

# The STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

“God’s Word has to be the most marvellous thing in heaven and on earth. That is why it must at one and the same time do two opposite things, namely give perfect light and glory to those who believe it, and bring utter blindness and shame upon those who believe it not. To the former it must be the most certain and best known of all things; to the latter it must be the most unknown and obscure of all things. The former must extol and praise it above all things; the latter must blaspheme and slander it above all things. So does it operate to perfection and achieve in the hearts of men no insignificant works, but strange and terrible works.”

Martin Luther, Luther’s Works,  
Vol. 45, p. 156

## CONTENTS:

Meditation —	
The Song of Creation .....	578
Editorials —	
Editor's Notes .....	581
A Word of Explanation .....	581
An Open Letter to Rev. G. I. Williamson .....	582
Feature —	
Our Heritage and the Standard Bearer .....	586
My Sheep Hear My Voice —	
God's People, The Sheep .....	589
Signs of the Times —	
Transcendental Meditation —	
A Prayer Substitute .....	591
In His Fear —	
Christian Stewardship .....	593
The Day of Shadows —	
A Triangle Within A Family Circle .....	596
All Around Us —	
Correspondence And Reply .....	598
News of Our Churches .....	600
News From Our Churches .....	600

## THE STANDARD BEARER

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

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

**Department Editors:** Prof. Robert D. Decker, Rev. David J. Engelsma, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman Hanko, Rev. Robert C. Harbach, Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. Jay Korterling, Rev. Dale H. Kuiper, Rev. George C. Lubbers, Rev. Meindert Joostens, Rev. Marinus Schipper, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Herman Veldman, Mr. Kenneth G. Vink.

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

**Church News Editor:** Mr. Kenneth G. Vink  
1422 Linwood, S.E.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

**Editorial Policy:** Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of his own articles. Contributions of general interest from our readers and questions for the Question-Box Department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be neatly written or typewritten, and must be signed. Copy deadlines are the first and the fifteenth of the month. All communications relative to the contents should be sent to the editorial office.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## MEDITATION

## The Song of Creation

Rev. C. Hanko

*All things are done in parables.*

Mark 4:11.

Have you ever stood in rapt wonder as the setting sun majestically bid its farewell to the day, flooding the skies with radiant splendor and giving to the approaching night the confidence of ultimate victory? Have you ever watched the innumerable stars in their courses through the dome of the heavens, one surpassing the other in brightness? Have you greeted the dawn as the first rays of light broke over the distant hills, silhouetting the trees in bold relief against the

morning sky, and arousing the birds from their slumber? Have you listened to the busy chirping of the birds, the cheery song of the wren, the rustling of the leaves, the whisper of the wind, the rhythmic beat of the waves against the shore? Have you paused to admire a flower, a blade of grass, a leaf, or watched a busy ant hasten about its business? Surely your soul has responded along with the Psalmist: "The heavens are telling the glory of God, the firmament is dis-



playing the work of His hands; day unto day wells forth speech, night unto night shows wisdom."

Jesus heard this song of creation far better than you or I ever can hope to do on this side of the Jordan of death. Jesus saw a farmer walking along the hillside, spreading seed with the wave of his hand, and He saw a parable. Jesus walked past a dirty field of grain; the farmer had sown good seed in the field, but weeds had sprung up along with the grain, in Jesus' eyes was another parable. The Lord saw Peter and Andrew drawing up their net full of fishes off the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and He smiled at the parable. The Good Shepherd saw an ordinary shepherd with his flock, He saw a vine and admired the vineyard, He noticed a leper by the way, watched the eagle soar through the sky, heard the cry of the wolf — yes — there were thousands of voices speaking to Him, an endless display of marvels unfolding before His eyes, waiting for His nose to smell, for His hand to touch, for His sensitive soul to respond. Every one of these relayed to Him a message of the spiritual and the heavenly. For He understood so very well that God was doing all things in parables.

Little things belong to this speech of creation. A dot — like this · ? A horizontal line, like this \_\_\_\_\_? Or maybe a vertical line? A slanting line? Let's take a look. We make use of a dot, a period at the end of a sentence. We use the word "period" to denote a span of time. It stresses for us that we reach an end. It calls for a pause. We pause in that ever moving span of time, until time shall be no more. Then God sets His final period upon all that belongs to time and introduces for us eternity. A straight line goes right to the point, like an arrow that flies to its target. The horizontal line reminds us of the broad expanse of prairie that reaches out to the horizon. It is the earthly in distinction from the heavenly. An animal stands in that horizontal position, all four feet on the ground, reaching his nose down to the ground to satisfy his hunger. Did Asaph have this in mind in Psalm 73 when he complained about his envy of the prosperity of the wicked: "So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before Thee"? Did he mean to say, "I saw no farther than my nose was long"? The vertical line is much more appealing. It stands erect to point heavenward, like the towering spire of a church. Man was created in the image of God to stand erect and to lift up his eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh his help. The vertical line speaks of uprightness, conformity to the law of God, a courage that is born from the consciousness of divine approval. The slanting line is a departure from the vertical. It is out of plumb, leans away, hangs awry. It is most disturbing to see a building out of plumb, or a picture that hangs awry on the wall. The sinner who transgresses God's law slants off from the

upright, leans toward Satan, sin and evil, until he falls completely and lies prone on the ground, in the sphere of death. No one but Christ through His atoning death of the cross and His powerful resurrection can raise the dead sinner into an upright position before God. The line that slopes downward leads ever farther into sin, ever deeper into death; it becomes like a swift toboggan ride into the abyss. It is the upward grade, the struggling, narrow way that leads to life. Cross-bearers over Calvary's heights reach the golden realms of eternity.

We are all acquainted with the symbolism of numbers. *One* is a unit that stands alone. There is strength in that single unit, even as God is the "Wholly Other," the independent, self-sufficient, sovereign One. *Three* points to the three persons in the Trinity. *Three* often makes a single combination: think of the three basic colors, the three notes of music, the fact that water appears in the threefold form of water, ice and steam. *Four* turns our attention to the four corners of the earth. Even as the horizontal line, it represents the earthly maybe even the earthly as it still lies under the curse. The flood lasted forty days, Israel roamed the desert for forty years, Elijah spent forty days travelling that desert, Jesus was forty days in the wilderness. *Six* is the number of man without God. It is the week without the Sabbath, it spells out the vain attempts of man throughout all of history in his striving to be as God. Six, when multiplied by 10 makes 60, when multiplied by 100 makes 600, a total of 666 — mere empty vanity. *Seven* is the covenant number, God in intimate communion with His creation, the sum of three plus four. For God so loved the world (the four) that He gave His only begotten Son to redeem that world unto Himself for the day when He makes all things new. Look at the starry heavens and see the numerous combinations of three and four in the stars, as if God would have us know that He keeps covenant even through the dark hours of the night. *Ten* expresses a fulness, an ever increasing fulness that grows into 100, 1,000, 1,000,000, and thus on and on into the infinity of God Himself.

Colors speak their own language. White and black stand antithetically opposed to one another. The God of the antithesis makes day and night, light and darkness, heaven and hell. Black is, interestingly enough, the absence of all color. White is the combination of all the colors. One ray of light breaks into an array of colors like a rainbow. Therefore the rainbow is so fittingly the sign of God's promise that He will surely save His people, keeping covenant forever, even through judgment. The rainbow spreads itself on the black background of the departing storm. Colors can be warm or cold, relaxing or disturbing, appealing or ugly, happy or sad. White is the happy, bright color that speaks of holiness, purity, life, victory. Black is



the mournful color of sin, curse, judgment, death. Sin hides under the cover of darkness; the enemy lurks in the shadows of the night. Purple belongs to royalty. Verdant green reminds us of the springtime, while golden yellow tells of harvest time. Red is the wild, angry color that "makes us see red." One is impressed by the fact that colors can clash horribly, and yet colors can also harmonize beautifully in a grand display of splendor. Heaven must be very colorful.

All creation joins in singing its Maker's praise. The sun in the heavens tells of God's dazzling holiness, as One Whom no man has seen nor can ever see. At the same time the Sun of righteousness arises in power and marches through the heavens as the Bridegroom Who brings His Bride with Him into everlasting tabernacles of blessedness. The moon rides through the sky, even at times breaks through banks of clouds, to tell us that night is but a shadow awaiting the dawn of a new day. The starry hosts move serenely above all the turmoil of this present time. How soothing to look beyond all this present confusion and to see that the church, Abraham's seed, remains unruffled, untroubled, come what may.

Creation necessarily speaks of divine wisdom and knowledge. "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew." (Prov. 3:19, 20) Standing in the midst of this powerful revelation, the apostle Paul cries out, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. 11: 33, 34) As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's thoughts beyond our thoughts. He is great in counsel and mighty in work.

Predestination, including election and reprobation, is clearly pictured before us in creation. A single oak produces thousands of acorns, yet very few acorns become mighty oaks. The cornstalk produces its leaves, its tassel or flower, its husk and its ear, all for the sake of the kernels of corn that are harvested. Wheat and tares grow side by side. Scaffolding serves for the erection of the building and then is torn down and destroyed.

We stand in the midst of the judgment of this present world. It is evident to anyone who cares to see it that this earth has already passed through one judgment. The lofty Rocky Mountains especially tell of the power of God that heaved up mountains out of the sea cast huge boulders around in wild disorder, scattered the crushed rock as no human power could ever imitate it. Notice the Great Lakes, or the Grand

Canyon, gouged out of the continent's heart by no human hand. There is evidence everywhere of the great Flood that destroyed the first world of wicked men and changed the whole contour of the earth. The desert with its endless span of sand and waste witnesses of the great desolation that God brings upon the earth. The farmer wrestles with weeds, insects, drought and floods. Sickness and diseases penetrate into our homes. Tornadoes roar through the country, leaving a trail of destruction. In an ever increasing measure God sends us the signs of the times that point to the swiftly approaching end. "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thundereth: . . . the voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty." (Ps. 29: 3, 4)

The wonder of it all is that Zion is delivered through judgment. Scripture speaks of the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world. He is mighty Conqueror, the Lion of Judah's tribe, the Sun of Righteousness, the Bright and Morning Star.

There are times when the desert blooms like a rose. There is the springtime when trees and shrubs and flowers awaken from their long sleep to declare to us the resurrection from the dead. Even the autumn has a splendor all its own. The seed must fall, to be buried in the earth and die, in order to bring forth new life. The trees vie with one another in shouting the praises of our God. As I listen I hear the groaning of the creatures as they travail together in hope, expecting soon to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. (Rom 8: 20-23)

The fool says in his heart: evolution, long periods of development. God speaks in such a plain language that it is deliberate unbelief which closes a deaf ear to His voice. That is as God intended, so that man may never find a single excuse for his unbelief.

What an amazing wonder of grace to have eyes to see, and ears to hear! After all, this is my Father's world, and in His world He speaks His Word.

Lord, open Thou my eyes that I may see ever more clearly the wonders of Thy Word!

---

### CORRECTION ! ! !

In the October 1st issue a notice of a change of address was printed. The zip code was incorrectly printed. The correct address is:

MR. RICHARD H. TEITSMA  
3681 MOHAVE DRIVE, SW.  
GRANDVILLE, MI 49418.



## EDITORIALS

### Editor's Notes

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

*Gremlins!* There must have been a bad gremlin in the office of our typesetting service when Volume 52 began. I carefully reminded our printer that this was "Volume LII, Number 1." But you will notice — if you have not noticed already — that our page-numbers are in the 500s! That's where that gremlin did his work: our printer failed to begin the new volume at page 1. To prevent utter confusion in the annual Index and in the bound volumes we simply decided to continue throughout this volume with consecutive numbering. Next year — hopefully — we'll begin at page 1.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Regrets.* We failed to make special mention a month ago of the Special Report by Pastor E. C. Case concerning the General Assembly of the Presbyterian

Church of America. We thanked him privately, and we now do so publicly. We value our contacts with a few brethren of the PCA, and we hope they will continue to keep in touch with us and to keep us informed.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Surplus Copy.* Due to the fact that we had some surplus copy and some articles which required prompt placement, some of the regular departments are omitted from this issue.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Books for Gifts.* If you are thinking about worthwhile Christmas gifts, think about our R.F.P.A. books. By this time there is a considerable variety. And they are all good! Write our Business Manager.

## A Word of Explanation

We were unable, due to space limitations, to continue our Tour Report in this issue. Our editorial, however, is related to our Australasian Tour.

By way of explanation, the following:

1) You will recall that earlier we mentioned the fact that we had contact with people of the Reformed Church of New Zealand.

2) This is the denomination which was embroiled in the Runia controversy a few years ago, a matter about which we wrote extensively in 1970-72. As a result of that controversy, some separated from the Reformed Church, among whom were Mr. W. van Rij, of Christchurch, and Messrs. J. Koppe and B. van Herk, of the Wellington area. These were men who, along with others, fought for doctrinal discipline in the Reformed Churches of N.Z.

3) When Rev. C. Hanko and I were in Wellington last June, we were invited to meet with three ministers of the Reformed Church, Rev. G.I. Williamson, Rev. G. Kroon, and Rev. B. Gillard. We did not

anticipate a lengthy discussion of the Runia controversy; in fact, we had not even prepared for such a discussion or taken along any information or documentation. But this became the chief subject of our visit with these three ministers, and particularly with the Rev. Williamson. The latter had been a minister of the Reformed Church of New Zealand; he had been an opponent of Dr. Runia's teachings; but he had left and had served as minister in the United States during the period when the Runia controversy came to a head and was synodically decided. He is now back in New Zealand and serving as pastor of one of the Wellington churches involved in that controversy.

4) We had no intention of writing about this private conversation when we reported on the Wellington portion of our tour. (We have already omitted such private visits from the earlier portion of our report, in fact.) But Rev. Williamson chose to publish a false report of this visit in a New Zealand paper. This necessitated a reply on our part. And we received an urgent request from New Zealand to make such a reply.



## An Open Letter to Rev. G. I. Williamson

Dear Rev. Williamson:

Your recent article in *Faith In Focus* entitled "A Visit With Profs. Hoeksema and Hanko" has come to my attention. Needless to say, I was rather surprised to read a public report concerning a private visit which you and the Rev. Gillard and the Rev. Kroon held with the Rev. Cornelius Hanko (not Prof. Hanko) and myself at the residence of the Rev. Kroon last June 27. On my part, I had resolved not to report in the *Standard Bearer* concerning private visits of this kind, especially not when they were visits which involved disagreements. Now, however, you have chosen to write publicly about these matters; and thus you have compelled me to reply and to set the record straight. And then I must add that not only am I surprised at your article, but also deeply disappointed and offended. I could understand that you might present a factual report concerning our discussion and our disagreement. I am deeply offended at the fact that your article is far from being a factual report. It is full of misrepresentations, half truths, and downright lies. I can hardly recognize our visit in your report. I consider such misrepresentation and such a vitriolic attack to be unworthy of a Christian, and especially of a minister of the gospel. I ask you to apologize and to correct all of your misrepresentations. It would be proper for you to publish my article in *Faith In Focus*, although I do not expect that you will do this. Nevertheless, I assure you that my rebuttal will reach New Zealand and will be distributed to many whom you seek to deceive.

In the first place, you write that it has "never been offensive to us to read criticism of our New Zealand churches in 'The Standard Bearer'." To the contrary, we have also profited from the candid statements in this paper of the Protestant Reformed Church." I cannot understand such a statement. For all that was stated in your hearing at the home of Rev. Kroon last June 27 was also stated in the *Standard Bearer*. I refer you particularly to the reports concerning your Synod of 1971 and concerning the subsequent events which appear in Volume 48 with complete documentation. How is it, I ask, that the very things which were not offensive to you to read became so thoroughly offensive to you in the Rev. Kroon's home? I did not change my position one iota since I wrote that critique. Have you changed? You left the Reformed church of New Zealand before the Runia matter reached its climax — reportedly with the statement that the situation in the Reformed churches of New Zealand was hopeless. While others

were fighting the battle, you were sojourning in America. Now you have returned — after the battle. Are you now desperately attempting, perhaps, to justify your participation in a denomination which was derelict in its duty and which has never remedied its wrong-doing?

In the second place, you do not present correctly either the course of our discussion last June or the course of events at the synod of 1971.

As far as the former is concerned, let me point out the following:

1) You failed to point out that it was you, not Rev. Hanko and I, who initiated the entire discussion about your churches and the Runia matter. Neither Rev. Hanko nor I had the slightest inkling that afternoon that this was the purpose of the meeting. If we had known this, we certainly would have been better prepared than we were, would have reviewed the history in advance, and would have taken ample documentary proof along with us. Instead, I had to rely suddenly on my memory of a rather complicated chain of events of a few years ago; and fortunately, on a couple of occasions the Rev. Kroon kindly confirmed what I stated from his memory and from the Acts of Synod of 1971 over against your claims. And, by the way, let me remind you that neither Rev. Hanko nor I throughout our tour of New Zealand ever initiated any discussion of the Runia matter. In my lectures I never so much as mentioned it. In our cottage meetings, as well as in meetings with individuals, I never talked about any of these matters unless others brought them up. Everyone who heard us in New Zealand will have to confirm the truth of that statement. Yet you leave the impression in the last paragraph of your article that we went about sowing discord in New Zealand. You write: "They are encouraging people to forsake these Churches, in direct conflict with our Reformed Confessions. And we are compelled to call this a destructive work. It is not helping the cause of the Reformed Faith in New Zealand, but separating brethren who ought to strive together for that cause." This is not true. We were positive in all our work. We always sought unity: unity in the truth. We never went anywhere or spoke anywhere except by invitation. And I am firmly convinced that those who heard us will give us the testimony that we conducted ourselves circumspectly in all our meetings.

But let me remind you, Rev. Williamson, that our discussion began with an inquiry on your part as to the purpose of our coming to New Zealand, and that



I replied that it was our purpose to contact as many people and churches who were likeminded as to the Reformed faith as it was possible for us to contact. Thereupon, it was you, not we, who brought up the matter of the Runia case. It was you, not we, who brought up the matter of the so-called attempts at reconciliation with the brethren van Herk and Koppe on the part of the Sessions of Silverstream and Wainuiomata. Do you not recall, too, that I stated that I did not care to discuss the personal cases of the brethren van Herk and Koppe in their absence? And do you not recall, further, that I pointed out: a) that these brethren, as well as brother van Rij, had walked the ecclesiastical way to the end and had not obtained satisfaction? b) that they therefore had no choice but to separate, seeing this was a fundamental doctrinal issue? c) that neither of the two sessions has as yet made any attempt to resolve that doctrinal issue and to bring about reconciliation? d) that later in the conversation you even suggested that a statement could be made on the Runia matter at the level of the Session? e) that I pointed out that this resolution of the matter had to take place at the *synodical* level, seeing that the case had been at synod, and that the Rev. Kroon agreed with me on this point? f) that all three of you conceded that such a synodical statement *could not be obtained* in your churches?

2) You misrepresent matters when you write: "The only problem (that is for Rev. Hanko and myself, HCH) is that Synod fell short of what they see as a consistent line. This is due to the fact that one question posed by the 1971 appeal was not answered. That question was this: 'Will the New Zealand Churches continue to support Geelong College with Dr. Runia as one of its teachers?'" This is not our position, and you know it. The brethren Koppe and van Herk in 1971 knew that they could not seek the discipline of Dr. Runia. They knew that Runia was not under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the New Zealand churches. The question was that of Dr. Runia's *errors*. It was a question of your churches' supporting and endorsing the Reformed Theological College at Geelong in the light of those errors. It was a question of doctrinal discipline. And the appeal in 1971 was for synod to act in defense of doctrinal purity and to act in condemnation of doctrinal deviation, especially since these matters of doctrinal purity and doctrinal deviation involved a crucial aspect of the churches' work, namely, the theological education of their future ministers. And let me now add, by way of emphasis, that when you study the Acts of your Synod of 1971, it becomes very plain that there was a studied attempt at that synod to *avoid* saying anything about the specific errors in the specific case concerning Dr. Runia's teachings. The

fact of the matter is that your synod would not even recognize that there were any errors being taught by Dr. Runia and being supported by men in your churches. Even in the doctrinal statement which you praised so highly, and which was after all nothing but a political maneuver (as I shall presently point out) the synod refuses to recognize the existence of any errors. They inserted in their so-called reaffirmation the emphatic phrase, "IN SPITE OF CERTAIN ALLEGATIONS."

3) You made much of the matter of "due process" in connection with Dr. Runia. Now, first of all, it did not take any *pressure* (as you write) whatsoever to make me admit that no man could be declared a heretic in our churches without "due process." And why, pray, do you twice speak of "under pressure" when you "looked forward to meeting" us? Let me assure you that I need no pressure to admit the truth. However, you failed to state: 1) that we stated again and again that there was no case at synod concerning Dr. Runia personally, nor any attempt to condemn Dr. Runia as a heretic. This was impossible. Runia was not under synod's jurisdiction. 2) But it was indeed a case of the churches' responsibility with respect to the errors, the *heretical teachings*, of Dr. Runia. 3) We did also make the claim — and the appeal of Koppe and van Herk is evidence — that there was indeed documentary proof of error, and that these brethren cited specific references in Runia's writings and specific items from Scripture and the confessions, but that your synod failed to treat these matters item by item. To all this you paid no attention in the course of our conversation.

4) It is indeed true that you stated that "at the time of this 1971 Synod everyone knew that Dr. Runia was about to depart from Geelong. The question posed by the appeal therefore was anachronistic." But what you failed to state is very significant. I recall vividly that the Rev. Hanko asked you whether your churches did not have a *moral obligation to warn the churches in the Netherlands, their sister churches, against the errors of Dr. Runia*. And I am sure that you recall this, too. This also, by the way, is in harmony with what I wrote in December of 1971 (p. 124): "The New Zealand churches have fraternal relations with both the churches in Australia and in the Netherlands. It surely is not very brotherly to take the attitude, as it were, 'Well, we're rid of Runia and therefore rid of the problem; let the other churches wrestle with it if they want to.'"

5) You also misrepresent matters when you state the following: "A matter of particular condemnation from these men was the fact that a letter of thanks was sent to Dr. Runia on behalf of our Churches at the time he left Geelong." And you misrepresent by failing to state the point which we made. You know



very well that we did not merely speak in general of a "letter of thanks," but that we referred specifically to the fact that in this letter your churches officially called Dr. Runia a "champion of the Reformed faith." You know very well, too, that it was pointed out that when this letter was sent by your synodical Stated Clerk in the name of your churches, there was only *one session* in your denomination which took exception to this letter. About this also I wrote in December of 1971 in one of those articles which you did not find offensive: "... The New Zealand churches gave the lie to their own decision. After declaring that they would take no action about the errors of Dr. Runia, they nevertheless did take action — in another way. They sent Runia a very commendatory farewell letter in which, among other things, they called him a 'champion for the Reformed faith.'" And I went on in that article to state: "A man may deny reprobation. He may openly contradict the confessions. He may contradict the doctrine of Holy Scripture. When confronted by a concrete case, the Synod says, 'We will say nothing about it; the man is leaving for the Netherlands.' But when the concrete case is safely shunted aside, then turn around and praise such a man publicly as a champion of the Reformed faith! This is anything but honest; and it is anything but Reformed!"

At the time of our conversation in Rev. Kroon's home, as I said, neither did I have the opportunity to prepare for the discussion, nor did I have any documents at hand. Now that I am home and have access to the necessary documents and information, let me also remind you that Dr. Runia *understood* the letter sent by your synodical stated clerk, D. G. Vanderpyl, very well. I reported this in the *Standard Bearer* at the time as follows: "And Dr. Runia got the point. For here is his response, as quoted from the bulletin of the Reformed Church of Christchurch, New Zealand: 'I cannot tell you how much Mrs. Runia and I have appreciated this letter. In the past some New Zealand brethren have issued serious accusations asserting that my theology was a great danger for the Reformed Churches in Australasia. As you may remember, last year I sent a letter to all the sessions repudiating these accusations. I am very happy indeed that before we leave Australia you have expressed your confidence in me and your appreciation for my work.'"

From all this it is very plain that this letter of glowing tribute to Dr. Runia at that time was, in effect, a complete exoneration of him; it is very plain, too, that he thus understood the letter; and it is very plain that this letter gave the lie to the positive assertions of your Synod of 1971 and shows that the Synod did not at all intend in any way to condemn the errors which Runia taught on the various matters

touched on in the Appeal of Mssrs. Koppe and van Herk. The Reformed churches of New Zealand are still wide open for all who teach and defend the same errors which Runia taught. Moreover, this is not theory, but fact. For you still have in your denomination those who would defend Runia and who agree with his doctrinal position.

6) You also misrepresent matters when you write the following: "At one point in our afternoon of discussion Prof. Hoeksema said that we are apostate. But then, under the pressure of our defense he softened this to say that we are 'semi-apostate.'" And again: "It was naturally our desire (the three Reformed ministers) to know precisely why we are supposedly 'semi-apostate.' The sole answer was the fact that we have not taken a strong enough stand. We have not been sufficiently consistent." What you write here is far from the truth of the matter. It is certainly true that I stated that your churches are apostate. The rest of your statement is not true. The truth is that you were attempting to force me to explain that word "apostate" as meaning that you are the false church in the absolute sense of the word. This I would not say, and this I did not say. And when my use of the term "apostate" came up again toward the end of our conversation, I explained it, not by changing it to "semi-apostate," but by changing it to "apostatizing." And, moreover, it is not true that "our sole answer was the fact that we have not taken a strong enough stand. We have not been sufficiently consistent." We made it abundantly plain in the course of our conversation that the problem lay in the failure of your churches to exercise doctrinal discipline, that is, to condemn doctrinal deviation when plainly confronted by it in the life of the church. Instead, your churches gave to one who was obviously heretical the glowing tribute that he was a "champion of the Reformed faith."

7) In your article, Rev. Williamson, you also make much of the fact that Dr. S. Woudstra has been relieved of his duties at Geelong "even though many of the same allegations that have been heard against his teaching are those that arose concerning Dr. Runia's teaching." Again, however, you failed to point out certain significant facts. In the first place, there is the fact that Dr. Woudstra could have been and should have been properly barred from Geelong before he ever arrived in Australia. It was clear already in 1972 that his position was heretical, as the *Standard Bearer* made plain. To his credit, the Rev. Kroon wrote to this effect at that time in the magazine of your churches known as *The Reformed Journal*. But neither Geelong nor the Reformed churches of Australia nor the Reformed churches of New Zealand took any action. In the second place, the initiative for the removal of Dr. Woudstra did not



come from the Reformed churches, but chiefly from a student from the Free Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, Mr. John Cromarty. But, in the third place, — and this is more serious — Dr. Woudstra is now a minister in good standing in the Reformed Church of Australia, a sister denomination of your churches. And if I understand the sister relationship correctly, this means that he could also be allowed in the pulpits of the Reformed churches of New Zealand.

8) In your article you omit completely something very significant which I called to your attention. You had made a point of the fact that your Synod of 1971 had urged that there be reconciliation between the sessions and the appellants. Do you not recall that I told you in that connection that the last word of the Session of Christchurch to Mr. and Mrs. W. van Rij was that they had to apologize to Dr. Runia? Let me now refresh your memory from the record. In a letter to Mr. van Rij before the Synod of 1971 the Session of Christchurch charged that Mr. van Rij had falsely accused Dr. Runia, and further required of him to retract and apologize for “all such writings as infer that: 1) Dr. Runia denies the sovereignty of God with respect to reprobation. 2) Dr. Runia denies the historicity of Genesis 1, 2, 3. 3) Dr. Runia is an unbeliever” (something which Mr. van Rij neither stated nor implied, HCH). After the Synod of 1971 that same Session of Christchurch showed no inclination whatsoever to reconcile in the sense of retracting and apologizing for their heavy charges of gross sin. In the case of Mr. van Rij, on the contrary, the Session continued to maintain its charges and to insist that the apologizing had to be done by Mr. van Rij. Now this is serious. It may have sounded pious that the Synod urged “all concerned to seek reconciliation.” The fact of the matter is, however, that the Synod was confronted by concrete cases of gross injustice over against the three appellants, Koppe, van Herk, and van Rij. The fact is, too, that the Synod did not adjudicate those appeals, but trampled truth and justice. The fact is that justice was perverted by the churches in the case of the very men who called the churches to doctrinal purity and to doctrinal discipline. The fact is that discipline was used to persecute those who sought to maintain the truth of the confessions. And the fact is that by its failure to treat these appeals the Synod became co-responsible for the injustices committed by the various Sessions against these men. Remember, the abuse of discipline is a mark of the false church!

But there is another matter. Your presentation of the course of events at the Synod of 1971 is not correct. In your article you present the various actions of Synod as coming as a result of the appeals of Mssrs. Koppe and van Herk. This, however, is not

correct. The fact of the matter is that there was some political maneuvering at that Synod. At the very beginning of that Synod there was an item brought up which was not even on the Agenda. Article 15 is simply entitled “General Discussion” and reads: “It was moved and accepted to start on deliberations with a general fraternal discussion on our own Confessional position quite apart from outside interest. It was ruled that this discussion take place upon motion from Dunedin before dealing with matters relating to the Confessions.” Art. 38 was a motion by Rev. P. Berghouse, the pastor of Dunedin, *who is still today a defender of Dr. Runia*, as we learned when we visited him at Dunedin. That article reads: “Rev. Berghouse moved motion (seconded) that Synod consider making statement on Confessional position of our churches.” Now it must be kept in mind, remember, that Rev. Berghouse certainly had no intention of making any statements which would condemn Dr. Runia. The contrary was true: he was seeking to *avoid* a forthright statement by Synod condemning Dr. Runia. Then we turn to Art. 43, which is entitled “Confessional Standing.” This is the article which you characterize as one of the several strong steps in the right direction which your churches have taken. It appears to be rather strong upon first reading; but read *in the context of the situation at that time*, it was a deceptive political maneuver. The article reads:

“The Reformed Churches of New Zealand hereby unanimously re-affirm, IN SPITE OF CERTAIN ALLEGATIONS, that they maintain the Doctrine of The Infallible Scripture as summarized in the Confessional Standards. This includes:

a. That we maintain the historicity of the details AS THEY ARE RECORDED IN GENESIS 1:3, e.g. creation, Adam and Eve as the first created man and woman, the Fall through disobedience, and the subsequent promise of Divine Redemption in Christ.

b. Furthermore we maintain that the WHOLE TEACHING of the Canons of Dort (including Divine Election and Reprobation) IS in complete agreement with the Infallible Word of God.

Consequently we require ANYONE who speaks or writes, teaches, preaches, or counsels *on behalf of these Churches* to do so in accordance with this statement.”

Now, in the first place, it must be noted that the plain suggestion of the words “in spite of certain allegations,” which this article emphasizes so strongly, is that these allegations were not true. But they *were* true: for there were many who were taking the side of Dr. Runia at that time. In the second place, it should be noted that the article speaks of “anyone who . . . teaches . . . on behalf of these



Churches" being required to do so in accordance with the above statement. Yet Dr. Runia was at that very time teaching contrary to the above statement. Moreover there were ministers and sessions who were defending Dr. Runia and attacking those who opposed him. This statement, therefore, was plainly hypocritical.

What happened later at this same synod — much later? In Article 103 the appeal of Mssrs. Koppe and van Herk is treated. In that appeal the synod was confronted by the specific instance, with abundant references to proof, of Dr. Runia's teaching contrary to the statement of Article 43. And what did synod do? Did they *apply* this allegedly strong article to the concrete case of Dr. Runia's teachings? By no means. They simply referred the appellants to the statement of Article 43 without so much as hinting at a condemnation of the specific errors of Dr. Runia. In other words, the maneuver had succeeded. And the supporters of Dr. Runia by this maneuver had prevented synod's making any statement which specifically condemned the teachings of Dr. Runia.

This is the realistic and the correct presentation of the events at the Synod of 1971. In this light it can also be understood that shortly after this Synod Dr. Runia was paid the glowing tribute that he was "a champion of the Reformed faith."

In the light of all this, Rev. Williamson, it was impossible for us to say to you what you have suggested. We could only say that the Reformed Churches of New Zealand had apostatized and are continuing on that track. We could only tell you, as we did, that proper rectification with respect to the Runia matter is still necessary.

But I say again: we did not go up and down New Zealand talking about these matters. We did speak the truth. We did warn against departure from the Reformed faith. We did urge God's people to maintain and to seek the Reformed faith. And we did encourage the brethren of the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches of New Zealand whenever and wherever we came into contact with them, and shall continue to do so.

You have done the cause of the Reformed faith and the cause of truth and justice damage by your article. And you have done your churches a disservice by your silence about the wrongs which I have mentioned. I respectfully call upon you to make rectification and to change your ecclesiastical course. Then your conscience will be clear, and then you will do the cause of Christ in New Zealand a service.

Yours for the Reformed faith,  
H. C. Hoeksema

---

## FEATURE

# Our Heritage and the Standard Bearer

Rev. M. Joostens

[Address delivered at the Annual R.F.P.A. Meeting, Sept. 18, 1975]

By way of introduction to our topic this evening, I want to say that the committee in charge of assigning me this title for this speech perceived that the anniversaries of *The Standard Bearer* and our churches almost coincide. I think this is quite evident from the choice of topics which the committee submitted to me. They were these: "God's Covenant Faithfulness and *The Standard Bearer*", "Our Heritage and *The Standard Bearer*", and "Faith of Our Fathers and *The Standard Bearer*". And it is indeed true that the close proximity of these two anniversary dates reveals something to us. It tells us that both *The Standard*

*Bearer* and our Protestant Reformed Churches were born out of identical circumstances. They were both fostered by the same ecclesiastical situation. The same love and commitment to the truth inspired both. Furthermore, they had the same friends and enemies. And, at least in our early history, they were both somewhat dependent upon each other and flourished together. These things being true, I chose "Our Heritage and *The Standard Bearer*" for my subject this evening; for the truth which fostered our churches we hold dear as a precious legacy. And though this truth has more enemies today than it ever did, we still cherish it. Because of this, our churches and *The Standard Bearer* still flourish today. You



understand: not because they have any official ties, or because the truth depends upon them; but because they stand mutually dependent upon the truth. That truth we must have expounded and explained to us continually. This must be our demand.

This evening we want to survey *The Standard Bearer* historically in connection with our heritage; but not so that we may boast in ourselves or pat ourselves on the back as Reformed Free Publishing Association. Rather, as association and churches we will acknowledge our weaknesses. Such an acknowledgement was the key note on which *The Standard Bearer* was launched. It was the first editor-in-chief of our periodical who said that his only boast was in his infirmities in order that all the praise and glory might be God's. We must give thanks unto God for the legacy He has given us and trust that even in our weaknesses we may treat it properly.

The Scripture speaks much to us about the idea of a heritage. This is true especially in the Old Testament. The Old Testament speaks repeatedly of the typical inheritance of the land of Canaan. It was the promised land in which each had his allotted portion. In the dispensation of types and pictures, the inheritance of a portion of Canaan pointed to the fact that God's children have a place prepared for them in heaven. It is in this latter sense that the inheritance is spoken of in the New Testament. Recall the words of the apostle Peter when he spoke of the "...inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven. . ."

This evening we want to speak concerning the idea of an inheritance in a little different way – not fundamentally or essentially different, you understand – but we want to speak of it as it includes the foregoing from the viewpoint of its possibility. Paul speaks of this in Romans, chapter 8. Here he mentions that we are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." And again in Ephesians 1: "In whom (i.e. Christ) we have obtained an inheritance." From this viewpoint we might say that our inheritance is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent. Such a knowledge is eternal life; the inheritance, the legacy of that knowledge, according to which we have eternal life, has been passed on to us by our fathers in a peculiar and particular way.

What do we mean by this? First of all, that God has preserved His Church in the truth. He preserved this truth in the Old Dispensation by direct revelation and through the prophets, and in the New Dispensation by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We stand in the line of the Church of Christ as she was given the truth; and as churches have historically departed from the purity of that truth, God has preserved in our midst the purest manifestation of this truth. But in

the second place, as God has preserved that truth, so God has also developed it – I mean, not only in the very distant history of the church, but God has been pleased to do that in our brief fifty years of history. When the church, the purest at that time, was about to lose a cardinal part of that truth, God called into being *The Standard Bearer*, and a bit later our churches. That was 1924.

In particular then, what is this heritage of ours? In the first place, it is the cardinal truth that the grace of God is particular. This truth was gradually being lost in our mother church prior to 1924. This became clear already in the early teens of the nineteen hundreds when several conservative ministers of the Christian Reformed Church met together in concern regarding this unfortunate trend. Among these were Danhof and Hoeksema.

The whole idea of the particularity of God's grace came to the fore in the controversy which raged around the figure of Dr. R. Janssen. Dr. Janssen, then professor of Old Testament Exegesis, threw doubt upon the absolute authority of the Scriptures. He brought to bear upon his instruction the views which were expressed in the magazine *Religion and Culture*. These views were the influence of the "jongeren" movement in the Netherlands. These views were, in a few words, a "marriage between Athens and Jerusalem". Fundamentally they found their roots in the teachings of Dr. A. Kuyper. As far as Janssen's teaching was concerned, this resulted in a higher critical approach to the Bible. Dr. Janssen was condemned at the Synod of 1922 held at Orange City, Iowa. There were two factors in this controversy, opposed to one another, which would shape future history. They were, first, that Rev. H. Hoeksema was largely responsible for the work which led to the majority decision which condemned Janssen. And secondly, that although the Synod deposed Dr. Janssen upon the basis of the Formula of Subscription, nevertheless his error was not eradicated. These two fermenting factors made 1924 inevitable. In 1924 the Christian Reformed Church officially lost the truth of particular grace. In consequence to various protests and overtures against Rev. H. Danhof and Rev. H. Hoeksema, the three points of common grace were hastily adopted. Thus they took a doctrinal stand which declared: 1) that God shows a general attitude of favor to all men (which was defined as grace), 2) that God by the general operation of His Spirit restrains sin, without or apart from regeneration, and 3) that the unregenerated man can perform "civil righteousness" (Synod meant good in God's sight). That was a departure from the truth.

It was over against this error that our fathers maintained that God's grace and goodness is particular: that is to say, that the grace of God is never upon the



reprobate wicked. And that which seems to be God's "goodness" and "blessing" upon him will serve to his condemnation. Asaph understood this very clearly in Ps. 73. The grace of God is only and exclusively upon His elect children. For, where His grace is, there is His blessing and salvation. And that which God begins by the operation of His Spirit, He will certainly finish! As far as the reprobate wicked are concerned, there is no restraint of sin by God's Spirit or any righteousness as a result of the work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit works only in the hearts of the elect. This is true by definition because God's Spirit works out His election. And good works, the Heidelberg Catechism tells us, proceed only from a true faith.

Moreover, to our heritage belongs the fact that the truth of particular grace developed in the framework of the idea of the covenant. The whole idea of the covenant, as we possess it as Protestant Reformed people, is unique. Nowhere in Reformed history do you find the idea of the covenant set forth so beautifully. The covenant was always explained and considered a means to an end. But our father, chiefly Rev. Hoeksema, developed more perfectly the idea of the covenant.

In consequence, we understand the covenant to be an end in itself, as the covenant of God's friendship with His people in Christ. It is a covenant of particular grace! It is a covenant which God establishes unilaterally. And it is according to that covenant that God, by His grace, takes us into His own covenant life and glory forevermore. That means that the covenants which are historically distinct form a chain of increasing revelation. That is to say that God reveals His covenant with us more clearly throughout history, beginning in Adam, continuing through Noah and Abraham, and realized fully in Christ.

Often we do not realize the uniqueness of this truth as it was developed in our brief history. It was not only a preservation of the truth, but also an advancement above the church historically. That, too, belongs to our precious heritage.

That brings me to *The Standard Bearer*. As far as the historical connection between our *Standard Bearer* and our churches is concerned, it is quite evident that they were both fostered by the same heresy. As early as April 1924 fifteen brethren, as yet in the Christian Reformed Church, met together out of concern for the defense of the truth. It was at that time that a publication society was organized, in order that the truth might be defended against error. For, prior to this, the pages of *The Banner* and *De Wachter* had been closed to the Reverends Danhof and Hoeksema. The purpose of the society was to support the brothers Danhof and Hoeksema in publishing brochures and, when possible, a paper. We might take

note of the tremendous zeal that these brothers exhibited in that they collected \$425.00 among themselves. This was before *The Standard Bearer's* subscription rate was \$1.50 a year! Genuine concern for the defense of the truth mushroomed. And when the fifteen brethren met again on April 17 in Kalamazoo, they were joined by 60 more. A collection netted \$792.00! This was the official beginning of the Reformed Free Publishing Association. Pamphlets and brochures were financed to defend the truth. And in October 1924 *The Standard Bearer* made its debut.

What was the result? God was pleased to use the association and its efforts to preserve and maintain His truth. The Reformed Free Publishing Association gave the tool of the printed page to the servants of God who as ministers of His Word defended its precious pearls in all their beauty. The association provided a means for rebuttal against those who gainsaid the truth. It was in the way of controversy that the truth developed and prospered.

At the same time, The Reformed Free Publishing Association provided a means whereby the people of God were instructed in the Scriptures. This instruction was not only for our fathers and their children, but also for those outside of our churches who love the truth. And the positive result of all this is that the truth which our fathers defended is our legacy! You can find it set forth in our books, some fifty volumes of *The Standard Bearer*, and other printed material. Oh, these books are not "best sellers," nor is our semi-monthly magazine known for its vast circulation. But they are the best books one can buy, and we have the most soundly Reformed semi-monthly one can subscribe to. And this is true, because you find in these works an explanation and development of the truth, the truth which is so dear and precious to God's people.

I want to make a few remarks of application. From the aspect of time, 1924 is a long way removed from us. Today we do not stand in the heat of ecclesiastical controversy. Within the domain of our churches there is peace in the truth. There are no heretical clouds upon the far horizon. But let us never forget that in a very real way the Reformed world abhors the truth we hold dear. And for this very reason it is still of utmost importance to maintain and defend this truth publicly by means of the printed page.

Also this: in regard to 1924 the devil smiles because common grace is a dead issue. It is sad that its logical consequences have almost destroyed that church. But the devil still works very hard in our midst. Don't underestimate him! Therefore, we as an association must continually rededicate ourselves to the further propagation and defense of the truth. Why is this so important? In order that our children



may look upon us as fathers who preserved for them a rich and beautiful legacy.

Furthermore, we are responsible to develop the truth. We have, at this juncture in time, largely passed the time of protesting. Don't misunderstand: we must always and continually call the wayward back. But we as churches and association must adopt a positive viewpoint and purpose. We must wholeheartedly dedicate ourselves to the developing and spreading of our rich heritage of the truth. We may not stay the same. As the individual child of God grows in knowledge and in grace, so it must be with our churches. Rev. Hoeksema and others are in glory. Others must take

up their pens. God has blessed us with capable men. We must give them time and money to develop the truth and to build upon the foundation laid for us. This is for our spiritual benefit!

And we may not keep that truth to ourselves. As association we must avail ourselves of every opportunity to spread the works in which God's Word is developed and explained. What more worthwhile thing can we be engaged in? What more precious gift can we pass on to our children and other of God's people, than our heritage?

With these thoughts I want to leave you this evening. I thank you.

---

## MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

# God's People, The Sheep

*Prof. H. Hanko*

In our last article, after some introductory remarks, we began dealing with the relation between Christ and His people as that relation is defined in Scripture in terms of a shepherd and his sheep. We discussed the fact that this is the implied relationship in what is called, "Pastoral Theology" — the general subject with which this rubric has to do. We discussed the fact already that Scripture often calls Christ the Shepherd of His sheep, and we made brief mention of the fact that Christ is the Shepherd because He is the revelation of Jehovah God, Who alone is our Shepherd. We also pointed out that Scripture often calls those who are appointed in the church to teach the people of God, shepherds, and that Scripture has some very strong words of condemnation for those who are unfaithful shepherds.

We want to turn now to the fact that God's people are considered *sheep*. This is already either stated or implied in some of the passages to which we referred and which we quoted; but we want to call attention to a few more such passages in order that we may draw some conclusions from them.

Before we enter into this idea specifically, it is perhaps worthwhile to notice that Jesus Himself is sometimes referred to as a sheep or a lamb. Already in the Old Testament economy, there were sacrifices of sheep, (see Lev. 1:10, Num. 18:17, and many similar passages). A sheep or a lamb was indeed a

particular kind of offering. This is evident from Abel's sacrifice which, in Heb. 11:4, is described as a more excellent sacrifice than Cain's. It was this because of the fact that Abel, by offering a lamb, showed his awareness of his sin and his hope in the promise of God that sin would be removed by the sacrifice of a perfect lamb. Isaiah also describes the sacrifice of Christ in these terms: "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Isaiah 53:7b. When writing this beautiful prophecy, in which Isaiah saw so clearly the atonement of Christ that it seems almost as if he were standing at the foot of Calvary, Isaiah compares Christ's suffering with the shearing and slaughter of sheep. And he finds that the silence of sheep under such circumstances was a picture of the silence of Christ. This figure is not meant to convey to us the idea that during Christ's trial He never spoke. The gospel narratives show us clearly that when the defense of the truth of God and His own calling required of Him to speak, Christ spoke many words. But the figure is intended to show us that Christ went to the cross in perfect obedience to His Father. He did not complain; He did not make an effort to defend Himself; He did not rail against His accusers; but He submitted without argument to the various judgments which were pronounced upon Him. And He did this because it was required of Him that He walk the way of the cross in order to



accomplish the atonement for which God had sent Him into the world. There is, therefore, a mixed figure when Scripture refers to Christ both as the Shepherd and as a sheep. But the latter figure refers particularly to Christ from the viewpoint of His perfectly obedient suffering to accomplish redemption for His people. It is as if the Scriptures are saying that Christ, by means of becoming a sheep, could and did become the perfect and exalted Shepherd of the flock. It was through the way of His obedient walk which led Him to the cross that He was exalted to the position of chief and only Shepherd of His people. It is with all the prophecies of the Old Testament in mind that John the Baptist pointed out Christ to the multitudes with the words: "Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29b.

But God's people are also called sheep in Scripture. It is not surprising that this figure is used repeatedly in the Psalms. Psalm 23 has this figure underlying its entire metaphor. In Psalm 44:22 the Psalmist writes: "Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter." It is this precise verse which Paul later quotes in Romans 8:36. In Psalm 78:52, in speaking of the wonders God performed for Israel, the Psalmist writes: "But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock." And Asaph confesses in Psalm 79:13 "So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks forever: we will show forth thy praise to all generations."

But there are several passages which especially give to us the reasons why God's people are called sheep. The first group of these passages always defines a particular relationship between God and His people through Christ. That is, the people of God are called sheep in Scripture because they are peculiarly God's own people. The idea of being God's sheep implies possession, and carries with it therefore the idea of election. We read, e.g., in Psalm 95:7, "For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand." Or, again, in Psalm 100:3 "Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." All these texts emphasize that, because we are sheep, we are the possession of God. We belong to him in a special and unique way. And all of this carries us back to the decree of sovereign election.

This idea is probably stressed most strongly in the "parable" of the sheep and the goats found in Matthew 25:31-46. In this passage we read of the Son of Man coming in His glory with His holy angels. When He sits upon the throne of His glory and when all nations are gathered before Him, He separates the sheep from the goats and sets the sheep upon His right hand. To these sheep He says, "Come, ye

blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The very fact that the kingdom was prepared for *them* from the foundation of the world indicates that they were God's chosen people from all eternity. That they are sheep, therefore, indicates that they are God's elect people.

But there is yet another idea involved in this concept of sheep. The Scriptures also bring this idea to the foreground in various passages. This idea is indicated in, e.g., the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15:3-7. God's people are portrayed in that parable by the figure of the sheep which wanders away from the flock. This is not an uncommon figure in the Scriptures. The Psalmist confesses in Psalm 119:176: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments." And although once again unfaithful shepherds are to blame, Jeremiah speaks God's Word when he says in chapter 50:6: "My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace." Isaiah puts a similar confession in the mouths of God's people when he writes: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way." Chapter 53:6. G.F. Handel perhaps missed the point here a bit when he wrote his glorious oratorio, "The Messiah." The music which accompanies this chorale number is obviously intended to convey the idea of sheep blithely and unconcernedly frolicking through the meadows and straying farther and farther away from the safety of the flock. And, while this is indeed a sadly true picture of how God's people actually do go astray in many instances, nevertheless, the words of Isaiah 53:6 are a sorrowful confession of sin which pours forth from the lips and heart of the child of God. The same idea is expressed by the Apostle Peter in I Peter 2:25: "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." If we take these passages into account along with such passages as Psalm 23 and the general figure of a sheep which Scripture as a whole portrays for us, then we see why it is entirely appropriate for God's people to be pictured as sheep.

If any of you who reads this has ever worked with sheep, then you will know that sheep are perhaps the most stupid of all domesticated animals. And in their stupidity, they are also the most helpless. They are unable to take care of themselves in any respect. They cannot find their own pasture and water unless it is right under their noses. They will literally eat themselves to death if they manage to break into an alfalfa field. They cannot have their young by themselves, and the shepherd must be with them con-



stantly. They will not seek shelter in a blizzard though the shelter be within 20 feet of them. They panic easily at unexpected noises and will rush off sometimes to destruction if they are not watched. They will foolishly stray away from the flock if they are not kept close by the shepherd and his dogs — even though they are totally unable to cope with the dangers of mountains, cliffs, ravines, and wild animals. And so they must be perpetually watched and cared for. So much is this true that in sheep country, people talk of “sheep men.” That is, not every man is successful in raising sheep. This work takes a particular kind of man. It takes a man who has endless patience, who will not chafe under the inconvenience that sheep cause him, who is willing to forego his own personal comforts for the welfare of the sheep, and who will provide for the sheep all their needs because they cannot provide for themselves. Not every man can do this. In short, it takes a man who loves sheep, not because they are such lovable creatures — for they are quite the contrary; but simply because he *loves* them. This is the main attribute required.

It is for this reason, too, that the figure of sheep is so appropriate for God’s people. All that sheep are in the natural sense, God’s people are in the spiritual sense. God’s people are utterly helpless of themselves. They cannot find the green pastures and the quiet waters which are so essential to their spiritual well-being. They need a shepherd to find these pastures for them and to lead them beside the still waters. They cannot protect themselves from the enemies that surround them, yet in their foolishness they are repeatedly straying away from the safety of the flock and exposing themselves to all kinds of dangers in which they will surely perish if their shepherd does not go to search for them and to restore them again to the fold. They never know what is best for themselves, and will, in their stupidity, usually do what is harmful to them. They would indeed kill themselves if the

Shepherd and Bishop of their souls did not watch carefully over them in love and with tender regard.

It is exactly against the background of this figure that the whole idea of Christ as the Good Shepherd stands out so sharply in Scripture.

The two ideas are, of course, connected. God’s people are sheep by virtue of the decree of eternal election. And as such, they are the objects of God’s eternal and unchangeable love. That love is revealed centrally in Christ Who laid down His life for the sheep. Therefore, Christ is their Shepherd. He goes to seek them when they are lost. It matters not how hard the way may be that He must travel to retrieve them — even if it means going to the death of the cross; Christ goes to find them. He, as it were, forgets Himself and the comforts of His home, the warm meal that awaits Him at the fireside; He forgets the weariness of the day and the safety of His dwelling; His only concern is to search for His sheep which is lost. And having found that sheep, He does not drive that foolish sheep which had caused Him such discomfort with a stick back to the fold, but He tenderly lifts that weary and footsore and terrified sheep upon His mighty shoulders to carry it back to safety. And He comes rejoicing. So greatly does He love that sheep that He is willing to lay down His life that His sheep may live. No price is too great to pay and no suffering too great to endure.

But as the Shepherd of His sheep, Christ cares for all the needs of His sheep throughout their entire life in the world. Never does He take His eye from them; never for a moment does He leave them; always He watches over them and cares for them, protecting them from all danger and insuring the safety of their souls, until such a time as He can take them to glory with Him.

And all this for sheep who are so stupid they deserve nothing. This is the wonder of the figure, Christ and His sheep.

---

## *SIGNS OF THE TIMES*

# Transcendental Meditation -- A Prayer Substitute

*Rev. G. Van Baren*

Perhaps none of our readers needs warning concerning many of the practices of cults which have

been adopted, increasingly, by many in our land. Yet the deceptiveness and appeal of some of this might



warrant a warning. These last days are characterized by the attraction toward that which is devilish.

One of the popular practices today is called Transcendental Meditation. So popular has it become, that *Time* magazine featured this in one of its latest issues (Oct. 13, 1975). The magazine speaks of its popularity and describes the practice as follows:

Before each game, New York Jets Quarterback Joe Namath finds a quiet spot and seems to nod off. In the middle of a gale on Long Island Sound, while her friends are wrestling with lines and sails, Wendy Sherman, a Manhattan adwoman, slips to the bow of a 36-ft yawl, makes herself as comfortable as she can, and closes her eyes. On warm afternoons in Rome, Ga., Municipal Court Judge Gary Hamilton and his wife Virginia can be found on their screened porch, apparently dozing. It is not a compulsion to sleep that these and perhaps 600,000 other Americans have in common. It is TM, or Transcendental Meditation, a ritual that they practice almost religiously twice a day and every day . . .

...First off, a would-be meditator must attend two introductory lectures of an hour to an hour and a half. Then, if he is still interested, he pays his fee: \$125 for an individual, with lower rates for college and high school students and children four (the minimum age) to ten.

The initiate takes off his shoes and gathers his "offering": a fresh, white handkerchief, several pieces of sweet fruit and a bunch of flowers. TM claims to be totally secular, and the offerings are supposedly meant only as symbols: the flowers represent the flowers of life, the fruit the seed of life, and the handkerchief the cleansing of the spirit. After handing over his gifts, the newcomer is taken to a private room, where his teacher lights candles and incense and places the fruit, flowers and handkerchief on an altar under a color portrait of Guru Dev. The teacher then chants in Sanskrit and introduces the meditator to his mantra, the one word that is meant to keep him meditating for the rest of his life.

The meditator is never supposed to reveal his mantra — not to wife, husband, lover or children. Each teacher is personally given a set of mantras by the Maharishi — exactly 17 according to one knowledgeable source. He must parcel them out to his initiates, based on a secret formula that presumably includes temperament and profession. Duly initiated, the fledgling meditator is ready for his meditating classes, which last about an hour and a half each and which must be taken on three consecutive days or nights. Together with others, up to 50 or more, he sits in a lecture room, meditates for ten minutes or so, opens his eyes with the others, then meditates again. With the help of charts and diagrams, TM theories are explained by instructors who, following the movement's dress code, are invariably well-groomed and conservatively clothed.

Rather striking, too, is the support of this sort of thing by many organizations. Even the federal government, whose courts insist on the separation of church and state is involved. *Time* reports, "The Federal Government has so far funded 17 TM research projects, ranging from the effects of meditation on the body to its ability to help rehabilitate convicts and fight alcoholism."

Reading of the promoter from India, the Maharishi, it becomes evident that there are definite religious overtones to this whole practice. Writes *Time*:

His aides are always awed and reverential around him. The headquarters of the movement, they say, is not in one physical spot but rather "wherever Maharishi is" — true believers do not use the article before his name. He is the only one in the movement who is not expected to and does not meditate on a regular basis. "He doesn't have to," says Robert Cranson, who served two years as one of his secretaries. "He long ago achieved a perpetual fourth state of consciousness. The clarity of his mind is awesome."

The Maharishi believes that if only 1% of the population of any community or country is meditating, the other 99% will feel good effects and crime will be reduced. If 5% meditates, he adds, great things will really begin to happen. "A good time for the world is coming," he says. "I see the dawn of the Age of Enlightenment. I am only giving expression to the phenomenon that is taking place."

The above describes the formal practice of TM. However, I have observed other articles in popular magazines of our day which seek to advocate a variation of this TM. And, because of the claims of the whole of this practice, it becomes popular and appealing to Christians as well. Who would not want to lower his blood pressure by this means rather than through medication or hospitalization? Who would not be tempted to use this means to reduce his tensions and give peace of mind? Is it not an easy way to tranquility?

Some churches have regarded all the above to be such a serious threat that they have taken an official stand against it. The Association of Regular Baptist Churches decided this past summer:

Whereas there is a growing interest in that system known as "Transcendental Meditation," and

Whereas United States Senate Resolution 64 introduced February 5, 1975, is a "Resolution To Increase Public Awareness of Transcendental Meditation," claiming that this will strengthen our democracy and help achieve "the spiritual goals of mankind," and

Whereas Transcendental Meditation is incorporated in the United States as an educational institution thus disguising its deeper purposes,

Be it resolved that we, the messengers of the churches in fellowship with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting in annual con-



ference at Winona Lake, Indiana, June 23-27, 1975, alert our own constituency and Christians everywhere that Transcendental Meditation is one of a variety of yoga techniques introduced into our society from the East, and that as such has religious significance despite vigorous denials to the contrary by its advocates, and

Be it further resolved that we oppose its approval by state legislatures and by our national government as a breach of the principle of separation of church and state.

And what must we, as faithful children of God, say? Rather obviously, we must heed the warning of Scripture, (I Tim. 4:1 and 7) “. . . in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils . . . refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.” Or there is the warning of I Cor. 10:20-21, “. . . they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye can not be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils.”

And indeed it would be strange for a child of God to become involved either in “play” or seriously with this TM or variations thereof. Often one finds that the Christian has but little time for Scripture reading and prayer — but he can find 40 minutes a day for TM?

The trouble with such who turn to TM or some variation of it is that they have neglected proper meditation in the first place. Scripture emphatically speaks of meditation too — but of a spiritual sort. Psalm 1:1-2 states, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he *meditate day and night*.” Or Ps. 143:5: “I remember the days of old: I *meditate on all thy works*; I muse on the work of thy hands.” There are many similar passages. But note well: the meditation is not a repetition of a certain “mantra”, but rather upon God’s Word and His works. He who does such

things doeth well.

And meditation for the child of God includes constant prayer. Eph. 6:18 states, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” And in I Thess. 5:17 we read, “Pray without ceasing”. And in James 5:13 the Word states, “Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. . . .”

The point is, that when children of God turn to such things as TM, regarding it as a possible “cure” for some of their tensions, trials, etc., these show how far they have departed from the mandate of Scripture. These have not meditated properly according to the Word of God — or they would have no time to dabble in transcendental meditations. And these, in the way of proper meditations, would have indeed the peace which surpasseth understanding. They would have no need for any TM.

The child of God must continue in meditation of the Word and work of God, and in prayer. That is essential — and that is sufficient.

Will such meditation give one the things claimed by TM advocates? Yes — and no. No, this will not give those merely earthly, physical goals of a TM. But yes, this sort of meditation does give peace — and often does relieve the tensions and pressures which are sometimes so great on the earth. But such peace is infinitely above anything which T.M. or any other earthly variant could ever provide.

One more thing. If TM practitioners can spend 40 minutes a day, 20 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes at night in this sort of devilish meditation, could not the child of God do the same for proper spiritual meditation? I am convinced that many of our problems in church and family arise out of the fact that few have any time at all for proper meditation. What sort of spiritual lives would we enjoy, according to the promise of God’s Word itself, if we properly meditate upon His Word and come to Him in prayer?

## IN HIS FEAR

# Christian Stewardship

Rev. D.H. Kuiper

These lines are not written because there is a lack of Christian giving in our churches. To my knowledge there is not. The head of a family who gives twelve to twenty dollars a week to the church and pays from a

thousand to thirty-five hundred dollars a year in school tuition does not have to be exhorted to give. But there are reasons why we should be confronted by this topic nevertheless. First, the high financial



sacrifice for the needs of the covenant is borne primarily by the married heads of households; the young, single person, although he contributes, usually does not do so to such an extent. In fact, usually the level of his giving is quite low; occasionally it is nothing. There is evidence that the richest, untapped resource in our churches is the single, young, working man or woman. Worldly affluence and materialism afflict us. Some would need eight arms and legs to operate all the vehicles they possess: cars, campers, trail bikes, boats, snowmobiles. For all of us, but primarily for these, the following is helpfully offered. Secondly, there is the danger that we become weary in well doing, that long years of giving begins to exact a toll. Cheerfulness is replaced by grudging duty, grateful thanks by automatic offering. Thirdly, this article will serve as an opportunity to consider the practice of tithing that is a common practice in many churches, and, one learns on the mission field, in the lives of many individual saints. To the subject of tithing we hope to turn our attention next time.

### SOVEREIGN OWNERSHIP

Implied by the term stewardship is the relationship of proprietor and servant. The original compound word means to serve in a house, to manage a household or an estate, to be a trustee in charge of the property of another. This relationship is well illustrated in the Parable of the Talents as found in Matthew 25. Stewardship involves responsibility, for it is a position of trust. Care must be given to the property of another. It involves, secondly, accountability. As the steward manages his master's estate to the best of his ability, he does so in the expectation that his master may return at any time and demand an accounting. It is the prerogative of the master to judge whether the steward has been faithful or not, and to treat him accordingly. Thus stewardship is not merely a formal relationship, but it is an ethical obligation, a matter of the heart. The good steward devotes his time and energies in the place he is called to labor with love to his lord and master. The evil steward seeks his own welfare and in so doing is a cheat and a thief; the good steward constantly asks himself, "Do I have my lord's welfare at heart?" This ethical aspect is emphasized by Paul in I Cor. 4:2, "Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."

Although there is stewardship among men due to the relative "ownership" of goods by man and the unequal distribution of those goods among men (and hence the eighth commandment), ultimately all things belong to God. This absolute ownership of all things in the universe by the Creator, Sustainer, and Governor lies at the heart of Christian giving. All things are of Him and through Him and unto Him!

The earth and its fulness, the world and they that dwell therein, the beast of the forest and the cattle on a thousand hills, the silver and the gold, our children and ourselves, they are all the LORD'S. (Ps. 24:1, Ps. 50:10, Hag. 2:8, I Cor. 6:20)

Having finished the great household of the universe, God condescended to make man a steward of the earth with work to do. (Gen. 1:28) In Adam the human race receives all things of the earth, its wealth, its relationships, its time and opportunities, its truth and ideas, in the steward relationship. Man is blessed in order that he might bless God!

### STEWARDSHIP IN CHRIST

This single honor, once enjoyed, soon lost, typified throughout the Old Testament, is restored perfectly and irrevocably in Christ. In Christ we see that it is blessed to give rather than to receive. Consumed with zeal for His Father's house, the faithful Servant gave Himself unto death although He was tempted not to give at all. And God looked upon His Servant, was well-pleased, and gave Him a Mediator's glory. In this perfect giving of Himself, Christ did four things: 1.) He removed the curse from us for our selfishness and our greed. 2.) He delivered us from the sin of seeking self instead of God. 3.) He gave us an amazing example to guide us in our stewardship. 4.) And He restored us to a right relation of stewardship through the enabling power of His Spirit. Underneath were the everlasting arms of the mighty Savior God, Who in His Son reconsecrated us unto Himself, so that our consecration, our royal priesthood, begins not with material things but with *ourselves*, and then the things we have and do.

For the saint of the new dispensation, *giving* falls under the law of liberty, under the rule of the new heart which knows no constraint but only willingness. Accordingly, the New Testament gives us these guidelines for stewardship and giving, which, you will notice, require of the child of God an involvement of his will and discernment:

1.) Priorities — Giving for the cause of the kingdom, whether that be church, poor, missions, seminary, Christian school, is giving that comes first. Giving for these causes ought to come from the cream of the paycheck, not as an afterthought or only if there is enough left over. That this is a valid application of Jesus' words, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," is seen from the words he immediately adds, "and all these things shall be added unto you." All these things refers, according to the content of Matt. 5, to such things as food and clothing. Although first in this text has the idea of primary principle and not numerical order, to keep these words does require that we have an order of priorities as far as our spending is concerned.



2.) **Liberality** — The liberty of the new dispensation saint may not be turned into license, as if we stewards think we give according to what we can get away with. The rule is that we give as freely as we have received. In close connection with this liberality, of course, is the obvious guideline of contributing as we are able (Deut. 16:17) or as the Lord has prospered us (I Cor. 16:2). With some God is pleased with a few pennies, with others a large portion of their incomes, and this according to one's station in life.

3.) **Cheerfulness** — In II Cor. 9:7, cheerfulness stands in contrast to a grudging attitude and a forced feeling. That the Lord loves a cheerful giver implies: a.) That the giver wants to give. He understands the relationship in which He stands to His Father in heaven, and he is altogether pleased by this relationship. b.) That the giver has faith, faith in the promise of God that all other things shall be added unto him, and to give rather than receive is blessed. This conviction makes cheerful! c.) That the giver is thankful. He is aware of his own poverty and wretchedness. He is deeply conscious of the fact that all that he has has been given him of grace. That the Giver of every good and perfect gift should so enrich such a sinner compels him to give out of a grateful heart. Perhaps it can even be said that this cheerfulness, so pleasing to God, is the outstanding characteristic of true giving!

4.) **Without show** — Speaking of the Pharisees who loved to give on the street and in the synagogue with the purpose of being seen, Jesus warns with the words, "They have their reward." The only reward for showy giving is what happens when the show is made. We are to give humbly, privately, secretly. It is a matter between the individual's heart and God in heaven who rewards the secret giver openly, and no one else. This completely private aspect of a steward's giving has one exception, or perhaps it could be called one specification. The giving for various covenant causes by the head of a household ought to be shared in some way with the remaining members of the household, so that especially the children know what is going on. Certain things in life are not so much taught as caught. This is so true of values! If the youth of the church are to be faithful stewards, if they are to share in the blessedness that God promises to the liberal giver, if they are to demonstrate cheerfulness with all its rich implications, then they will have to see these things in their fathers! God will use sermons to lead them in the right direction. God will grace the verbal lessons we give our children with understanding and compliance. But above all else, God will crown our *example* so that we have followers. Lessons are being taught in the home without a word being spoken. Our attitudes oftentimes become the precise attitude of our young. How

urgent, then, that both the fact that we give and the way we give are held before them at home.

5.) **Regularity** — "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store . . . ." Paul instructs the Corinthian saints. The Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day XXXVIII, makes this weekly giving a matter of worship, a matter of proper Sabbath observance. Each Sunday we appear before the Lord with thanks in our hearts and gifts in our hands, confessing that all that we have is His, desiring that His kingdom may be extended and may come, showing our love for the poor. Those churches that have a weekly benevolence offering are certainly following the catechism closely. More, the practice of giving on the Lord's Day is so proper because that day itself is a reminder of our Christian liberty. Through His death and resurrection, Christ has put an end to all the shadows and types, and has clothed us with perfect freedom. Since giving is a splendid expression of this freedom, it is proper that with regularity we contribute on the first day of the week. And finally, this regularity is also beneficial with respect to the point that was made above, the instructing of our seed. Those who have few periods of income throughout the year, such as when crops or herds are sold, ought to plan in such a way that they have gifts to offer each week, and gifts to distribute to their children for giving each week. Long periods of time during which Dad and Mom put in only a little silver can only have a harmful effect.

6.) One other point needs to be made here that is a bit hard to name. What we have in mind is that our giving ought not to be conditioned by regarding certain outside influences. Two come readily to mind. The danger can often be present with us that we give with an eye to what someone else or what the rest give. This is not so much a danger with our weekly offerings as it is with special drives. We notice or think we notice what others are giving, we notice how our income or style of living compares to those others, and then we serve notice that we will give just so much. Clearly this is a grudging violation of the truth that each one stands responsible and accountable to God by himself. Secondly, it is not impossible that some are encouraged to give because the contribution is tax deductible. We may certainly deduct for tax purposes whatever the law of the land allows, but personally I feel bad that notes to this effect are included in literature distributed in our midst. That ought to be far from our minds when we consider prayerfully what God wants His stewards to do! Let us give with simplicity!

May these lines move us closer to the position of King David when he exclaimed after the offering was



received for the temple, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee . . . . I know also, my

God, that Thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart have I willingly offered all these things." (I Chron. 29:14, 17).

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

# A Triangle Within A Family Circle

*Rev. John A. Heys*

A triangle has three sides. But it derives its name from the fact that it has three angles. And at least two of these angles are sharp, sharper than those of a square, rectangle, pentagon, hexagon or octagon, all of which have more sides and more angles than the triangle.

When, therefore, one introduces a living triangle into a family circle, somebody is going to get hurt by the sharp points of that triangle. And this comes to such clear manifestation in the life of Abram.

In fleshly impatience he, at the suggestion of and with the help of his wife, Sarai, took Hagar, the hand-maid of Sarai, into their family circle in the hope of bringing forth the promised covenant son. All three got hurt, and so did the son who was born of Abram and Hagar.

In Genesis 16:5 we read, "And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: The Lord judge between me and thee." She speaks of being hurt by Hagar not only in that she plainly showed that she despised Sarai, but also in that there is a wrong for which she calls God to be judge between her and Abram. Sarai was injured, and she certainly asked for it. She, not Abram, authored this whole procedure. She suggested it to Abram and gave Hagar unto him. Abram did not concoct the whole scheme and ask Sarai's permission. She elevated Hagar above her position of servant by giving her to Abram. Indeed, Sarai meant it to be a form of service. With no concern for Hagar's well-being, she was simply going to use Hagar's body for her own advantage as she saw it. Yet it was an act which elevated her above that position of servant and brought her right into the family circle instead of leaving her outside serving that family circle. She saw it too late, but her deed elevated Hagar to the position of being one flesh with Abram,

while she, Sarai, was already one flesh with him. It was not a mere case of allowing a servant to live in the same house, to eat at the same table with the master; but it was erasing that distinction of master and servant to make Hagar one flesh with Abram. And having done so, Sarai should have no complaint when the angle of the triangle which she brought into the family circle began to stab her and bring her anguish and grief.

And Sarai did not hesitate, as one of the angles of that triangle, to jab into the flesh of Abram and with her tongue to injure him. She had already treated Hagar cruelly and would do so more intensely to the point that Hagar has to flee from it. When we read that Sarah "dealt hardly with her", this is more than a just punishment of a mistress upon a disobedient servant. We get to see another side of her who otherwise revealed a very meek and gentle spirit. The depravity of her nature shone through, and that she also needed the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit is displayed before our eyes.

Note also that Sarai makes a very vicious and unjust attack upon Abram and lets him feel very keenly a point of the triangle that is within his family circle. My wrong, she says, be upon thee. That is, the wrong treatment I am suffering from Hagar, the harm, the injury I now bear is your fault! The guilt of it be upon your head, Abram! So unjustly did she speak to her husband who had done all this at her suggestion and to please her. By "my wrong" Sarai does not mean to confess that she did wrong. Not at all! Everyone has done wrong, she thinks, but Sarai herself. She fails to see her own sin while she has such clear vision of Abram's "wrong" and Hagar's "haughtiness". Nor is Sarai the only one who has behaved that way. It is in all of us. And this is exactly what led Jesus to warn us to cast out the beam that is in our own eye before we try to cast out the mote that is in the brother's eye.



Hagar became a thorn in Sarai's flesh and as one angle of the triangle she made life miserable for Sarai. She became proud as soon as she saw that she had conceived, and showed great disrespect for her mistress. She did not have God in all her thoughts and did not behave as one who in humility before Him acknowledges that we have nothing that we did not receive from Him. She acted as though she conceived by her own strength and viewed herself as being of superior strength above Sarai. This of course was not so at all. It is not so today either. It is God Who decides who shall and who shall not conceive. He it is Who gives us children and Who keeps us from having children.

There are two or three matters that we may note in connection with Hagar and her pride. God did not approve of it, as can be expected. No, the end does not justify the means. It was not an act of faith that moved Sarai to suggest this plan to Abram. It was not faith on Abram's part to follow through on this plan. Nor was it faith on the part of Hagar to submit, or, if you will, agree to this arrangement. The desire to have the promised covenant seed was due to a true and living faith in God. Abram and Sarai are to be commended for that. And this, too, was a gift of God unto them. There is nothing in the account that even faintly suggests that Hagar's consent, or perhaps it is better to say her willingness to play the part Sarai had designed for her (she did not have to consent, for she was a servant) was due to a desire to see this covenant seed born to Abram. But, limiting ourselves for the moment to Abram and Sarai, it becomes plain that our best works are polluted with sin. The desire may be, and in this case was good and out of true faith, but the execution became corrupt, and was exceedingly evil in God's sight. He Who designed the geometric triangle also instituted the family circle in such a way that any triangle introduced into it would bring grief and misery.

To be noted also is the fact that God still considers Hagar to be Sarai's handmaid. For through the angel He tells her to go back to her mistress. And that clearly indicates that God does not condemn slavery as such. He hates all cruelty and mistreatment of the slaves, but He sends Hagar back to serve again as Sarai's handmaid. And this also reveals what God thinks of the modern denial of this relationship in the strikes which the labour unions (which men have founded and support) practice and in which the workers tell the employers that they have the say in that factory as to whether there will be work done or not and even as to who may work there and who may not.

And Abram? Let it be noted that he reveals an abiding loyalty to Sarai after this one deed of dishonouring her and sinning against her by adding Hagar's flesh to that divinely ordained union that made him and Sarai one flesh. He added strange flesh to what was already one flesh of man and wife. And although Sarai asked for it, Abram, by adopting Sarai's plan and as one of the angles in that triangle, injured Sarai.

It certainly was no "love affair" between Abram and Hagar. He had no interest in continuing the relationship or of having her as his second wife or concubine. But being attacked by Sarai he rises to her defence, although he must have seen Sarai's sin. Nevertheless he writes off Hagar completely and tells Sarai to do with her what she pleases. He will not interfere and side with Hagar. He remains loyal to his aged wife and does not fall for the younger woman who plainly will now present him with a child.

We may even wonder as to how deeply spiritual Abram was and how covenant minded he was when he went in unto Hagar. For now, even though she is carrying that child which they seemed to want so badly, he is ready to let Sarai do to Hagar what she wills. What if she wanted to sell her so that she would be sent far away? What would become of the child they were so eagerly awaiting?

It is true that one learns to love one's child far more deeply after that child is born and has been there to work itself more deeply into one's heart. But a sincere covenant parent will love that unborn child and wait with eager expectation for its birth. He will dedicate that unborn child already to God and plan to arrange for its spiritual as well as material growth and needs. Needless to say, a covenant parent, a believer, will not even desire abortion. He will not practice it, but he will also loathe the very thought of it in regard to his own flesh and blood that God has given him as it is in its still imperfect state. The world that is rapidly losing its natural affection will for carnal reasons get rid of what God has given. But faith and covenant interest will not allow the child of God to do such a thing. And Abram, had he been walking in the same strength of faith that later on caused him to offer up Isaac, would have had a deep interest in that child that was within Hagar. Later on, as we suggested above, when the child was there before him, he learned to love him so much that he pleaded with God before the birth of Isaac that Ishmael might live before Him. But could it be that Abram, after he had



gone in unto Hagar, began more and more to realize that this was not an act of faith and that this was not only against God's law but also wholly contrary to the covenant that God had established with him? After all, *God* established it with Abram, and He did not in any way leave even a suggestion that Abram had to keep that covenant from being unrealized.

To his credit it may be stated that although he, as one of the angles in that triangle, injured Hagar whom he was obliged now to protect as never before, he desired to keep the peace and unity of the family circle into which God had brought him and Sarai. He is amazingly meek and without a spirit of retaliation when Sarai jabs him with the words of her sharp tongue. He does not answer in kind and refrains from reminding her that it was all her idea and that she gave Hagar to him. And when Sarai intensified her hard treatment of Hagar, Abram not only kept his hands off the matter but kept his mouth shut and

sought the peace of his former state with Sarai.

Sarai had called God to judge Abram for what he had done, and it is not impossible that by this Abram was pricked in his heart and realized somewhat more clearly that the promise of God to Shem did not run in the line of Ham; and Hagar was an Egyptian and thus a descendant of Ham. Certainly if one is going to "help" God — Who needs no help — realize His covenant promise to Shem, one ought not go outside of Shem's descendants to seek to realize the birth of the covenant seed. At any rate Abram is quiet and meek, and exactly because a triangle had been created in his family circle, he will have to take sides and hurt either Sarai or Hagar. He chose to hurt Hagar. But the wonder of God's grace is that the Triune God makes peace for us in His Son, the Seed to Whom the covenant promise came and Who blotted out both Abram's and Sarai's and our sins.

---

## ALL AROUND US

### Correspondence And Reply

The editor of our *Standard Bearer* forwarded to the undersigned the following letter from a Rev. Peter Vander Weide of First Jenison Christian Reformed church, and I quote:

Dear Prof. Hoeksema:

Permit me to register a vigorous protest to a statement made by Rev. H. Veldman in the Oct. 15 *Standard Bearer* (p. 536). In commenting on the matter of reprobation ignored in the CRC he makes this statement: "But, the truth of Reprobation is a relic, is not a living matter in that church, is circumvented and avoided by all. This means, of course, that the doctrine of election is also circumvented and avoided by all."

It certainly is not circumvented and avoided by me, and I am sure many others in the CRC. To say that *all* in the CRC do this because some do is unChristian and unworthy of one who claims the

Spirit of Christ. Since his information was admittedly incomplete, he should have in the interest of fair reporting, made an effort to find out that not all the delegates at that Synod voted for the motion referred to, and that there were delegates there who did not share the sentiments expressed by Rev. Postman and said so. For one man in one denomination to state categorically that *all* in another denomination ignore and circumvent these issues is presumptuous. How can he know what all these men teach and preach in their respective churches?

I had expected better things from representatives of your denomination. It lacks Christian charity, to say nothing of intellectual honesty and integrity. I do not deem it a Christian prerogative to demand an apology, but I am convinced you owe such an apology to many in the CRC.

Sincerely,  
w.s. Peter Vander Weide



Here is the article or that part of the article against which the Rev. Vander Weide registers such a vigorous protest:

However, the *News Bulletin of the Association of Christian Reformed Laymen*, July, 1975, page 7, also quotes the Rev. J. Postman, Classis Toronto, who spoke at that synod, and we quote:

I want to support this Motion (this refers to a new motion to "accede" to the Boer request — H.V.). We are a confessing church not a church of confessions. And I submit, Mr. Chairman, that presently we are not confessing reprobation. It's not a living matter amongst us. It does not flow, issue from our pulpits in a dynamic Word-directed way. We all circumvent it, we all avoid it, yet we somehow hold on to our confessions as a relic. . .

So, here you have it. I do not know whether anyone at the synod objected to this remark of Rev. Postman. Anyone with any love for the truth of the Word of God certainly could not permit this remark to go unchallenged. But, the truth of reprobation is a relic, is not a living matter in that church, is circumvented and avoided by all. This means, of course, that the doctrine of Election is also circumvented and avoided by all. I refer, we understand, to the doctrine of Election as set forth by the Canons, the truth of divine and sovereign election. . .

I reply to the Rev. P. Vander Weide as follows:

When Rev. Vander Weide writes that my information was incomplete he, I suppose, means that the quotation as it appears in that Bulletin of the ACRL was incomplete. However, how does that in any way affect what had been said by Rev. Postman upon the floor of the CRC synod last June?

Secondly, an apology is owed to many in the CRC? I did not know that there were delegates at that synod who objected to the sentiments as expressed by the Rev. Postman. I simply quoted from a public bulletin of the Christian Reformed laymen. Neither am I aware of any sentiments expressed against this sentiment of Rev. Postman after this CRC synod. I wish that I had known that there were such sentiments expressed against what Rev. Postman said upon the floor of the synod. I am glad that such opposition was expressed. If this be true, then the ACRL did some false reporting. They owe an apology.

Thirdly, it is simply a fact, Rev. Vander Weide, that your church has officially denied the truth of reprobation and, therefore, also the truth of election. Point One of the Three Points of 1924 declares that God is favorably inclined to all who hear the preaching of the gospel, that this preaching of the gospel is an offer, that God would therefore have all men be saved. According to the official teaching of the CRC

the Lord would bestow faith and salvation upon all men. However, the Canons of Dordrecht declare in Art. 15 of the first head, and I quote:

What peculiarly tends to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal and unmerited grace of election, is the express testimony of sacred Scripture, that not all, but some only are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree; whom God, out of his sovereign, most just, irreprehensible and unchangeable good pleasure, hath decreed to leave in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves, and not to bestow upon them saving faith and the grace of conversion. . .

There you have it, Rev. Vander Weide. These Canons declare that God has decreed NOT TO BESTOW UPON THEM SAVING FAITH AND THE GRACE OF CONVERSION. This is the very opposite of Point One. No man can believe and confess both. The one denies the other. And this denial of the truth of reprobation and that God loves only His own elect has appeared in writings in the past of leaders in the CRC.

Finally, Rev. Vander Weide, you write that the truth of reprobation is not circumvented and avoided by you. Do you believe in and preach and teach the truth of divine reprobation as set forth by the Canons? Remember, our fathers here are repudiating the Arminian presentation of a conditional predestination. But now I have a question to ask of you. You know that there are those in the CRC who deny this truth of sovereign predestination, and this includes the truth of election as well as that of reprobation. What are you doing about this? Are you protesting against those in your church (CRC) who deny this truth? Do you leave them alone? What are you doing about this terrible condition in the CRC? May I suggest to you that you also register vigorous protest against those within the CRC who teach this heresy and other heresies?

**Know the standard  
and follow it.  
Read the  
STANDARD BEARER!**



## News From Our Churches

*November 1, 1975*

The October calendar has been filled with all kinds of special meetings — especially in the greater Grand Rapids area. In addition to the normal consistory meetings, catechism classes, societies, Sunday school, school board meetings and the like, some of the October 'extras' include three PTA meetings, Men's League with Rev. Veldman speaking on "The Power of Unceasing Prayer," Mr. & Mrs. League with Rev. Veldman again on "Patriotism — What should we teach our children? — What should be our attitude toward our Country?", Ladies League with Rev. Van Overloop on God's Sending of His Messengers," Acts 8:4. In addition to the league meetings, there were at least one bazaar, two fall coffees and several sales scheduled.

First Church celebrated Rev. Van Baren's tenth anniversary as pastor with a short program on October 9. Included were several special musical numbers, congregational singing, remarks of appreciation given in the name of the congregation by Mr. J. M. Faber, and the presentation of a \$600 gift. When quizzed, Mrs. Van Baren revealed that the gift would be used to replace their 'tired' couch, a veteran of 19 years.

Rev. Kortering addressed the Western Ladies League on "Affluence and Its Affect on Home and Church." Prof. Hanko addressed a combined chapel service of Doon and Edgerton schools on October 9. South Holland scheduled a lecture by Rev. Engelsma on "The Authority of Scripture," and Prof. Hanko was to speak on "The Bible Chained Anew," the annual Reformation Day Lecture in First Church.

The undersigned was privileged to worship with our Redlands, Calif. congregation this past summer. During a visit with some of our people there, the wish was expressed that they would not be so far removed from all the denomination and school activities taking place in the East. I have also heard some here in the

East express a desire to be in one of our Western Churches 'where life moves at a slower pace and there are not so many meetings to attend.'

As you can see from the number of special events listed above, finding a free night is no small problem — lectures are usually scheduled on Adams School Mothers Club nights. Covenant Christian High School has offered to serve as a central 'clearing house' for scheduling meetings. Covenant staff will keep a 'master calendar' of meetings. We wish them success in providing this useful service.

As you may recall, our Hudsonville congregation decided to build a new church. A building fund drive has already resulted in gifts of almost \$50,000! Plans are being drawn for a new building containing a hexagon auditorium with a seating capacity of approximately 625. Sale papers for the present church building were signed on October 29. The building had to be vacated by November — the deacons were very busy searching for space to store the church organ, piano, tables, and other furniture. The congregation expected to hold services beginning on November 2 in the Hudsonville High School Auditorium on 32nd St.

Mr. John Schaap of First Church celebrated his 100th birthday on October 4. A birthday card provided by the consistory was signed by many of the congregation. We understand that Mr. Schaap also received cards from President Ford and other notables.

Rev. C. Hanko declined the call from our Kalamazoo church.

A quiet thought from our Southeast Church bulletin:

"People who are so sure they know where the younger generation is going should try to remember where it came from."

K.G.V.