God's blood that was shed on Calvary's brow. Acts 20:28. God was in Christ reconciling us unto Himself. God came into the flesh to redeem His people unto Himself as an everlasting possession and thus to redeem unto Himself all things in heaven, and all things on earth. In saving His people He carries out His purpose in making all things new in that unending Tomorrow.

Jesus is the unchangeable, eternal God.

* * * * *

Jesus is also the unchangeable *Christ*.

We see *Jesus*, "Jehovah salvation."

We see Him as He is revealed to us on the pages of Holy Writ and sealed to our hearts by a living faith through the testimony of His indwelling Spirit.

We see Him as He stands eternally before the Father: THE Elect of God. He is chosen eternally to be God's great Friend-Servant, our eternal Prophet,

our exalted Highpriest, our glorious King of kings, and Lord of lords.

The saints of the old dispensation knew Him as the Angel of Jehovah, ever encamping round about those that fear Him. Some saints were even privileged to see Him, to converse with Him, to carry out His mandates, and to marvel that heaven had come so very close to them. Imagine Abraham's surprise as he sat under the oak at Mamre, when he realized that his distinguished guest was the angel of Jehovah, eating, fellowshiping, talking with him as a Friend with a friend. Even then, as now, the secret of the Lord was with those who fear Him.

* * * * *

Even greater was the wonder when God sent His son into the world, born of a woman, born under the law. The eternal Christ took on the form of a servant, humbling Himself unto death, even the bitter and shameful death of the cross to carry out Father's will and to fulfill the Scriptures. Never do we weary of speaking of that cross; never do we cease to marvel, never may we cease to glory in it. We had Father's promise, the promise of complete deliverance from bondage of sin and death into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. That promise had to be made good. And it was. For Christ fulfilled every detail of the divine program of suffering that had been assigned to Him, bearing the burden of God's wrath as the only possible atonement for our sins. When all was accomplished He could say with as much certainty as relief: "It is finished."

Therefore God hath exalted Him to the highest position of power and authority in the heavens. He now rules over the angels and saints in heaven, over all the demons of hell, over every creature that stirs upon the earth. Imagine that! The man Jesus is risen from the dead, is brought into heaven, and is now entrusted with power to carry out the eternal counsel of God's will. He has power over springtime and harvest, over summer and winter, over all of history, so that this same Jesus brings us this last sunset of the year. Even this little hour must also serve for the gathering of God's church and the coming of His kingdom, even unto that day when all things will be made new.

For Christ is Lord over His church, appointed to rule over them in love. He gathers His sheep unto Himself, leads them into green pastures and beside still waters. He protects and defends them against the attack of every ravenous wolf. Like a shepherd He gently leads them, carrying the young in His bosom, ever bringing them into the sheepfold of glory.

Jesus Christ is still the Savior of His people, and thus the Savior of the world that soon will appear in

all its perfection, to the glory of that one, great, sovereign God, our Savior.

I believe in Him. My Lord, and my God.

* * * * *

Jesus Christ the same in an ever-changing world!

He was Jesus, the Christ, yesterday.

The sun drops behind the distant hills, informing us that another day is gone, another year is all but spent.

History is in the making. Powers have risen and fallen. National and international politics have revealed their corruption. Kissinger has gone about buying peace. There have been storms, severe blizzards in the mid-west. There has also been an extreme drought of summer; corn stood withered in the fields. Nations were in turmoil. People were concerned about rising prices, about the price of oil this winter.

The usual, one might say. Yet the usual has increased its tempo at an amazing rate. Floods, tornadoes, and other destructive forces are at work more than ever. Wars, unrest among nations, are on the increase. Time rushes on almost faster than we can keep up with it. New highways prove inadequate even before they are finished. New inventions are obsolete almost before they appear on the market. The world can only wonder, where are we going?

As churches we have had a wonderful year. Our congregations experience a blessed harmony. Our denomination still enjoys a wonderful unity of faith and love. Our seminary flourishes; many young men are zealously being prepared for the ministry. We have found contact with saints of a life faith even in the far ends of the earth. God is drawing His church together from far and wide, preparing her to maintain a united front in the evil days to come.

Even as individuals we can rejoice in the fact that God has kept us in the palm of His hand, under His watchful eye. His ear was always attentive to our sighs, His mouth pouring forth words of comfort, peace, and blessedness. We could worship with His church, exercise the communion of saints, train our children in our own schools, freely worship our God in our homes. The caves of the earth have not beckoned as yet.

He was Jesus, our Savior; the Christ of God.

* * * * *

He is Jesus today.

Yet today is but a passing moment. I must not delay. I must recount His faithfulness of the past and see His good hand upon us still today. True, we have our problems, even today. We have our cares, our burdens of sin. But we flee to Him as our Refuge also now.

The Jesus of yesterday is the Savior of today.

And He is Jesus into endless eternity.

Yes, tomorrow, and the next day, and the next He has planned for us in harmony with His glorious purpose with all things. He will create new needs, but He will also provide for the needs that He creates. He is Jehovah, Who changes not; how could we ever be consumed, even if all the powers of hell would break loose against us.

Thou, Lord, has dealt well with thy servant! Thou hast holden me by Thy hand, afterward to lead me to glory!

Teach Thou me to trust in Thee and to walk in good judgment and knowledge. For in Thy commandments I trust.

EDITORIALS

Our Australasian Tour (6)

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

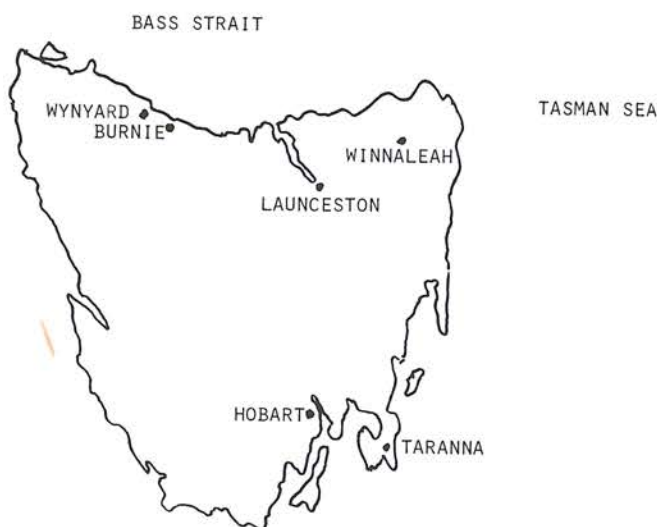
In the last portion of our report, we had left Christchurch, New Zealand, and flown across the Southern Alps of New Zealand and across the Tasman Sea to Melbourne, Australia — some 1800 miles to the northwest. After a 5-hour layover at the Melbourne airport, we travelled another 250-300 miles

south over Bass Strait to Wynyard. This was our first stop on the island-province of Tasmania.

The accompanying maps will help a bit in the geography lesson needed at this point. For it must be remembered that both geographically and ecclesiastically this was an entirely new portion of our tour.

Geographically, I remind you, New Zealand and Australia are by no means close neighbors, being separated by many miles of ocean. And although they are culturally related, in our brief visit and through admittedly hasty observation we gained the distinct impression that in several respects they are culturally different. Australia, I would say, is culturally much more like the United States or like Canada than is New Zealand. There are even distinct differences between Australia and New Zealand as to the way English is spoken. Perhaps by that time I was picking up a bit of an Australian accent, but at one point in our Australian tour I was even told after a lecture that I spoke "just like an Australian."

TASMANIA



But let us get back to geography. Tasmania lies in about the same latitude as Wellington and Christchurch, New Zealand. Thus, when we were on the Tasman Peninsula in the vicinity of Taranna, we were not as far south as we had been in Dunedin, N.Z. But don't let the size of the map fool you. Mainland Australia, remember, is about as large as continental United States. And when we made our tour from Tasmania up the east coast to Brisbane, it was roughly equivalent to travelling from Florida to New York City. I hasten to add, however, that Australia is not nearly so heavily populated as our country. By far the largest portion of the population is concentrated in the eastern coastal region; and it is in this part of the country that the largest population centers, Melbourne and Sydney, are found.

Although Tasmania, in the accompanying map, looks very small in comparison with mainland Australia, it is no small island. Actually it is not quite as large as the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. One gets the impression that Tasmania is a bit of an orphan in relation to mainland Australia. Although our pace in

the island was nothing short of hectic, life seemed more quiet and slower-paced in Tasmania than in the large urban centers of the mainland. We had one distinct advantage during this portion of our tour: we travelled in Pastor Rodman's Holden Station Wagon, and thus we had an opportunity, though hastily, to see something of the countryside. It is a ruggedly beautiful country, with profuse vegetation, much forest-land and many mountainous areas, but also many beautiful coastal areas. We had many an unforgettable view of the northern and eastern coastal areas in our travels from Wynyard to Launceston to Winnaleah to Taranna. We did not get to see the fierce animal known as the Tasmanian devil; we did have opportunity to see kangaroos in their native habitat. The chill of their winter season still bothered us, especially at night; but on the whole, we experienced somewhat milder weather than during our stay in New Zealand. However, I can imagine that just about this time of the year would be ideal for a grand sightseeing vacation on the island.

One more item connected with the geography must be mentioned. Travelling another 2000 miles also made another 2 hours' difference in the time. The total difference between us and Grand Rapids was now 10 hours. And, seeing we were also across the International Dateline, our formula for figuring Grand Rapids time now was: add 10 hours to local time and subtract a day. Thus, when we were in church for our first Tasmanian meeting at 8 o'clock in the evening on July 4, it was 6 o'clock in the morning of July 4 in Grand Rapids, and probably your neighbor's children were setting off their first Fourth of July firecrackers.

Our contacts in Tasmania were with the small denomination known as the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. This contact is a story in itself. The brethren of the EPC had first heard of us through the Rev. Malcolm McKay, of Nova Scotia, Canada, a Presbyterian who had some correspondence with the *Standard Bearer* several years ago. The common interest between the EPC and our churches was the matter of common grace and the "free offer" of the gospel. Over the past few years, especially through our Reformed Witness Hour printed messages and our *Standard Bearer*, we had built up some correspondence. Then in August, 1974 the Rev. Charles Rodman visited for a few days in Grand Rapids; and we had the opportunity to become better acquainted. As this happened, we also discovered that apparently we had much in common as far as the Reformed faith is concerned.

The background of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, however, is entirely different from ours. You will recall, perhaps, that Pastor Rodman wrote about the origin of their churches in the *Standard Bearer*



last year. (By the way, he still promises to finish that story for us in the future.) But to put it briefly, these churches (and this is true of most of the membership as well as of the ministers) came from a radical, decisionistic, crusade-type Arminian background. Among the membership there are a few who have come from a Dutch and Reformed background; but most of the people are Australian and have had ecclesiastical experiences similar to that of Pastor Rodman. As far as we could discern — and we had much opportunity for discussion as we travelled — these churches, in their long journey from Arminianism via the Baptist position, have come to the full Presbyterian position in every respect. As you might expect, there are various areas in which their under-

standing is not yet very thorough. These churches are relatively young yet; and a church grows, of course, as it faces various problems in its ecclesiastical life and as it searches for proper solutions. One of these areas of the truth is that of the covenant. But they are interested in this subject, have studied it, principally understand it, and agree with our explanation. They certainly want nothing of Arminianism in the sphere of the covenant. They are deathly afraid of presupposed regeneration; but they also must have nothing of a conditional promise, as is the view of the Liberated, with whom they have also had some contact in the past.

The one area in which we found a difference was that of so-called “purity of worship.” The purity of

worship idea involves an insistence on Psalm-singing in their worship services — something on which we also insist. However, it also involves the elimination of all instrumental music in the services; they sing their Psalms a capella. In a congregation which is able to sing well, this kind of singing seems to grow on a person; we soon felt at home singing the Psalms with them from the Scottish Psalter. Further, purity of worship also involves the non-observance of any of the Christian holidays in their worship services. Moreover, in harmony with their Directory of Worship, there are no fixed liturgical forms used for the sacraments. In practice, perhaps, we would find their worship to be considerably different. But we must also remember that as long as purity of worship (which is of long standing in Presbyterianism) is not elevated to the status of a fourth mark of the church, there is no obstacle to fellowship here.

I must bring this installment of our report to a close. But before I do so, I must mention a few facts to complete the picture. In the first place, these churches are not limited to Tasmania, although most of their congregations and preaching centers are on

that island. There are also congregations and preaching centers on the mainland, especially in the province of Queensland. Near the end of our Australian tour we visited Brisbane, where there is a congregation presently being served by one of their students, Mr. Chris Coleborn. And while we were at Brisbane we made the acquaintance of the Rev. Philip Burley, pastor of the congregation in Rockhampton. We deeply regretted the fact that our schedule did not allow us to spend more time in the Brisbane area and also to make a visit to Rockhampton. For we found real fellowship in the faith with the brethren and sisters of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. In the second place, it struck me repeatedly that these churches are not afraid to be small, nor are they afraid of small beginnings at their little preaching centers, which, I gathered, are in the nature of church extension outposts. And finally, I must mention that this little denomination has a rather severe shortage of laborers. And while they have instituted their own program for the training of ministers, this is largely by correspondence and on a part-time basis; and it is necessarily a rather slow process.

(to be continued)



The Mysteries of the Kingdom: An Exposition of the Parables

Professor H. Hanko

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Correspondence and Reply

From France

In response to the Rev. Veldman's comments in the October 1 issue we received the following letter from Pierre Courthial, Academic Director of the Faculty of Reformed Theology at Aix-en-Provence, France. The letter was written in French; and I must thank my sister, Mrs. Chas. Kregel, for the following translation:

"Dear sirs and brother,

"I thank you for having addressed me in the October first issue of *The Standard Bearer*, the contents of which are very interesting to me.

"Permit me only to be surprised that the Rev. H. Veldman has written: 'One also wonders what kind of a *Reformed* congress this brother from France envisions. He speaks of "too narrow points of view, too much drowned in local controversies," which would be enlarged. He also speaks of a "Reformed evangelization being extended in the entire world." One wonders what his opinion may be of the fathers of Dordt and of the Canons of Dordrecht etc . . .'

"In reality, in my letter to the editor of *The Outlook* — and *The Outlook* has clearly published it — I wrote (but the Rev. H. Veldman did not quote this passage): 'Along the lines of the wish of Calvin . . . my dream, in 1975, . . . is that there be convened as soon as possible a Reformed ecumenical congress with pious and wise men, *ONE in the recognition of the great ecumenical creeds of the first centuries and of the confessions of the Reformed faith, including the Canons of Dordrecht . . .*' (Note: the last words, "including . . . Dordrecht," were doubly underscored in the letter. HCH)

"To my eyes, 'the issues which confronted our fathers at the great synod of Dordrecht were "not secondary matters"!

"To my eyes, 'it is "not" a secondary matter to teach (or not) that God saves whom He wills' etc . . .

"I would not wish that the readers of *The Standard Bearer* imagine that my dream is not a 'truly Reformed' dream!

"My article intended solely to affirm that we have 'to search for the path of unity, toward the unity of the truly Reformed churches of the entire world.'

"I am sincerely yours.

"Pierre Courthial"

Comments:

The Rev. Veldman may comment further on this matter if he wishes, of course. We thank Prof.

Courthial for his response to the comments which appeared in our October 1 issue. Since I was involved in the original discussion of Editor Vander Ploeg's "Dream" in *The Outlook*, I wish to add the following editorial comments:

1. Perhaps our French Reformed brother is not aware of the entire discussion of this matter in *The Outlook*, seeing that the latter magazine published only *part* of the exchange of views between *The Outlook* and *The Standard Bearer* on this matter. I am therefore asking our Business Manager to send him the back issues containing the *entire* discussion.

2. The underlying questions are, of course: a) Who are "truly Reformed"? b) Who is to decide who are "truly Reformed"? After all, just because someone *claims* to be Reformed and to adhere to the Reformed creeds does not guarantee that it is *true*. I, for one, deny that the brethren of *The Outlook* and of the Christian Reformed Church (to which they are loyal) are *truly* Reformed *if they adhere to the Three Points of 1924 and to all that their denomination stands for today*.

3. For a genuinely fruitful ecumenical congress there must be openness and a willingness to discuss openly. This is also in the spirit of John Calvin, let us remember. But M. Courthial must remember that the brethren of *The Outlook* were not even willing to have a *committee meeting* with us for the purpose of *arranging* a conference without adding all kinds of conditions. And, by the way, it is not true, as the church news editor of *Reformatisch Dagblad* suggested some time ago, that we demand, as a pre-condition of any conference agreement on the matter of the Three Points of Common Grace of 1924. We *do demand* as a pre-condition a willingness to have open and free and frank discussion of that subject, and that, too, on the basis of Scripture and the Reformed Confessions. And why? Because we believe that these issues go to the heart of our Reformed Confessions.

H.C.H.

* * * * *

In Response To "Open Your Eyes"

Not very often does an editor receive correspondence on his editorials unless he happens to kindle some disagreement. Two such responses follow.

The first letter is as follows:

Dear Editor-in-Chief of the Standard Bearer:

Will you allow me to give my opinion about your

article in the November 1 issue of the Standard Bearer? If so, I appreciate your kindness. I like to object to the advice given to our churches, namely, that we should have our eyes open when the blessing is laid upon the congregation. I do not like the expression "habit" which means "to do something without premeditation." In the second place, by having our eyes open we exclude our children and small people because some big people stand in front of them and they cannot see the minister. It also prevents the minister, if he closes his eyes, from stammering as ours also did about ten weeks ago. Maybe he was distracted by something he saw.

Allow me further to explain my view. When Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph, he bowed himself with his face to the ground and no doubt the boys also were kneeled down with their faces to the ground, in a state of obeisance. Even if they had their eyes open they were not distracted by anything around them because they had their faces bowed to the ground. We don't have this mode of worship any more so the best way to show reverence is to close our eyes and bow our heads. When the minister pronounces the introduction to the salutation, we have our eyes open and while the pastor raises his hands to pronounce the blessing, the parent puts his or her hands on the eyes of the little ones to close them and by so doing teaches them to behave reverently. The older ones close their eyes and so, being distracted by nothing, we altogether receive the blessing of the Lord which is something invisible and cannot be seen by the natural eye even if we see the raised hands of the minister.

In the old country, prior to the pronouncement of the blessing, the minister would say, "Receive the blessing of the Lord." This enabled us, through the closing of our eyes and the bowing of our heads, to receive that blessing.

The argument that the Epistle was read in the congregation while the reader had his eyes opened does not hold water because he was not looking at the congregation and most likely not raising his hands.

When we celebrate the Lord's Supper and the sacrament of Baptism, the minister reads the prayer which is included in the Form. And, of course, he has his eyes open. Does that mean now that he is not praying? Of course not! Neither does it mean that the mere fact that the congregation has its eyes closed when the blessing is pronounced indicates that this must be a prayer. Likewise, what the minister says may well be an authoritative pronouncement even though his eyes are closed.

I hope we maintain our old mode of worship for I think the old is better than the new.

Respectfully yours, with Christian greetings,

N.D.

Comments:

1. If you consult my editorial, it is quite obvious that I did not use the word *habit* in the sense N.D. suggests. This, of course, is not the only connotation of the word.

2. It takes a good deal of imagination to get this picture of Jacob and Joseph and his sons from the Genesis record.

3. I do not believe it is good pedagogy to teach even little children incorrect practices. Instead, teach them to pay attention in the proper way.

4. You would be surprised how many people, children and grownups, think of the salutation and benediction as prayers, rather than as addresses by the minister, as ambassador of Christ, to the congregation.

5. It simply is not reasonable in such an address-listening situation to close the eyes, no more than in the address-listening situation which exists during the preaching of the Word.

H.C.H.

* * * * *

The second letter is as follows:

Dear Editor:

Would like to react to your recent editorial, "Open Your Eyes" as follows:

Take Your Shoes Off!

The recent editorial asking us to "open our eyes" led to the contemplation of worshipful attitudes mentioned in the Holy Scriptures. Examples are numerous for the people of God always assumed a posture which indicated their reverence in the presence of their God. Moses was told to take his shoes off when he approached the burning bush, (Ex. 3:5); Joshua was given the same command when in the presence of God (Joshua 5:15); many, many other occasions the people struck attitudes of worshipful reverence, the most prevalent was to bow with faces to the ground. In II Chron. 20:18 we learn that Jehoshaphat and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did so. In Neh. 8:6 we read: "... and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces toward the ground." Turning to the N.T. we find in I Cor. 14:25 that Paul describes a new convert so, "and so falling down on his face he will worship God ..." In Rev. 7:11 it is said that angels "fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God." And a final example, in Rev. 11:10 we read, "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before

God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God.” The reason we bow our heads with eyes closed while receiving the Benediction of the Triune God, it seems to us, is not in the attitude of prayer, but that of worship. We have strayed “far right” from Moses’ and Joshua’s attitude of worship, even past the “near right” of the angels’ falling on their faces, to the present attitude of bowing our heads with eyes closed. So let us not go to the “far left” and open our eyes while standing so near to the presence of God while the minister of God pronounces the benediction of God upon the people of God. We are not recommending returning to the attitude of humble prostration of falling on our faces, but let us keep the present worshipful attitude of bowing our heads with eyes closed. If we have to give that up then we would recommend starting all over again and remove our shoes in our worship of God.

Thanking you in advance for receiving the contribution,

J.M. Faber

Comments:

1. Brother Faber should not entitle his contribution “Take Your Shoes Off!” if he, as he says, does not mean it.
2. Anyone who takes the trouble to analyze the passages cited carefully will discover that none of

them deals with a situation parallel to the one under discussion. It is true, of course, that they refer to a worshipful attitude which is portrayed physically. But they do not speak of the situation under discussion; nor do these passages speak of *all* possible attitudes of worship.

3. I submit that there is no principal difference between the minister’s pronouncing the benediction and his proclaiming the Word of God — both of which he does as ambassador of Christ. In one case you are no nearer to the presence of God than in the other — and no farther from it. In both cases we hear the Word of our God *mediately*, not immediately and directly — that is, through the agency of the minister. In both cases our attitude should be that of worshippers — as it should be for the full hour-and-a-half service. But our worshipful attitude in these cases should be that of reverent and believing attention.

4. I wish brother Faber would be less quick with innuendoes such as “far right” and “far left.” I find no objective grounds for such characterizations, and they do not contribute to the serious discussion of a serious subject.

5. Finally, I have at least succeeded in kindling some thinking, apparently, about our worship practices. That is all to the good!

H.C.H.

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Letter to Timothy

January 1, 1976

Dear Timothy,

In our last letter we talked about the fact that the so-called New Hermeneutics was fundamentally a rationalistic approach to the Scriptures which had to be rejected. Setting this rationalist approach over-against the approach of faith, we decided that the issue was, at bottom, a spiritual, ethical issue — an issue which involved the difference between faith and unbelief.

I want to spend a little time in this letter talking about what is meant by the approach of faith. What exactly do we mean when we say that Scripture must be approached in faith?

I think this is an extremely important question to understand. And it is important for more than one reason. It is important in your work with the people of God. We must face the fact that far and away the majority of the people of God come to Scripture without any knowledge of what the New Hermeneutics is all about. In fact, they come to the Scriptures without even knowing what Hermeneutics is all about. They do not even come with any conscious awareness of using *principles* of interpretation. They have probably never heard the term “Hermeneutics” before. They have received no course in Hermeneutics in the Seminary. They cannot recite the various *rules* which must be applied to the interpretation of Scripture. They come equipped only with *faith*. And we

must surely ask the question whether this faith is enough to give the child of God the key to Scripture's meaning. There is, after all, such a thing as what our fathers used to call a "simple faith". Is this adequate? That is the question.

The second reason why this matter of faith is so important is because there are those who maintain that faith is indeed indispensable to the interpretation of Scripture, but who have a sort of misconception of what faith really is. Is this faith, e.g., a blind leap into the dark? Is this faith simply a matter of blindly accepting what is fundamentally unprovable? Is this faith a sort of secret power which enables one to accept as true a number of propositions which lie beyond the realm of proof? Or, to put the matter a little differently, is faith something which stands at odds with man's powers of reason? We who insist that Scripture must be approached by faith are often accused of this. We are said to deny the use of reason and the validity of reason. This is implicit in the charge of "unscholarliness". We are said to commit the sin of "Bibliolatry" — the worship of a mere book. And the implicit charge is that we honor the book for its own sake and do not worship the God Who is revealed in the Bible. We are said to substitute faith for reason so that we are content with slavish adherence to the words of the Bible without even understanding what they are all about and without taking into account the nature of the book which we call the Bible.

So we shall have to look into these matters somewhat and see if we can come to any understanding of them.

I think probably the best way to get at this matter is to jump forthwith into the fray and state unequivocally that we believe the Bible is the Word of God because the Bible itself says so. This is a fact which no one can deny. If you want to read a book which, in a very beautiful and thorough way, sums up all the proof for this statement, I highly recommend Edward Young's book: "Thy Word is Truth." There are other good books as well. To mention but a couple, I could refer you to R. Laird Harris's book: "Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible," and Archibald Alexander's book: "Evidences of the Authenticity, Inspiration and Canonical Authority of the Holy Scriptures." These men show that the truth of inspiration is literally taught on every page of Holy Scripture. But the two classic passages will serve our purposes for the present. I refer, of course, to II Timothy 3:16, 17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." And II Peter 1:19-21: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye

take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Now these passages, it is clear, speak of the inspiration of Scripture with the kind of language which proves that Scripture is, in its entirety and throughout, the infallibly inspired Word of God. We accept this testimony of Scripture by faith, and, on the basis of these passages, we believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God. We need no other proof. This is sufficient for us. But, you see, those whose approach is rationalistic call this simplistic not only, and unscholarly, but they also charge us with arguing in a circle. They accuse us of teaching that the Bible is the Word of God because the Bible says so; and the testimony of the Bible is true because it is the Word of God. Is not this arguing in a circle? Is not this really assuming to be true exactly the point that needs to be proved? Is not this committing an obvious logical fallacy which makes the whole argument fallacious? It would seem so. It would seem to be the same kind of argument as saying Mr. McCall is a trustworthy man. I believe that this is true because Mr. McCall himself says so. And I know that Mr. McCall speaks the truth because he is a trustworthy man. This is arguing in a circle, and no one would entrust his most cherished possession to the safe-keeping of Mr. McCall on these grounds. Would we trust the salvation of our souls to the Scriptures when the argument for the veracity of the Scriptures is the same kind of argument? The argument is reasoning in a circle. It is a false proof for the truth of the Scriptures.

But is it?

This really brings us to the heart of the matter.

And the heart of the matter is exactly the question: What is faith?

Is faith a sort of blind acceptance of basic pre-suppositions which, in their very nature, are unproved? This is the way faith is often explained. I recall, e.g., that when I was taking a science course in my college years that the professor spent a great deal of time in the introduction to the course making plain that the approach of the Christian scientist was indeed the approach of faith. Never mind the fact for the moment that he was a man who believed in the "period theory" as a way of interpreting Genesis 1. He claimed that our approach was one of faith, that indeed we were compelled to this approach by the very fact that we were Christians. And he said that this meant primarily that we accepted as true a number of propositions which were not susceptible to

proof. The very nature of the propositions made proof impossible. We accepted as true, e.g., the fact that there is a God, that in some fashion God created all things, that He rules over all things in His providence. He insisted these were unprovable, but that faith accepted them without proof. He sternly cautioned us not to be ashamed that we did this, for he insisted that the unbeliever does exactly the same thing. We are not the only ones who build a science on faith; the unbeliever is guilty of the same thing. He too builds his science on faith because he too builds his science on the basis of presuppositions. The only difference then is that the presuppositions which the believer and the unbeliever accept by faith are different. The difference is not a lack of faith and the presence of faith. The difference is in the content of faith.

I am convinced that this distinction has done a lot of damage. I suspect, in fact, that it is this distinction which is really at the bottom of a lot of the trouble. Quite obviously, if we all have faith, believers and unbelievers alike, and differ only in what we accept by faith, then there is a lot of common ground between us, and it is very easy to reduce the argument once more to a rationalistic argument: Who has the better presuppositions? Who has the best "proof" for the position which he holds?

This is surely not the meaning of Scripture when Hebrews 11:3 tells us: "By *faith* we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God . . ." The faith spoken of here is not a blind acceptance of certain unprovable assumptions. This faith is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

We must always remember above all that faith is the bond that unites the believer to Christ. I do not want to get into a theological discussion of this. I refer you to the beautiful description of this faith as it is given in our own Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day VII. But the truth of this assertion cannot be emphasized strongly enough. Faith is the means whereby the life of Jesus Christ becomes the possession of the elect child of God. And, insofar as this has implications for our present discussion, faith is the means whereby we are put into contact with Christ and with all that belongs to Christ's kingdom and truth.

Faith is an altogether wonderful gift. The greatness of it can hardly be fully appreciated by us. It is a gift. Ephesians 2:8 is clear enough on that score. You

cannot acquire it through learning. It does not come along with a Ph. D. degree. You cannot buy it on the open market or from your friend. All the money in the world will not purchase it. You cannot share it once you have it. You cannot give it to the man with whom you are arguing about the truths of Scripture. You either have it, or you don't. And he either has it or he does not. And once it is yours, no one can ever take it from you, nor can you, through your carelessness, lose it. It is yours for all time and into eternity. It is yours because God has given it to you.

But the power of faith is a tremendous something which is unexplainable. It is a power to change and to shape the whole life of a man. It is a power to alter everything he does not only in his outward conduct, but also in his inner life of thinking and willing and feeling. It is a power so great and so wonderful that it defies description, is beyond explanation, needs never give an account of itself, cannot be accounted for even by the one who possesses it, and gives to a man so completely a different direction in the whole of his life that he is not and cannot be the same kind of a man which he was before that faith was his.

I want to talk a little bit more about this matter of faith — and its wonderful power. But the hour is late and the pages of this letter are full; and so we shall have to wait with this till another time.

But, in the meantime, there really is not anything which can be called "a simple faith". There are people of God whose knowledge is somewhat meager and whose understanding of the profundities of the Christian religion is limited. There are people of God who do not have the capacity for profound theological endeavor and for deep theological penetration into the mysteries of the truth. There are little children who stand at the very beginning of the road of salvation. There are "dying thieves" who come to the faith shortly before death. There are people who have never had the opportunity to learn a lot of the riches of the truth in Jesus Christ. From this point of view, their faith may be a simple faith. But faith itself can never be simple. Their faith is not simple. It is, even in them, a mighty power. And indeed, sometimes the power of their faith is so staggering that it puts the learned man and the professor of theology to shame. Do not despise faith wherever and in whomever it may appear. It is a gift of God.

With Christian greetings,
H. Hanko

ALL AROUND US

On Masons and Membership

Rev. H. Veldman

In the Banner of August 29, 1975, under "Voices," James Daane of Fuller Theological Seminary, has an article on "Masons and Membership." He writes:

About fifteen years ago I contended in the *Reformed Journal* that if Christian Reformed mission effort brings a man to faith in Christ, the church is obliged to accept such a man into its membership even if he is a member of the Masonic Lodge. I claimed this on the ground that if Christ accepts a person the church may do no less. Not to accept him would be a sectarian act.

Now, many years later, the Rev. George Vander Weit makes the same plea (*Banner*, May 16, 1975). He contends that any Christian whom God through His Spirit brings to the Christian Reformed Church must be accepted even if he is a Mason. He is, of course, right. He has, furthermore, asked the CRC to prove him wrong by officially declaring that the reason a Christian Mason cannot belong to the CRC is that such a person is not a Christian but a child of the devil.

This the CRC, of course, will never do. Why not? Because although the CRC argues that the religion of Masonry is incompatible with the Christian religion — which it is — nonetheless the CRC recognizes that saints are still sinners, that a Christian can inconsistently be a Mason and for all of that still be a Christian. The CRC's basic position on this matter is *not* that a Christian cannot inconsistently be also a Mason, but that it does not want such inconsistent Christians to be members of the CRC.

Is this a legitimate position? I make no brief for Masonry. I think its religious aspects are profoundly un-Christian. But I also believe it is profoundly unbiblical for a Christian church to exclude from its membership any authentic Christian whose conduct or doctrinal views are less than wholly Christian. The CRC is untrue to its Lord when it excludes those whom Christ has accepted, and the CRC is sectarian when it maintains conditions of church membership that exclude Christians from its membership.

Now in the first place, James Daane does not state why the CRC does not want such inconsistent Christians in its fellowship. However, I can give him some very good reasons.

James Daane maintains that a Mason can be a

Christian and therefore should be accepted into the fellowship of the church. He concedes that the religion of Masonry is incompatible with the Christian religion. So, one can be a Christian and at the same time deny the Christ! If such a man be a Christian, he is surely not walking and revealing himself as a Christian, and the church of God must judge a man, in this instance, according to his appearance. Besides, does not the Saviour say in Matt. 10:33 that "whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven?"

James Daane maintains that a Mason should be accepted into the fellowship of the church of Christ. How, then, would the sacrament of baptism be possible, when it is promised before God and His church that the child will be instructed in the doctrine as taught in this Christian church? How, then, can there ever be public confession of faith when it is promised before God and His church that he will maintain the truth as taught in this church and that he will fight every heresy repugnant thereto? How, then, could Christian discipline ever be exercised against any heresy, when a person can be a Christian regardless of what he believes and confesses?

Notice how miserably and inexcusably weak James Daane is. He concedes that Masonry is incompatible with the Christian religion. He writes that Masonry is profoundly unbiblical and un-Christian. Rev. Daane, Masonry is anti-Christian, even as Arminianism is not merely un-Christian and un-Reformed, but anti-Christian and anti-Reformed.

James Daane would welcome Masons into the fellowship of the church of God and of Christ. This means that James Daane would not hesitate to welcome wolves into the sheepfold of Christ. He would not hesitate to expose the church of God to every heresy. Does he not know that the Saviour warns against those wolves? Does he not know that the church of God is exhorted to keep that which it has, that no man take our crown? Does he not know that, according to Eph. 4:14-15 the people of God and the church of the Lord are exhorted to be not as children, tossed about with every wind of doctrine? James Daane would not hesitate to expose the church of the living God to ruin and destruction.

OPC-RPCES UNION FAILS TO GAIN SUFFICIENT VOTES

The Presbyterian Journal of June 15, 1975 informs us that this union fails to gain sufficient votes. On page 5 we read the following:

BEAVER FALLS, Pa. — In voting tallies which surprised both observers and participants, the Orthodox Presbyterian General Assembly approved a proposed merger while the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod voted against a plan of union which had been ten years in the making.

The Orthodox Assembly, which had been expected to reject the plan, voted 95-42 in favor.

In the RPCES General Synod, the vote was 122 - 92 in favor, slightly less than the two-thirds required.

Following the vote, which was taken after a full day of debate scheduled by both bodies, both Churches adopted statements of continued interest in on going discussions but without setting any particular deadline for another vote. However, the respective union committees were directed to continue their contacts in hopes of an eventual merger.

It was generally conceded that a deciding influence in the RPCES General Synod were remarks made by the Rev. Francis Schaeffer, who spoke against the union proposal.

Our readers may recall that *The Standard Bearer* has written sometime ago about this merger. There are difficulties involved, such as Arminian and pre-millenarian tendencies. However, this merger may yet come to pass.

ARE WE HEADING FOR A SHOWDOWN?

In *The Outlook* the editor, Rev. John Vander Ploeg writes editorially on the above subject. This article appears in *The Outlook* of Sept., 1975. We need not quote the article. Rev. Vander Ploeg directs attention to conditions in the Christian Reformed Church. The attention of our readers has been directed repeatedly to these terrible conditions. And I may add that the editor of *The Outlook* has also called the attention of his readers repeatedly to these conditions. And now he asks the question: Are we heading for a showdown?

Our comments will be very brief. First, Rev. Vander Ploeg, how long must this continue before this showdown is finally reached? And, secondly, what must be done with those in the Christian Reformed Church who believe in and advocate these terrible departures from the Word of God? How long must they be tolerated? How long can you recognize them as brethren and have fellowship with them and sit with them around the same table of the Lord? If you can tolerate them, what guarantee is there that you will not tolerate them in the future.

WORD AND CHURCH

In the *Banner* of Sept. 26, 1975, the editor also writes on: Word and Church. We quote:

So we, too. The rescued must come to the Rescuer: "What, O Lord, would You have me do?"

The divine and inspired answer is spoken to us through the Scriptures. Here and here alone is to be found, as we confess, the *infallible guide* both to faith and to life — to belief that issues in doing.

Fundamental, then, to the role of Christianity in the world is always this question: what of the Bible?

Every attack upon the Scriptures weakens the impact of Christianity upon human behavior. If the guidelines are blurred, the path is obscured and our steps become uncertain. The moral confusion so characteristic of our era bears eloquent testimony to what follows for human behavior when the Bible has been riddled by criticism, speculation, and scepticism.

What can and shall we reply to this? To this we say a hearty AMEN. How true, editor of the *Banner*! How true that the moral confusion so characteristic of our era bears eloquent testimony to what follows for human behavior when the Bible has been riddled by criticism, speculation, and scepticism!

Yet, to anyone who loves the truth that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, from Genesis through Revelation, these words of the editor of the *Banner* are a hollow sound. They mean so little. Fact is, this same writer has written in a booklet that the Bible does not tell us whether the evolutionistic theory of creation is true or the theory that the world was created by God's almighty power. He wrote that the Bible does not bother to settle this issue. And, editor of the *Banner*, do you believe that the Bible is infallibly inspired from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation?

In the *Banner* of Sept. 12, 1975, under "Voices" appears a short article under the above heading. See page 20 of this issue of the *Banner*. We quote the following:

Prosperity, affluence, material success can never be equated with the favor of God; much less as a reward or payment for faithful service.

There is more in this article. The writer takes issue with one who had written that "the farmer in India may experience success equal to that of the Iowan farmer if he would only take the "positive Christian outlook, taken as a whole and taught by Calvin."

We were so surprised to read in this article that prosperity, etc., can never be equated with the favor of God. Did this writer ever hear of the theory of common grace? This is exactly the position of the Christian Reformed Church that prosperity must be equated with God's favor. Sunshine and rain, etc., are

all tokens of the favor of God. I assure the writer of these words that the Protestant Reformed Churches hold to this view that God's favor must never be

equated with things, and we have held to this teaching of the Word of God throughout our existence, ever since 1924.

THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

A Good Name

Rev. J. Kortering

All of us are out to make a name for ourselves.

We are interested in building a certain image of ourselves. We care what others think of us.

This is generally true of people. We are name-conscious.

President Ford is interested in being known as the healer of a troubled nation. Having gone through the trauma of Watergate, having taken over an office that had become defamed by the actions of an irresponsible man, our President wants to restore dignity to the office, and confidence in the people. The nation needs healing and he wants to be the healer.

"Squeaky" Fromme wants to make a name for herself. She wants to be known as the protector of redwood trees. She took the idiotic route of pointing a gun at our president to get such attention. Now she has a different kind of a name.

Sports heroes want to be known as the greatest in their respective fields — Hank Aaron, Jimmy Connors, Mohammed Ali. They go to great lengths breaking records, winning games, all for the purpose of a name!

Even Fanny Foxe, ever since she took her dip in the tidal basin in Washington, wants a name. And it isn't a very good one at that.

WHAT KIND OF NAME

As a young person adds years to his life, he becomes more conscious of his own name. There is quite a difference between the timid freshman and the confident senior in high school. The persistent drive of a teen-ager is to conform. One's peers practically dominate his personality. They talk alike, dress alike, laugh alike, eat alike, think alike, dream alike. For a while teens act like so many robots manipulated by some strange psychological force — "every-one does it".

Soon one comes to himself. He realizes how silly it is to act that way, to be completely dominated by others without really being one's self. He begins to think of himself as an individual person. He asks himself how his teachers view him, what others think of him. We're concerned what aspect of our personality is coming through loud and clear.

There are all kinds of possibilities:

Mr. Brain
Mr. Tough Guy
Miss Ambitious
Miss Daring
Mr. Poker Face
Miss Giggly

It all boils down to one of two possibilities: either we have a good name or a bad name.

Paul wrote to the church of Galatia and described the bad name this way, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I tell you before as I have also told you in the past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God," Chapter 5:19-21.

In the same context he described the good name, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit," Chapter 5:22-25.

I ask you, what name are you after?

A GOOD NAME

The Holy Spirit instructs us through Solomon, "A

good name is rather to be chosen than great riches," Prov. 22:1.

Are you concerned about a good reputation? Do you want your teachers, your parents, your fellow students, your friends to consider you to be the right kind of person?

Obviously, good has to be explained. It makes a great deal of difference from what perspective we speak of good. To the street gang in New York City, a good guy is one who will flash the switch blade at the command of the leader, will rape a woman to show his contempt, will shoot off his lip to anyone in authority. Such a fellow is "in" with the gang. He's the kind they want.

Here we speak of good in the only real sense one can speak of it. There is no good apart from God. He is the source of good, the standard of good, and the ultimate determiner of all good. What God says is good is really good, what God calls evil is really evil. The texts we quoted from Galatians 5 demonstrate this.

One who walks in a way that God calls good possesses a good name. His reputation will be that he obeys the command of God and seeks to do His will.

Such a name is to be "chosen", according to Prov. 22:1. No one possesses such a name naturally or inherently. By nature we have a bad name. Rather, we have to choose it.

This involves two things. We first of all must value it greatly so that we desire to have such a name. We must consider it a real treasure, a wonder of grace, a gem of sanctification. We look at such a name with amazement and thankful contemplation. Secondly, we cultivate such a name. A good reputation does not fall from the sky, but comes through daily prayerful effort, through hard work, through tears of repentance, through reading the Word of God, through testing the spirits, through putting into practice what one believes to be right, and not being afraid of the consequence. The crucifixion of the flesh and the living in the Spirit is a wonder of grace. It means overcoming a "bad name" and replacing it with a "good name".

Such a name will be considered good, not by the world at large, for they will scoff. However, God will consider it good and your fellow believers will rejoice in it. Such a name is attractive to the good.

WHY A GOOD NAME

We must be careful here. We could easily desire a good name with an evil motive. This would be bad news. Conceivably within the sphere of the covenant, someone might work hard at a good name much like the Pharisees of Jesus' day. They did it to be seen of men. It might be a personal ego trip for someone to

boast how good he is. This would be terrible. The big "I" would come through loud and clear, and that is displeasing to God. Christ called these kinds of people white-washed sepulchres, beautiful on the outside, but filled with dead men's bones on the inside.

To look at it a bit differently, one might also avoid getting into trouble, and thereby save his name, because he is afraid of what people might think. In other words, because he knows that his reputation is at stake, he might work hard to "keep his nose clean." He doesn't want people to think bad things of him, so he avoids wrong. This makes him a hypocrite. The final test of hypocrisy is his private life. If he is motivated to do good publicly, but privately he acts differently, then he is indeed a hypocrite. Such a person avoids going to the theatre because "people might see him", but doesn't blink an eye to watch the same movie on television in the privacy of his own home. Such a person wouldn't check out a bad book at the public library, but would buy a cheap paperback and read it on the sly. He doesn't buy the 8-track tape of the latest hits — then he would have to admit he listens — he just tunes in on the radio. If he does things just to be or not to be seen of men, it is wrong.

It is important to seek a good name for the sake of others!

If we who claim to be Christians and to be born of the Spirit walk openly and repeatedly in sin without repentance, that act may very well give occasion to other young people to sin. You have heard of giving offense, of making oneself a stumbling block. Christian young people have to be doubly careful that carelessness does not cause some other struggling child of God to abandon the struggle. This is serious. We have to care about each other, to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. If we go to church, attend a Christian school, are raised in a Christian home, and publicly and openly flaunt the warnings of those who care about us, we will cause all those who are spiritually weak to become more bold in walking in sin. It never fails. Sad as it may be, the weak within the covenant look to those who claim covenant promises, but who are careless, and follow them. It comes in the well known phrase, "Well, so-and-so does it". Ask yourselves: why is it that the brash, the bold, the daring become the popular ones within the sphere of the covenant? Must that not sound a warning to us? We are responsible not only for our own faults, but also when we lead others into fault. If we choose a bad name, we hurt not only ourselves, but others as well.

The opposite is true when we choose a good name.

God gives us the Holy Spirit, renews our hearts, and thereby influences our lives so that we may

demonstrate every day the mighty power and glory of God Himself. A good name testifies to God that He is faithful and good. It is proof that God is able to save His people from their sins. When the people of God walk in Jehovah's fear, they show in all their lives that grace is greater than the power of sin. This is the deepest reason why we desire to have a good name. God's glory radiates from such a life.

In addition to this, by doing good we are able to advance the cause of God's kingdom. This doesn't mean that we have to be missionaries to bring God's Word to others in remote areas. This may indeed be the calling of some who are missionaries. For young people, it means more than anything that they live out their life of faith in the place God has given them. Choose a good name as a student and you will advance God's kingdom in the area of your school work. Be obedient to your parents and this will contribute to Christ's kingdom. Study your catechism faithfully and this is fulfilling your God-given calling. Be kind to others around you, avoid harsh and unfair criticism, don't wag your tongue but be helpful, think about your aged grandparents and demonstrate kindness to them, contribute to your society life in

church. These are things that cause one to have a good name. By doing these things we make God's cause to triumph and contribute to its welfare in the world.

A good name will also make you to be a good example to others. Rather than giving occasion to others to fall into sin, you will give occasion to others to imitate. Sometimes young people overlook the potential of this. So often we can reason concerning something worthwhile: no one does that; consequently I won't either; and so no one ever does. Try breaking that trend sometime. Do something worthwhile that no one else seems to do and see if others might not begin doing it. It works both ways. We can be a powerful influence to one another by being a right example.

It is all part of choosing a good name.

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.

Who doesn't want to be rich?

Is a good name of greater value to you?

Choose it.

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

“Hyper-Calvinism” and the Call of the Gospel (15)

Rev. David Engelsma

We are presently examining the doctrine of the call of the gospel in Reformed theology of the past. We are concerned to discover whether Reformed theology has historically maintained the doctrine of the well-meant offer of the gospel, as is confidently asserted and widely accepted today, so that the denial of the offer must be regarded as conflicting with classic Reformed thought, if not as hyper-Calvinism. In the previous article, we looked at the theology of John Calvin. We now consider Francois Turretini.

F. Turretini (or Turretin, as hereafter) was a Reformed pastor and professor of theology in the 17th century. Born in 1623, only four years after the Synod of Dordt, he became professor of theology at Calvin's academy in Geneva, Switzerland in 1653. He was a successor of Calvin, therefore, less than a hundred years after Calvin's death and about fifty years after the death of Calvin's immediate successor, Theodore Beza. Turretin is universally acknowledged as a significant, faithful proponent and defender of the Reformed theology of Calvin and the Synod of

Dordt. *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* describes him “as an earnest defender of the orthodoxy represented by the Synod of Dort,” and a living Presbyterian theologian, John Gerstner, refers to him as “the greatest champion of the high-reformed orthodoxy of the seventeenth century.” The theology of Turretin, therefore, can safely be regarded as the expression of classic Reformed thought. What makes his theology even more significant is the fact that immediately after Turretin's death the Reformed Church in Geneva apostatized from the Reformed faith — ironically enough, through Turretin's own son, Jean Alphonse.

Turretin's theology is found in his three-volume work, *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae* (Institutes of Polemical Theology). The work has never been published in English. But in the middle 1800's a certain George Musgrave Giger of Princeton University translated it from the Latin into English. Although the translation — which is located at Princeton Theological Seminary — remains unpublished, a large and

important part of it has been reproduced in mimeographed form as "Selections from Francois Turretini's Theological Institutes." It is from this nearly 600 page and rather rare reproduction of Giger's translation of Turretin that I quote in these articles. I take this opportunity to voice the hope expressed in the preface of the work (by "J.H.G."): "It is hoped that the perusal of these pages by interested students may create a demand for a critical revision and publication of Turretini in English."

Turretin treats the doctrine of the call of the gospel in two sections of his work. The subject comes up, first in the section on "The Decrees of God in General and Predestination in Particular" (pp. 33-143). After explaining and defending the Reformed doctrine of double predestination, Turretin investigates, whether there is in God any will, or purpose, of having mercy upon all men and of saving all men, which will, or purpose, is reflected in the call of the gospel. The viewpoint here is that of God's will. The issue, in reality, is the teaching of the defenders of the offer that there is in God a sincere desire to save all men and their squaring of this "desire" with the decree of election by the positing of two wills in God, one will to save only the elect and another will to save everyone.

Turretin heads his treatment of this issue with a question: "Whether any conditional will, or universal purpose of having mercy upon the whole human race fallen into sin, of destinating Christ as Mediator for all and each one, and of calling them all to a saving participation of his benefits, ought to be attributed to God?" His immediate, clear, and conclusive answer — on behalf of Reformed orthodoxy — is: "We deny." Such a view, Turretin attributes to the Lutherans, the Arminians, and certain Reformed theologians who, by "extending more widely the periphery of grace and defending the universality of Mercy, Redemption and vocation (God's call by the gospel — D.E.)," "depart from the doctrine thus far received in our Churches" (p. 110).

First of all, Turretin explains the question. "The question is not, whether there is in God a will commanding and approving faith and salvation of men; nor, whether God commands in the Gospel men to believe and repent, if they wish to be saved; and whether it please him for me to believe and be saved. For no one denies that God is pleased with the conversion and life of the sinner rather than with his death . . . But the question is, whether from such a will approving and commanding what men must do in order to obtain salvation can be gathered any will or purpose of God, by which he intended the salvation of all and every one under the condition of faith . . ." (pp. 111, 112). "... the question may be reduced to these boundaries; whether there is in God a general

decree, whether it is called a counsel or purpose, or a conditional will, by which God truly and earnestly intended to have mercy unto salvation upon all and each one, not by giving faith, but by sending Christ for all and each one, and calling them to salvation under the condition of faith and repentance which the patrons of Universal grace maintain; We deny." (p. 112).

Next, he proves that there is no such gracious will or purpose towards all men in God. The first proof is obtained "From the decree of Election and Reprobation. Because the Scripture makes the purpose of having mercy particular, not universal, since it testifies that God has mercy upon some certain persons only, loves and inscribes them in the book of life, but hates, hardens, appoints to wrath, and ordains to condemnation others, Rom. 9:11, 12, 13, 18, 22; I Thess. 5:9; I Pet. 2:8; for who would say that God willed to pity unto salvation those whom he reprobated from eternity, and most seriously intended for them one end under a condition, whom by the same act of will he excluded from the means of ever arriving at that end? And who does not see that the conditional purpose to give salvation to innumerable persons, is destroyed by the absolute purpose concerning the not-giving of faith to them" (p. 113)?

Against this proof, it was objected that, in addition to the merciful will of God in election that effectually saves, there is also a merciful will that does not save — exactly the position of the present-day defenders of the offer. Turretin's reply to this objection is devastating: "... it is gratuitously supposed that there is that twofold purpose of having mercy, while the Scripture draws every purpose of God's mercy from his eternal election, yea, it makes Election itself to consist in it, Rom. 8:28, 29 and 9:11; Eph. 1:11; II Tim. 1:9. And the thing itself teaches that it cannot be conceived without absurdity, that God, in whom there cannot be priority and posteriority, and who decrees all things by a sole and most simple act of will, by the same act willed most seriously to intend salvation for some under a certain condition, and at the same time, he, who alone can give, determined to deny to them the very condition without which salvation cannot be obtained; what else is this than to will to have mercy and not to will at the same time? I confess that the sole act of the divine will can be divided into various acts, which may be conceived as prior and posterior, but this is to be understood only of those, which do not butt against each other, and destroy themselves; Now to say that God intended salvation for all, and at the same time decreed to elect and love some, but to hate and reprobate others, are most absurd, nor can they either at the same time stand with God, or even successively, unless his will is supposed to be liable to change, which is blasphemous" (p. 114).

The second proof is that, if God earnestly willed the salvation of all men, He would also will all the means necessary to that end, e.g., the preaching of the gospel and the gift of faith, and would actually confer salvation upon all — which, in fact, is not the case. Turretin's argument here is that by the notion of a sincere, merciful desire to save all, "velleities (wishes — D.E.) and vehement desires, but fruitless and frustrated, are attributed to God, by which he is made to intend and in earnest will that which willing he yet knew would never either be, nor could be." This, says Turretin, is not "becoming to the majesty of the supreme Deity"; is "repugnant to his wisdom and power"; obscures and lessens the divine goodness and grace, making God's goodness and grace "vain and inefficacious" (p. 118). In short, Turretin condemns the doctrine of a sincere desire of God to save all men as a denial both of God's sovereignty and of God's truthfulness. It is a denial of God's sovereignty because God's will to save is not realized; it is a denial of God's truthfulness because it represents God as desiring to save many whom He has no intention of saving.

In a fascinating section, Turretin turns his atten-

tion to several passages of Scripture that the opponents of Reformed orthodoxy brought up — already in the 17th century! — in support of a Divine desire, or will, to save all men. John 3:16 is the first passage. Turretin insists that "the Love treated of in John 3:16 . . . cannot be universal towards all and every one, but special towards a few." It has reference "only (to) those chosen out of the world." As for the word, "world," "why then should not the *World* here be taken not universally for individuals, but indefinitely for any one, Jews as well as Gentiles, without distinction of nation, language and condition, that he may be said to have loved the human race, inasmuch as he was unwilling to destroy it entirely but decreed to save some certain person out of it, not only from one people as before, but from all indiscriminately although the effects of that love should not be extended to each individual, but only to some certain ones, viz, those chosen out of the world? And nothing is more frequent in common conversation than to attribute to a community something with respect to some certain individual, not to all" (pp. 119, 120).

(to be continued)

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

Man's Creation and Fall (1)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

"We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after his own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will agreeably to the will of God. But being a honor, he understood it not, neither knew his excellency, but willfully subjected himself to sin, and consequently to death, and the curse, giving ear to the words of the devil. For the commandment of life, which he had received, he transgressed; and by sin separated himself from God, who was his true life, having corrupted his whole nature; whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death. And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he hath lost all his excellent gifts, which he had received from God, and only retained a few remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse; for all the light which is in us is changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us saying: The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not: where St. John calleth men darkness. Therefore we reject all that is taught

repugnant to this, concerning the free will of man, since man is but a slave to sin; and has nothing of himself, unless it is given from heaven. For who may presume to boast, that he of himself can do any good, since Christ saith, No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him? Who will glory in his own will, who understands, that to be carnally minded is enmity against God? Who can speak of his knowledge, since the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God? In short, who dare suggest any thought, since he knows that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of God? And therefore what the apostle saith ought justly to be held sure and firm, that God worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. For there is no will nor understanding, conformable to the divine will and understanding, but what Christ hath wrought in man; which he teaches us, when he saith, Without me ye can do nothing."

Article XIV, *The Belgic Confession*

One continues to marvel at the beauty of this gem among the creeds of the church. In relatively few words this article sets forth some of the deepest truths of God's Word in clear and unequivocal language. The doctrines outlined here are certainly among the most important of the Scriptures. Man's original excellence as well as his present sinful and depraved state are described. Only in the way of a clear understanding of these are we able to understand the depth into which we are fallen. And, it is only when we realize that depth that we can begin to appreciate the power and beauty of God's mercies by which we are saved. These truths, therefore, have profound significance for the Christian doctrine and life.

Here, too, we find in sharp focus THE battle which the church has had to rage all through the centuries, the battle between Jesus and the Pharisees (salvation by works, no depravity), Pelagius (denial of total depravity) and Augustine, Erasmus (free will) and Luther, Roman Catholicism (meritorious good works) and Protestantism, Arminianism and the Reformed truth. Because the truth is one beautiful harmony our views concerning man's creation and fall and the consequences of that fall radically affect our views of the grace of God in Christ. Hence, we had better have a proper understanding of these first principles. We can only thank God for the beautiful summary of the Scripture's teaching on these matters presented in Article XIV.

The *Confession* really speaks of two subjects in this article: the creation of man by God and his fall into sin and the consequences of that fall. We shall devote, therefore three articles to the exposition of Article XIV. We limit ourselves in this issue to the relatively brief statement of what we believe concerning man's creation out of the dust of the earth. Even here we shall have to be brief. For a much more detailed discussion of these rich doctrines the reader may consult Herman Hoeksema's *Reformed Dogmatics*, pp. 197, ff.

The creation account refers to the creation of man in two passages. The first is found in Genesis 1:26, 27 and reads:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Genesis 2:7 tells us how God created man in these words:

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

This latter verse has often been misinterpreted to mean that God created man by two separate creative acts so that man is made up of two separate parts: a body and a soul. According to this view man is really two distinct entities or beings: a spirit or soul within a body. Now, it is certainly true that Scripture distinguishes between soul and body. No one disputes this. But what must be understood is that man is not made up of two beings; man is one. The body is not a meaningless shell or abode for the soul. Man is one. This is plain from the fact that in the resurrection our bodies shall be raised to newness of life. But this is also evident from the text in Genesis 2. By the one act of God with its two aspects (the forming of man from the dust of the ground and the breathing into his nostrils of the breath of life) God created the whole man. And that whole man thus created is one personal, thinking, willing, moral creature. Note well that Genesis 2 does not tell us how God created first a body and then a soul. Rather it speaks of the forming of the whole man. God formed man, the whole man, out of the dust of the ground and He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and the whole man became a living soul. Man, therefore, is one being.

By virtue of this twofold creative act man stands in a twofold relationship. He is created "out of the dust of the earth" as the creed emphasizes, and this means he is of the "earth earthy." This is literally stated in that interesting comparison Scripture makes between the first and last Adams in I Corinthians 15:45-47:

"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven."

Notice, man as a living soul, according to this passage, is "natural" and "of the earth, earthy." This means that man as a living soul is earth bound. In fact from this point of view he is no different from the animals. The animals too, are called "living souls" (cf. Gen. 1:24 and Gen. 2:7. While the King James translates "living creatures" with reference to the animals and "living soul" with reference to man, the Hebrew terms in both instances are precisely the same.) The fish and fowl were produced from the waters by the creative Word of God and they are earthy. The animals were produced by that creative Word from the earth and they are earthy. Likewise God formed man from the dust of the ground and he is earthy. He is bound to the earth; completely dependent upon it for all his earthly existence. Man cannot escape from it. Dust he is and to the dust he must return. H. Hoeksema puts it nicely when he writes:

"He has earthly sensations and perceptions; an earthly eye, with which he perceives earthly things;

an earthly ear, that can hear earthly sounds; an earthly sense of taste and touch and smell, that can bring him into contact with earthly objects. He is bound by ties of earthly love and friendship. Even his thinking and willing assume earthly forms. There are things which eye cannot see, and ear cannot hear, and which cannot arise in the heart of man, which only the Spirit of God can reveal to him. And this, finally, also implies that man is mortal, although as he came forth from the hands of his Creator death had no dominion over him. Yet he was not beyond the reach of death. And therefore he was not created in the state of immortality. It was possible for him to fall and to die. Thus man was made a living soul."

(*Reformed Dogmatics*, p. 200)

Yet even from an earthly and natural point of view the Bible speaks of the excellency of man. Even the earthly aspect of man contains something which makes him a creature higher and more excellent than all other creatures. This is evident from man's very appearance. His upright stance, his face which reveals intelligence and understanding, and his ability to look upward to heaven all indicate that even from an earthly point of view he was created as king. Man is not merely the highest form of animal life. He is something much more than the animal. This excellency is also clearly evident from the creation narrative itself. There is that significant pause and divine soliloquy (cf. Genesis 1:26) before God creates man. God speaks with Himself: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . ."; and then follows in vs. 27 the statement of the actual creation of man. The form of the creation narrative itself indicates the excellency of man before God and in relationship with the rest of creation. Man is made a friend-servant of Jehovah. As such he is to be lord of the creation: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Genesis 1:27) In man the whole creation finds its focus and meaning. Through man the whole creation "declares the glory of God." The creation serves man in order that man may serve His Creator. This factor makes all claims of evolution nonsense. Even the form of the creation narrative precludes any evolutionary conception of things.

Man's excellency is evident from another fact of the creation narrative. In Genesis 1 we read that by the power of the creative Word of God the waters brought forth the fish and fowl and the earth brought forth the animals, but of man we read that God formed him out of the dust of the ground. (cf. Gen. 1:20-25; 2:7) Man as well as the animals was created out of the dust of the earth, but only man was

formed as it were by the very fingers of the Almighty. Thus while man remains of the earth, earthy he is far above the rest of the earthly creation. This factor, too, will not allow any form of evolution. There is obvious distinction between the animals and man. Man cannot be explained as coming from the animals, neither is there a gradual transition from animals to man. "The missing link is indeed missing." (Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics*, p. 201) God did not merely call man from the earth, He formed him and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

But there is still another dimension to man's being. He is a spiritual, moral, personal being for God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." God did not do this with the animals. They are merely of the earth, earthy. They are simply called forth from the earth and nothing more can be said of them. While man, too, is of the earth, earthy he is more; for when God formed him from the dust of the ground God also infused man with the breath of life. Thus man was created with a mind and a will. And thus, too, man was created capable of knowing His Creator, loving Him and serving Him. Man was enabled to serve His God by exercising lordship over the creation. He could stand in covenant relationship with the Most High. Truly in his original state man stood in the image and after the likeness of Him that created him. This is his excellency, his nobility. Well may we exclaim with the Psalmist: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." (Psalm 139:14)

On the basis, therefore, of the clear and powerful testimony of the Scriptures: "We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after His own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will, agreeably to the will of God."

Know the standard
and follow it.



Read the
STANDARD BEARER!

Book Reviews

Prof. H. Hanko

GOLDEN BOOKLET OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE, by John Calvin; Translated by Henry J. Van Andel; Baker Book House, 1975; 96 pp., \$1.45.

This booklet is a new translation of the material in Calvin's *Institutes* entitled "On the Christian Life." However, since 1550, this material was published separately also in French, Latin and Dutch. It has been republished a large number of times, but now it appears in a new and more modern translation. For those who have neither the time nor the inclination to read the whole of the *Institutes*, and for those who desire this important material in a separate booklet, this is a worthwhile purchase. [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

DEVOTIONALS FOR TEACHERS, by Nelle Vander Ark; Baker Book House, 1975; 80 pp., (no price given.)

A rather sentimental and moralistic book intended to help teachers through their difficult work by means of devotional readings based loosely on various Scripture passages. [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

WORD IN DEED, Theological Themes in Evangelism, by Gabriel Fackre; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975; 109 pp., \$1.95 (paper).

A rather liberal neo-evangelical approach to evangelism which is not much help to a Reformed man, but does give the current approach to much of evangelism. He treats the themes: Orientation, Proclamation, Authorization, Action, Conversion. [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

THE CALL TO HOLINESS, Spirituality in a Secular Age, by Martin Parsons; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975, 95 pp., \$1.65 (paper).

This primarily devotional book deals only briefly with the specific problems of the work of sanctification, and is, consequently, not much help in an understanding of this important doctrine. It contains a mild criticism of neo-pentecostalism and defines the means of holiness in terms of prayer and Bible reading. It is somewhat evangelically orientated. [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

MORE PSALMS FOR ALL SEASONS, Expressions of the Believing Heart, by David Allan Hubbard; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975; 96 pp., \$1.50 (paper).

These meditations on the Psalms are a good example of how the Psalms may never be used. The author fails completely to see the Messianic character of the Psalms and even denies that Psalm 22 speaks of Christ. The result is little moral homilies tacked on to a particular Psalm. [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

WILLIAM BARCLAY: A Spiritual Autobiography; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975; 121 pp., \$5.95.

Biographies are difficult to write. Autobiographies are, especially for a Christian, almost impossible. This book is not, in the true sense of the word, an autobiography. Although the author does give considerable information about himself, especially in the chapter entitled "Self-Portrait", nevertheless, he is more interested in setting forth his own theology in the context of a description of his work.

He was a pastor, a radio speaker, a writer of "Daily Study Bible", and, for twenty-seven years, a member of the Divinity Faculty at the University of Glasgow, Scotland.

The book is interesting reading, but the theology is very deficient, and, as a matter of fact, Antichristian. On page 40, e.g., the author comes very close to making his evolutionism a step to outright Arminianism. On pp. 44ff., he denies that sickness and suffering are God's will. But by far the worst, on pp. 49, 50, 52, he denies the deity of Jesus Christ and the vicarious atonement of Christ for sin.

After reading the book, one wonders why he continues to preach and teach Divinity if these truths are denied. [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

THE GOSPEL OF MARK, by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, 1975; 700 pp., \$14.95.

Baker has produced another in the series of New Testament Commentaries by Dr. Hendriksen. We are happy that additional commentaries are being published in this series, for they constitute some of the finest commentaries available.

The desirable features of these commentaries are: 1) The text is clear and written in a style understandable by all. 2) The books of the Bible treated are all introduced by a rather lengthy discussion of date, authorship, and various problems of an introductory nature. 3) The author is firmly committed to the truth of infallible inspiration. 4) All technical

material is placed in footnotes. There are two advantages to this. On the one hand, the reader is not interrupted by this technical material. On the other hand, those familiar with the Greek will find much material of value by a careful perusal of the footnotes. 5) The commentary is generally thorough and is of considerable value for Bible study whether that be in personal study or in preparation for Societies.

There are several features which are not too desirable. 1) The author believes in the theory of common grace and the general offer of the gospel. He brings these into his commentary at many points, sometimes in what seems to be a forced way. 2) The author, in this commentary as well as in others, is very fond of acrostics and various devices and schemes to divide or elucidate material. Sometimes these force the material into strange patterns somewhat foreign to the Scriptures.

Our ministers are often asked to recommend commentaries to their people. Hendriksen's commentaries can be recommended highly and will prove valuable additions in family, church and ministerial libraries. [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

A BASKET OF FRAGMENTS, by Robert Murray M'Cheyne; Christian Focus Publications, 118 Academy St., Inverness, IV1 ILX, Scotland; 194 pp., \$7.95.

Christian Focus Publications is a recently formed organization in Scotland which was formed for the purpose of "the propagation of the Gospel through literature." As far as I know, this is its second publishing venture. Its first was an exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith by Robert Shaw.

This present book contains some of the sermons preached by Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813-1843) whose short ministry was spent as pastor of St. Peter's in Dundee, Scotland. These sermons were originally published five years after M'Cheyne's death from notes taken down by his audience during the services.

These sermons stand in the Puritan tradition for the most part. They are strongly Calvinistic, but have that undercurrent of mysticism which so characterized much of Puritan preaching. Although quite naturally the homiletics is quite different from what we are accustomed to, these sermons make fine reading. The book is well worthwhile to anyone who enjoys devotional reading and who would like to have some idea of circumstances in Scotland among Calvinists during the first half of the Nineteenth Century.

The book can be ordered from the address given above and a publicity leaflet giving information about Christian Focus Publications can be obtained from the same address.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of Faith Protestant Reformed Church (Grand Rapids) wishes to express its sincere sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. David Ondersma in the passing of her father, MR. HENRY HEEMSTRA.

It is our prayer that the Lord will remember them in their loss. "The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace." (Psalm 29:11).

The Adult Bible Class of
Faith Church.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On January 4, 1976, our parents, MR. AND MRS. DICK VAN UFFELEN, hope to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to God for the preservation of them for each other and for us, and for the covenant love and instruction they have given us. Our prayer is that God may continue to bless them in the years to come.

Their children,
Mr. and Mrs. Lewis H. Bruinsma (Donna)
John Van Uffelen
JoAnn Van Uffelen
Laura Van Uffelen
Robert Van Uffelen

Redlands, Cal.

Gifts which we gratefully acknowledge for the year Sept. 1, 1974 - August 31, 1975

Doon	\$111.81
Edgerton	163.01
Faith	65.80
First	571.15
Holland	438.26
Hope	1,553.89
Hudsonville	640.34
Hull	207.81
Kalamazoo	173.40
Loveland	110.79
Lynden	75.75
Pella	29.00
Randolph	193.16
Redlands	178.87
South East	599.26
South Holland	1,413.20
South West	202.12
Hudsonville M.S.	25.00
Individuals	3,333.45
	\$10,086.07
	Board of the R.F.P.A.

News From Our Churches

Most if not all of our churches use tape recorders to bring recordings of church services into the homes of members of the congregation who are shut-in. Tape ministries have also been an effective tool in church extension work. First Church in Grand Rapids began this service with the use of wire recorders about 30 years ago. Recently, the following report appeared in First's bulletin concerning the cassette tape ministry conducted there:

During the past several years we have been using cassette recorders for our shut-ins, but also to send out our recorded services to those outside our congregation. We have also offered for sale such recordings as well as recordings of past lectures. At present, we have 14 individuals or families in our congregation who receive the recorded services, and there are 17 outside of the congregation who receive these. We have also sold over 500 cassettes of services and lectures to many both within our denomination and outside of it. We thank our covenant God for this opportunity to witness to His sovereignty and goodness. Should any desire to be added to the list of those receiving recordings, they may contact John Van Baren, 245-6666.

John Van Baren is Rev. G. Van Baren's oldest son. John serves as the recording engineer in this tape ministry. It is quite evident that no little recording activity has been taking place on Fuller and Franklin Streets.

* * * * *

In Hudsonville's November 2 bulletin this note appeared: "On July 26, 1926, this congregation was organized. Approximately in February of 1927 the church building was dedicated. After worshipping for more than 48 years in this building, the time has come that we leave it. Next Saturday morning catechism classes will be held in the Hudsonville Public High School at the usual time, 9:30 and 10:15. NEXT SUNDAY services will be held in the Hudsonville Public High School at 9:30 in the morning and at 3:00 in the afternoon! Please notice the change of time for the second service!" For many in the Hudsonville congregation, November 2 must have been a

little sad, for one does not leave the place which has served as church home for almost 5 decades without some feeling. But, we are all looking forward to the building of the new Hudsonville Church. In the course of the November congregation meeting, it was decided to alter the plans for the new church. The new church will have all the rooms as well as the auditorium on one level. The earlier plan was for a bi-level church.

Hudsonville also conducted a clothing drive for the needy in Jamaica this fall.

Due to growth in the size of their respective congregations, the size of the consistories in both Southwest and Holland churches was enlarged. The Holland consistory has brought building fund needs to the attention of the congregation because it appears that the building will have to be altered to make more seating room in the auditorium.

Both our churches in Hull, Iowa and Isabel, South Dakota, scheduled church cleanings last fall. Hull even furnished dinner for the cleaners. Isabel needed a couple men to dust the church ceiling. I always thought Spring was the time for the annual cleaning — especially among the Dutch.

Kalamazoo extended their call to Rev. J. Kortering.

For many years, the Sunday School of First Church has been publishing and distributing a number of pamphlets. Recently a letter was received from a book shop in Belfast, Northern Ireland. A new supply of pamphlets was requested to replace those lost when the shop was bombed — "Our Book Shop near city centre suffered bomb damage on a number of occasions. On the last occasion we suffered loss of most of our stock — books & Bibles. But after 6 or 7 months in temporary quarters we are back in our Shop again. The Lord reigns." The shop owner writes that one of the pamphlets was a great help to a convert from the Roman Catholic Church. We rejoice that the Lord has given opportunity to use these materials even in distant lands.

K. G. V.