

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Wonder of divine grace!

While the world passes away with the lusts thereof, blessed is the church upon whom Christ bestows the gift of the ministry!

That church is prepared for everlasting glory!

Blessed, too, is Christ, Who so graciously bestows the gift!

Above all, blessed be God, Who makes us once more to be restored to His glorious and perfect image!

Let the church say so!

Amen!

See “Christ’s Gift of the Ministry” — page 386

CONTENTS:

Meditation —	
Christ's Gift of the Ministry	386
Editorials —	
As to That 1956 Decision	
(Baptism on the Mission Field — 11)	389
"Our Song of Hope" — A Critique (1)	391
Translated Treasures —	
Acts of the Synod of Dordrecht	393
From Holy Writ —	
Exposition of the Book of Galatians	395
Guest Article —	
Responsibility to Church or School Versus	
Responsibility to Family	397
The Strength of Youth —	
Covenant Youth	400
My Sheep Hear My Voice —	
Letter to Timothy	402
All Around Us —	
What's up at the C.R.C. Synod?	404
Book Review	406
News From Our Churches	408

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 Kortering, Rev. M. Hoeksema, 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 acknowledgment 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

Australian Business Office: Reformed Literature Centre,
P.O. Box 849,
Rockhampton 4700,
Queensland, Australia

New Zealand Business Office: The Standard Bearer,
c/o OPC Bookshop,
P.O. Box 2289,
Christchurch, 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

Christ's Gift of the Ministry

Rev. M. Schipper

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Ephesians 4:11-13.

When Christ ascended up on high, He gave gifts unto men. So the apostle had written in the preceding context. Striking is the fact that among these gifts the apostle mentions first the ministry of the Word — that ministry as it is invested in the office of the ministry as the apostle describes it in the words of our text.

The gift of the ministry is given by Christ to the

church. The church, so it would appear, must be understood as that institution which comes to manifestation in the world in her offices, administrations, and discipline. It is the church of Christ which is ordained by Him to preach His Word, administer the sacraments, distribute to the poor, and exercise the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

When the apostle writes in the context therefore

that Christ gives gifts unto men, it must not be understood that He dispenses these gifts promiscuously and indiscriminately; but, as His Spirit is poured out upon the church, so are the gifts of the Spirit of Christ directed to the church in distinction from the world, and particularly to that church as institute and representative of Christ in the world.

Though it pleases Christ to call men to the office of the ministry through which office Christ will declare His Word, the gift of the ministry is not given to the individual, to particular persons, but to the instituted church. Hence when the minister retires, passes away, or is transferred to another local church, the office of the ministry and the gift of the ministry does not leave the church. The gift and the office of the ministry reside in the local, instituted church. It is the church, therefore, which exercises the gift and which ministers the Word, be it through the divinely appointed office in the church. Or, to state it still more correctly, Christ pleases to preach His Word of the gospel through His church unto whom He has given the gift of the ministry.

To the gift of the ministry belongs also the office and work of the ministry. And this office the apostle distinguishes twofold. In the first place, he speaks of apostles, prophets, and evangelists. And in the second place, of pastors and teachers. Clearly there is a marked distinction between them, while at the same time there is a close relation, so that the latter is dependent on the former.

As to the office of apostles, prophets, and evangelists, it should be remarked that it was peculiar to the early New Testament Church, was therefore of a temporary nature, and was basic in character. In other words, there are no more apostles, prophets, and evangelists today in the sense in which the apostle speaks of them in the text. The office of apostle ceased with the death of the last of the twelve apostles. The same is true of the offices of prophets and evangelists. There were those who were not apostles, yet held the peculiar office of prophecy in the early church. There were also others called evangelists, distinct from the apostles and prophets, who ministered the Word — men, e.g., such as Luke, Timothy, Philip, and Stephen, who co-labored with the apostles and prophets in the preaching of the gospel. That the office of apostles is mentioned first indicates its basic character. Unto the apostles was committed the Word of Christ, not only to be spoken by them as the oracles of Christ, but also infallibly written by them. On the testimony of Christ through the apostles, Christ would lay the foundation of His church against which the gates of hell should not prevail. From the apostles would sound forth the Word of the gospel as it was echoed and re-echoed in the offices of prophets and evangelists, and later in the office of pastors and teachers.

What remains of the gifts of the ministry today is the office of pastors and teachers. These are not two distinct offices, but must be understood as one, namely, pastors who are likewise teachers. Pastors they are who lead the church into the green pastures of the Word of God and feed the flock of Christ. Teachers they are who indoctrinate and establish the church in the knowledge of the truth of Scripture.

In the pastor and teacher you have therefore a minister of Christ, a servant of Christ through whom He pleases to speak His Word to the church. He is a minister, i.e., a servant of the Word of Christ. He is *Verbi Divini Minister*, i.e., minister of the Word of God. He is also the servant of the church. Not is he a lord over God's heritage, but a servant who is trained, prepared, and ready to serve the church. In this connection he stands in the service of the church whose calling it is to exercise the gift of the ministry in her preaching the good news of salvation.

It is the bounden duty of the church to see to it that this gift is not wasted, misused. The church must see to it that the minister (pastor and teacher) realize his sole calling to preach and to teach only the Word of God. The minister must never be allowed to come with a social gospel, or his own philosophy. Nor must he ever be allowed to become so busy with extra-official work that he has no time to prepare for his official calling. The church, too, that understands her responsibility with regard to the gift of the ministry, will therefore not be involved in all manner of social and community activities, but in exercising the gift according to the purpose for which Christ gave it.

For the perfecting of the saints!

Such is in part the intention of the gift of the ministry! Christ did not intend with the gift of the ministry that the church should endeavor to make this world a better place to live in. He had no intention that the church should be busy in the community administering social justice, delving into politics, serving as a corrective of social ills. Nor was it His intention when He gave the gift of the ministry that the church would be out saving souls for Christ, as the modern activity of the church appears to be. Rather, Christ gave the gift of the ministry to the church in order that the church, the saints of God, might be thoroughly, completely outfitted. The word "perfecting" means, literally, to outfit completely. The saints must be completely qualified to live and walk as saints. And this means that they walk in sanctification. But there is more.

For the work of the ministry!

This does not refer to the ministry of the Word, as a superficial reading of the text might suggest. Rather, the apostle has in mind the ministering to one another. The saints must learn from the ministry of

the Word to care for one another, to share with one another of the good graces of Christ, to care for the poor and indigent. So no one will look upon his gifts as his own, but use them for the benefit of others. But there is still more.

For the building up of the body of Christ!

The gift of the ministry is given to the church that she may be edified, built up in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To sum it all up, the intention of Christ in the gift of the ministry is the preparation, the formation, and complete outfitting of a people that is ready for the coming of Christ. Thus, when He shall appear, they may be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is.

The last part of the text makes this clear. It shows how the intention of Christ in His gift of the ministry is attained.

Till we all arrive!

That is, till the entire church attains unto the goal Christ has set as described in the foregoing. And make no mistake about it, the intention of Christ is certain of attainment. It cannot fail! It lies in the very nature and power of the gift of the ministry to bring the body of Christ to its fullest, most complete manifestation.

Till we all arrive!

Unto the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God!

Unto the perfect man!

Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ!

Space does not allow us to explain in detail the significance of all the apostle says here which is descriptive of the goal to which the gift of the ministry attains. But all this is intended to describe what the church will be like when the intention of Christ in the gift of the ministry shall be fully realized.

To be noticed, too, is the fact that the apostle, as it were in an ascending scale, climbs up to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." By the latter the apostle means, no doubt, that through the ministry of the Word Christ is pleased to communicate Himself to the church in such wise that the church becomes Christ-like. Or, as the Scripture often

refers to it, transformed into the image of Christ. When the church, therefore, stands in the light of the constant, pure ministry of the Word, the image of Christ becomes reflected in her. All the lines of His perfect Being are etched in her countenance.

Through the ministry of the Word the church goes on to perfection, or, as the apostle expresses it: "unto the perfect man," i.e., holy as Christ is, righteous as He is. Here is brought to light the wonder of grace, and the power of the Word of God. Let us not fail to see it! Wicked and perverse, vile and corrupt as we by nature are, Christ, by the power of His Word transforms us into children of light, holy and without spot. He brings us to the highest potential for man — to the perfect man — all that God in His eternal purpose intended man to become.

And when this shall be realized, we also likewise shall have attained to "the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God." Undoubtedly here "the faith" must be viewed objectively, referring not to the activity of faith in the heart of the believer, but to the contents of faith. With other words, when the church through the ministry has arrived, has reached the goal set by Christ, there will be no more any differences in doctrine. The church will have arrived at the fulness of the truth of the Word of God. The church will be one in faith. This is supported by the rest of the text: "and the knowledge of the Son of God." Notice that the apostle does not say: Christ, or Jesus, but the Son of God. God is pleased to reveal Himself in His Son. So we shall come to know God. As the apostle says in another place, we shall know even as we are known.

Wonder of divine grace!

While the world passes away with the lusts thereof, blessed is the church upon whom Christ bestows the gift of the ministry!

That church is prepared for everlasting glory!

Blessed, too, is Christ, Who so graciously bestows the gift!

Above all, blessed be God, Who makes us once more to be restored to His glorious and perfect image!

Let the church say so!

Amen!

Do you receive the STANDARD BEARER regularly?
Subscribe Now and give a subscription to a Friend

EDITORIALS

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

As to That 1956 Decision (Baptism on the Mission Field--11)

As we promised during our series of articles on the subject of Baptism On The Mission Field, and as we stated in the previous issue in reply to Rev. Lubbers, we now turn to the matter of the decision by the Synod of 1956 concerning administration of the sacraments on the mission field.

It is important to understand the historical situation, first of all. Our missionary was laboring in Loveland, Colorado. The circumstances were, however, not merely that there was an unorganized group of Reformed families in Loveland and that our missionary was seeking to organize them into a Protestant Reformed Church. On the contrary, the interested families were already an organized congregation, called the "Reformed Hope Church of Loveland, Colorado." Eventually, this Reformed Hope Church sought and received admittance into our denomination *as a consistory and congregation*, and then the Reformed Hope Church became the Protestant Reformed Church of Loveland.

While this church was the Reformed Hope Church, our missionary (at that time under the supervision of First Church of Grand Rapids, which was the calling church) also administered the sacraments (both baptism and the Lord's Supper). This was reported in the annual report of the Mission Committee (cf. letter from the Consistory of the Reformed Hope Church, Acts of Synod, 1956, p. 79) and also reported on the floor of Synod by Rev. Lubbers. When a motion was made "that we approve of Rev. Lubbers' labors in Loveland as reported by the Mission Committee," (Article 85), the following amendments were made from the floor of Synod (and I here combine Articles 86, 91, and 93): "with the exception of his administration of the Sacraments; (Grounds: 1. That the administration of the Sacraments is contrary to the second duty mentioned in the Form for Ordination. 2. It is contrary to his being under the supervision of the Consistory of the First Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Article 7 of the Mission Committee.) and with the exception of pronouncing the blessing, (Ground: The official blessing and benediction is only and exclusively laid on an organized congregation, and under the supervision of a local Consistory.

Proof: all the benedictions in the Old and New Testaments are laid upon the organized church of Christ.)" With these additions, the motion to approve the labors of our missionary in Loveland was passed, Article 94.

Now personally I am not fond of the formulation of this decision, for the simple reason that it is lacking in clarity and precision. I believe that when Synods make decisions on substantive matters, such decisions should be carefully formulated and should be both clear and complete, so that future generations can know precisely what is meant. For this reason, when matters of this kind arise, it is much better to refer them to Advisory Committees for careful formulation. I remember well that this matter was before Synod of 1956. I remember, too, that the late Rev. H. Hoeksema raised this matter on the floor of Synod and formulated part, if not all, of the amendments. If my memory serves me well, the late Rev. G. Vos also played a considerable part in the matter. Both of these men were great ones for coming up with motions on the floor of Synod. And they were usually right, too; and they gave the churches good guidance. But just because their motions were rather extemporaneous, they did not always receive the most careful and precise and clear formulation. You can even see something of that in the Acts of 1956. An amendment was made during the morning session. Then there was evidently some discussion, and some grounds were added by another amendment. Then a further amendment was made. Then, when Synod was almost ready for the main motion as amended, yet another amendment was presented in Article 93.

However, I cannot agree with the Study Report on this matter. What does the Study Report say? Three things: 1. It quotes the 1956 decision without furnishing any background. 2. It makes the flat, ungrounded statement that "This Form was misunderstood by the Synod of 1956, which decided that 'administration of the Sacraments is contrary to the second duty mentioned in the Form of Ordination' (Art. 91)." 3. It makes the ungrounded recommendation that "Synod declare that the Synod of

1956 erred in Art. 91, Ground 1 when it said, 'That the administration of the Sacraments is contrary to the second duty mentioned in the Form for Ordination.' "

Why can I not agree? Here are my reasons:

1. The Study Committee went beyond its mandate. They were instructed to "take into account" the previous decisions of Synod. They were *not* instructed to pass judgment on those previous decisions, and *certainly not* to make recommendations for Synod to declare them right or wrong. That decision was made in the concrete case referred to; it was and is settled and binding under the Church Order for the concrete case referred to; and, in fact, there was never any attempt to reverse it by way of protest or appeal. And now, twenty years later, we are going to declare it in error? And that, too, without any grounds?

2. The Study Report gives no evidence of having studied the 1956 decision; nor does it furnish any evidence whatsoever that Synod of 1956 misunderstood the Form. It is true, of course, that the 1956 decision does not agree with what the Study Report says about the Form. But that is an altogether different matter. I was a delegate to Synod in 1956: and I can assure you that I did not misunderstand the Form when I voted in favor of the decision in question. I understood it very clearly; but my understanding of the Form (duty #2 of the missionary) was not then and is not today that of the Study Report.

3. The decision of 1956 simply meant that the missionary's engaging in baptism (and administration of the Supper) in other than a Protestant Reformed Church, i.e., the Reformed Hope Church, and under the supervision of other than a Protestant Reformed consistory, i.e., the Reformed Hope Church consistory, was incorrect. And if now you remember that the Reformed Hope Church did not become the Protestant Reformed Church of Loveland until 1958, two years later, this simply underscores the rightness of Synod's decision. What did Synod mean? That there could never be any baptism, under any circumstances, on the mission field? One almost gets the impression that the Study Committee thus understands the 1956 statement. But this, of course, would be nonsense: for the Form plainly speaks of baptism and the Lord's Supper. And I hardly think Synod of 1956 would adopt nonsense. No, it is plain that Synod of 1956 understood that second duty in the Form just as I have explained it in my previous articles. It means this: "Secondly, thou art holden, if it pleases God to make thy work fruitful unto the gathering of a (Protestant Reformed) church, to administer the Sacrament of Holy Baptism..." Without going into detail, let me point out that thus understood, this part of the 1956 decision is in

harmony with the rest of the decision — concerning consistorial supervision and pronouncing the blessing. The point is that a Protestant Reformed minister under a Protestant Reformed consistory baptizes members into the visible, catholic body of Christ as manifest in a Protestant Reformed congregation (either established or at the point of organization). If we do not adhere to this, we simply get a kind of open baptism. Logically, the next step, then, is also open communion, rather than close communion. And logically, if we can have these things on the mission field, we may have them at home, also. Unless, of course, there are two kinds of sacraments — mission field sacraments and home church sacraments.

It has been suggested to me by an interested reader that our *Standard Bearer* furnish a critique of "Our Song Of Hope," the new confession which was provisionally adopted for a period of four years by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America in 1974 and which is scheduled for final consideration by the General Synod in 1978. Because of our general interest and concern with respect to affairs in the Reformed community, because this is the first effort in this country toward introduction of a new confession in the immediate Reformed family to which we belong, and also because this is an important item for consideration with respect to the attempt at inter-church relationships between the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in America, we are heeding this suggestion. We hope to devote a few articles to this critique.

Through the courtesy of the same reader who made the suggestion mentioned above, I received a copy of "Our Song Of Hope." The RCA has not only published the provisional confession itself; but under the auspices of the RCA a booklet has been published which explains or intends to explain this new creed. This is a 90-page paperback (published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., in case anyone wants to obtain it for the price of \$2.95), and it contains a commentary and appendices by Dr. Eugene P. Heide-man. The intent is that this shall be a new standard (fourth form) alongside the present Three Forms of Unity. Its status will be much like that of the Confession of '67 in the UPUSA. In other words, the other confessions will become museum pieces. More about this later. In 1978 the General Synod will adopt or reject this new confession *in toto*. And my correspondent informs me that thereafter a vote of the classes should follow, since a change in the *Book of Church Order* will be required.

So that our readers will know what is being discussed in future articles of this series, we are publishing the entire document in this issue. We suggest that you save this for future reference. Meanwhile, read this document through. Any discerning Reformed reader who has some speaking ac-

quaintance with our Three Forms of Unity (the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordrecht) will detect at once not only that there is an altogether different tone in “Our Song Of Hope,” but also that at several crucial points it speaks sharply different language than our present confessions speak.

Why is this called a Song? The prologue and the prayer are designed to be sung, and in the booklet referred to they are set to music. The rest of this creed is designed to be recited by the congregation.

Here follows “Our Song Of Hope” in full:

“Our Song of Hope”--A Critique (1)

We sing to our Lord a new song;
We sing in our world a sure Hope:

Our God loves His world,
He called it into being,
He renews it through Jesus Christ,
He governs it by His Spirit.

God is the world's true Hope.

I. OUR HOPE IN THE COMING OF THE LORD

1. We are a people of hope
waiting for the return of our Lord.
He has come to us
through the ancient people of Israel,
as the true Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth,
as the Holy Spirit at work in our world.
He speaks to us now through His inspired Scriptures.
He is with us day by day.

II. OUR SONG IN A HOPELESS WORLD

2. We know Christ to be our only hope.
We have enmeshed our world in a realm of sin,
rebelled against God,
accepted man's oppression of man,
and even crucified His Son.
God's world has been trapped by our fall,
governments entangled by human pride,
and nature polluted by mankind's greed.

III. JESUS CHRIST OUR ONLY HOPE

3. Our only hope is Jesus Christ.
After we refused to live in the image of God,
He was born of the virgin Mary,
sharing our genes and our instincts,
entering our culture, speaking our language,
fulfilling the law of our God.
Being united to His humanity,
we know ourselves when we rest in Him.
4. Jesus Christ is the hope of God's world.
In His death,
the justice of God is established;
forgiveness of sin is proclaimed.
On the day of His resurrection,
the tomb was empty; His disciples saw Him;
death was defeated; new life had come.
God's purpose for His world was sealed.
5. Our ascended Lord gives hope for two ages.
In the age to come, He is the judge,
rejecting unrighteousness,
isolating His enemies to hell,

blessing His new creation in Christ.
In this age, His Holy Spirit is with us,
calling nations to follow God's path,
uniting people through Christ in love.

IV. OUR HOPE IN GOD'S WORDS

6. The Spirit speaks through the Scriptures.
He has inspired Hebrew and Greek words,
setting God's truth in human language,
placing God's teaching in ancient cultures,
proclaiming the Gospel in the history of the world.
He speaks truly what the nations must know,
translating God's word into modern languages,
impressing it on men's hearts and into their cultures.
7. The Spirit speaks through the Church,
measuring her words by the Canonical Scriptures.
He has spoken in the ancient creeds,
and in the confessions of the Reformation.
He calls the world to bear witness to Christ
in faithfulness to the Scriptures,
in harmony with the words of the Fathers,
and in unity with all Christ's people.
8. God's Spirit speaks in the world
according to God's ultimate word in Christ.
In every time and place,
in ancient cities and distant lands,
in technology and business,
in art and education,
God has not left Himself without a witness.
His word has entered where we have failed to go.
9. In each year and in every place
we expect the coming of Christ's Spirit.
As we listen to the world's concerns,
hear the cry of the oppressed,
and learn of new discoveries,
He will give us knowledge,
teach us to respond with maturity,
and give us courage to act with integrity.

V. OUR HOPE IN DAILY LIFE

10. As citizens we acknowledge the Spirit's work in
human government
for the welfare of the people,
for justice among the poor,

for mercy towards the prisoner,
against man's oppression of man.

- We must obey God rather than men,
waiting upon His Spirit,
filled with the patience of Christ.
11. We pray for the fruits of the Spirit of Christ
who works for peace on earth,
commands us to love our enemies,
and calls for patience among the nations.
- We give thanks for His work among governments,
seeking to resolve disputes by means other than
war,
placing human kindness above national pride,
replacing the curse of war with international
self-control.
12. We hear the Spirit's call to love one another
opposing discrimination of race or sex,
inviting us to accept one another,
and to share at every level
in work and play,
in church and state,
in marriage and family,
and so fulfill the love of Christ.
13. As male and female we look to the Spirit.
He makes us the stewards of life
to plan its beginning,
to love in its living,
and to care in its dying.
- He makes us the stewards of marriage
with its lifelong commitment to love;
yet He knows our frailty of heart.
14. God's Spirit leads us into Truth —
the Truth of Christ's salvation,
into increasing knowledge of all existence.
He rejoices in human awareness of God's creation
and gives freedom to those on the frontiers of
research.
- We are overwhelmed by the growth in our knowledge.
While our truths come in broken fragments,
we expect the Spirit to unite these in Christ.

VI. OUR HOPE IN THE CHURCH

15. Christ elects His church
to proclaim His Word and celebrate the sacra-
ments,
to worship His name,
and to live as His disciples.
- He creates His community
to be a place of prayer,
to provide rest for the weary,
and to lead people to share in service.
16. The Spirit sends His church
to call sinners to repentance,
to proclaim the good news

that Jesus is personal Savior and Lord.
He sends it out in ministry

- to preach good news to the poor,
righteousness to the nations,
and peace among mankind.
17. The Spirit builds one church,
united in one Lord and one hope,
with one ministry around one table.
- He calls all believers in Jesus
to respond in worship together,
to accept all the gifts from the Spirit,
to learn from each other's traditions,
to make unity visible on earth.
18. Christ places baptism in the world
as a seal of His covenant people,
placing them in His ministry,
assuring them of the forgiveness of sins.
- God knows those who are baptized in His name,
guiding His church gently to lead us,
calling us back when we go astray,
promising life amid trials and death.
19. Christ places His Table in this world.
He takes up our bread and wine
to represent His sacrifice,
to bind His ministry to our daily work,
to unite us in His righteousness.
- Here Christ is present in His world
proclaiming His salvation until He comes,
a symbol of hope for a troubled age.

VII. OUR HOPE IN THE AGE TO COME

20. God saves the world through Jesus.
Those who call on His name will have life.
His hand reaches out beyond those who say "Lord"
to the infants who live in the atmosphere of
faith,
even to the farthest stars and planets — all His
creation.
- The boundaries of His love are not known,
His Spirit works at the ends of the world
before the church has there spoken a word.
21. God will renew the world through Jesus.
He will put all unrighteousness out,
purify the works of men's hands,
and perfect their fellowship in Himself.
- He will wipe away every tear;
death shall be no more.
- There will be a new heaven and a new earth,
and His creation will be filled with His glory.

OUR PRAYER:

Come, Lord Jesus:

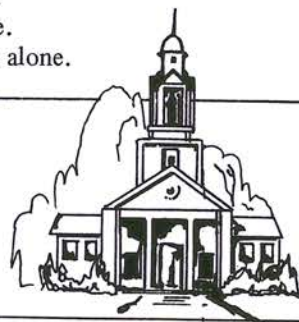
We are open to your Spirit.

We await your full presence.

Our world finds rest in you alone.

Know the standard and follow it.

Read the STANDARD BEARER!



TRANSLATED TREASURES

Acts of the Synod of Dordrecht

(In the previous installment we learned about another conference, urged by Willem Lodewijk, Count of Nassau and Governor of Friesland, between three representatives of the Remonstrants, led by Johannes Uitenbogaard, and three representatives of the Reformed, led by Festus Hommius. The Remonstrants sought toleration for their views — no strings attached. The Reformed sought a limited toleration pending the convening of a National Synod. The conference was held at Delft, but it was fruitless. When the Remonstrants reported to the States, however, they continued to press not only for toleration but for the removal of the Deputies of the Churches from any position of real power in the churches. The Remonstrants wanted free rein. In this installment the story of their efforts to obtain toleration is continued.)

In order now to gain this toleration more easily through public authority (the toleration for which they pressed so much as the means through which they merely hoped to be able to introduce their doctrine in the Churches), they made use of this strategy. A certain writing in which the true state of the differences was not correctly presented was sent in England by the Advocate Hugo Grotius to the Ambassador of the States-General, along with the draft of a letter requesting him that he would petition the King of Great Britain, James I, that, seeing that this matter could be laid to rest in no other way than through tolerance, it would please his Royal Majesty to write according to the draft of the enclosed letter to the States-General. This end was secretly and in a private way obtained; and such a letter was sent to the States-General, May 6. The Remonstrants rejoiced greatly about this, and, hoping that they would now be able to attain their purpose, they worked through the Advocate to the end that a certain formula of toleration (namely, the same as is in the 4th and 5th Articles, chapter 11, of the Church Order of Utrecht) should be established by the public authority of the States and imposed upon the Churches. Although the feelings of many in the gathering of the States were inclined in this direction, nevertheless the most understanding among them were valiantly opposed to this, considering it to be improper to force upon the Churches a toleration in matters of faith which had never been properly investigated in a lawful ecclesiastical gathering, and which brought with it a manifest change in doctrine. Further, they considered also that the peace of the churches could not be obtained in this way, seeing that it was to be feared that if this

were to be permitted, men might present from the same pulpit and for one and the same gathering views which differed so greatly from one another that the peace of the churches would be more and more disturbed, even as experience had taught to this point. Nevertheless, the Remonstrants continued to press in every way for this toleration and to recommend it publicly and secretly by writings and sermons, using especially this reason, that they said that the articles which were in question were of such little importance that they did not concern the fundamentals of salvation and that in the case of such kinds of articles of doctrine people ought to be tolerant. And so they finally brought it about, July 25, 1614, that this resolution of tolerance, contrary to the wishes and strivings of some of the foremost and strongest Cities of Holland and West-Friesland, was printed, clothed with some expressions of Scripture and of the old fathers, among whom they had also introduced Faustus Regins, who had been the head of the Semi-Pelagians.

When Jacobus Trigland, Minister at Amsterdam, had replied to this in a public writing, then Uitenbogaard had also taken in hand a lengthy defense of this resolution, in which he scandalously slandered and attacked both the doctrine of the Reformed Churches and the foremost lights thereof, Calvin, Beza, Zanchius, and others. Over against this writing, Trigland prepared a careful reply, for the defense both of the honor and the doctrine of the teachers of the Reformed Churches. And when they saw that this document, to which they had given the name of a resolution of the situation, did not have such an authority, they attempted another strategy, in order that they might be able to obtain what they wanted. And to that end, September and October, 1605, everywhere in Holland they invited the Ministers, both secretly and in their gatherings, to subscribe to a certain other formula of toleration, put in deceitful language, by some who secretly adhered to their party and their views, but who were not held to be Remonstrants.

However, when even so they could not get their way, they judged that those who could not be talked over would have to be coerced by the authority of the Regents, and that at last they would have to break through this matter and bring an end to it. To

this end, they achieved it that in the name of the States, this resolution of mutual tolerance, published in the preceding year, was sent to every Classis; and it was simply ordered that the Ministers should subscribe to it without contradiction. And in order that they might more easily get into the service of the Churches those who were of their party, and might exclude all the others, they brought it about that still another resolution was added. By this it was allowed that in the calling of Ministers and Elders they would use the order which was devised in the year 1591, but which was not approved. According to this rule, four would be elected who were delegated by the government, and four others who were delegated by the consistory. These resolutions having been sent to the Classes, many of them sent their Deputies to the States, in order to declare openly and by written document the objections, or *gravamina*, which they had against this, and to ask that the introduction of these resolutions be withdrawn. But when they arrived at the Hague for that purpose, they learned from the Delegates of some of the chief cities that those resolutions, although they had been forwarded, nevertheless had not yet been established by full and formal approbation of all the States, and therefore could not yet have the force of a law. They therefore found it advisable to refrain from their intended request until the resolutions should be further enforced. This last resolution again gave occasion in many places for new disputes and disturbances, especially in the Churches of Haarlem. For when certain of the Magistrates wanted to have the Ministers called according to this new order, and the Church did not approve that, it happened that they refused to have ecclesiastical fellowship with the Congregation where the Ministers were called in the aforesaid manner; and they refused to acknowledge them as lawful Ministers. Through the same decisions it also happened that some Classes in Holland, which for the sake of peace had until now maintained unity with the Remonstrants in the government of the Churches, now became divided, due to the fact that many Ministers could not consent to these decisions, while the Remonstrants nevertheless desired that the Churches should be governed according to their rule and law. Hence, in order to force this upon their fellow Ministers with authority, they introduced into the Classical gatherings certain Politicians who were either alienated from the Reformed Religion or were loyal to their party; and thus they sought to exercise dominance in the Churches. For the right-minded Ministers, being tired and weary of these disputes which arose daily on account of these things with the Remonstrants, deemed it better to come together without them and separately, and to take care of their churches in peace, rather than to be plagued by their continual disputes.

Meanwhile, Uitenbogaard brought it about that through the authority of certain Leaders, his Fellow-Ministers were ordered to obey these resolutions. When his Fellow-Minister Henricus Roseus said that he could not promise this with a good conscience, he was suspended from the office of Minister by their authority and at Uitenbogaard's corrupt instigation. Therefore the members of the Church of the Hague who loved the purity of the Reformed doctrine continued the practice of Religion in a separate Church, first in the village of Rijswijk, and later, after they obtained Ministers by loan from other Churches, in the Hague. Later on, at these services the chief men from the States, from the Counsellors of both the Courts of Justice and other Colleges, and the Prince of Orange himself and Count Willem Lodewijk of Nassau, forsaking the gathering of the Remonstrants, were present, in order to testify of their agreement in the sound doctrine and their inclination toward the same. The Remonstrants very hatefully called this separation schism, and they sought in every manner to prevent it or to avenge it. Meanwhile they continued to work to get these Resolutions enacted wherever they knew that the Magistrates were favorable to them. When because of this many pious people were punished in the goods and with imprisonments and exile, they appealed to the highest Court of Justice and sought help against this violence. And now the honorable Lord Counsellors of the High Council sought to come to the help of the oppressed; but the Remonstrants saw to it, through the Advocate, that the High Council was forbidden to help, and that the hands of the High Court of Justice were tied.

But when many leading Cities of Holland, among them especially the mightiest city of Amsterdam, took position against the enforcement of these Resolutions, March 18, 1616, then it happened, April 24, that Hugo Grotius and certain others were sent to Amsterdam to persuade the Magistrates of that city through their eloquence to accept those Resolutions. When he had tried to do this with a wide-ranging speech, the Magistrates answered that they could in no wise approve it that men should bypass the lawful Synodical gatherings and should take ecclesiastical matters under advisement in the gathering of the States, should make decisions in those matters, and should put those decisions into effect. Further, they answered that it was their intention to stand for the true Christian Religion, the exercise of which had flourished in these lands for fifty years; and they judged that the very least change of this religion would be damaging to the Republic unless it was first properly investigated by a lawful Synod. The Magistrates answered, further, that on this account they could not consent to various proposals and various actions which had taken place since the year 1616,

nor could they consent to this last proposition. And they did not desire that under the name of the city of Amsterdam (seeing that it was not one of the least members of the gathering of the States) any decisions should be made, much less be put into effect, nor anything should be decided against those who confess the Reformed Religion, unless the differences and changes in the Religion and in ecclesiastical matters, under the authority of the Lords of the States, would be previously investigated and treated in lawful Synods. Yea, they also did not desire that the Preachers who were loyal to the views of the Reformed Religion, defended by the Contra-remonstrants, should meanwhile be either suspended from their ministry because they would declare that they could not with a good conscience maintain

ecclesiastical unity with the Remonstrants; nor did they desire that the Churches which followed those views should be hindered in the practice of Religion, either under pretense of schism or because they had scruples of conscience against hearing the sermons of the Remonstrants. They declared, further, that they approved all these things until, by the authority of the States, a lawful Synod would be authorized, where the differences and innovations might be properly investigated and treated. Thus the labor and the attempts of the Remonstrants and of those favorable to them were in vain, especially since this advice of the Magistrates of Amsterdam was openly approved by the Magistrates of the Cities of Dordrecht, Enkhuizen, Edam, and Purmerend.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of the Book of Galatians

By Rev. G. Lubbers

PAUL'S VINDICATION OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL — Continued (Gal. 2:15-18)

Paul now asks a very telling and arresting question. He asks "Is Christ of sin a minister?" It would seem that seeking to be justified by faith in Christ would need to lead to that conclusion. If there were absolutely no need to keep the law in order to be justified, then the law could be set aside and men could live lawless lives. To that terrible position, it seems, the free grace in Christ must lead. Christ, instead of making men keepers of the law, makes men transgressors of the law by this teaching of the truth of the Gospel. And so Paul asks the question, whether those who seek to be justified in Christ are not in the ministry of sin, rather than in the ministry of grace!

To this question Paul gives the very strong "God forbid!" (*mee genoito*) It is a horrible thought, unworthy of God! Such a conclusion is shocking to the utmost to the soul of Paul and to the heart of all the justified in Christ. It is just as shocking as to say that the greatness of justifying and sanctifying grace of Christ leads to a life of sin and debauchery: let us sin that grace may abound. (Rom. 6:2) Paul is equally shocked by the terrible conclusion that if our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God, God is unrighteous when He taketh vengeance. Then, too, Paul exclaims with the strong: God forbid (Rom. 3:6) God will indeed judge the world in righteousness according to his holy law. Thus also the truth of the

Gospel that we are justified without works of law which we perform does not make Christ a minister of sin. God forbid! (Gal. 2:17) Out of the works of the law shall no flesh, Jew or Greek, be justified before God and have right to inherit eternal life!

Are then the circumcised Jews "found sinners" themselves who seek to be justified in Christ? Indeed, they are. But the question is in what sense are they found such "sinners." The term "sinners" here is the same as that which we have in verse 15, where Paul says, "We who are by nature Jews and not *sinners* out of the Gentiles." There the term sinner (*harmartoloi*) referred to those who were outside of the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (Eph. 2:12) They were those who did not share in the task of bringing forth the Christ as the Israelites of whom was the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the worship, and the promises, looking back to the fathers and forward to the coming of Christ from their loins, the Christ Who is God blessed forever, Amen. (Rom. 9:4,5) Such sinners, as the Gentiles were, Paul and Peter were not. Now in the phrase "found sinners" we can go in two different constructions of thought. This might mean that when Paul and Peter sought salvation in Christ, they learned profoundly that they were dead in trespasses and sins in themselves, children of wrath even as the

rest. (Eph. 2:1-3) Then Paul learned that he was the chief of sinners, and Peter weeps bitterly over his denial of the Christ and is converted. (I Tim. 1:15 f.f., Luke 22:62) Seeking to be justified in Christ they found that *they* were sinners. However, this hardly seems to be the correct interpretation. If a word is used in a given sense in the immediate context we should not give a different meaning to it than the meaning of the term in the context. There "sinner" meant a man who transgressed the law of Israel, living outside of it. He did not keep the law of the precepts of clean and unclean, meats, drinks, days and months and years. He was not under the Levitical laws and ordinances at all. Such sinners the Gentiles were! Now, if seeking to be justified in Christ we are "found sinners," it means that we no longer are under the Levitical laws and ordinances any more. Yes, we are "found sinners" like the Gentiles. Really, we are now in a third class. We are not *under* law, nor are we *outside* of law (without law), but we are the justified ones *in* Christ, which makes us such because the Levitical laws have been abrogated. However, in the sense that we no longer keep the O.T. Levitical laws and ordinances, we are just as little under these laws as were the Gentiles, with this understanding that we are now in a new relationship to sin and grace in Christ. Old things are passed away and all things are new! Even when we are "found sinners" we are not in the service of a "minister of sin," but we are in the service of righteousness! Is Christ then a "minister of sin"? God forbid! (II Cor. 5:16,16)

On the contrary, Paul holds that not he who continues to preach Christ crucified is a sinner before the throne of God's just verdict, but he who would return to a teaching and conduct contrary to the truth of justification by faith, is a transgressor. Says Paul, if it should prove a *fact* (Paul uses a first class conditional sentence, determined reality) that he was again breaking down the doctrine and teaching of free-grace, then he would be established before God as a transgressor. He had broken down the teaching of justification by works. He will not rebuild it. Should he do so, then God would constitute him a transgressor of the work of Christ, the Son of God, a denier of the Christ, crucifying the Son of God afresh. And Peter and all those in Antioch had better take this to heart. (Heb. 10:26-31)

What masterful apology for the Gospel. This is a good case-study in showing that not only the exact words of God must be heeded, but also the deeper and profounder implications must be taken to heart. The great polemic of the Gospel stands as the rock of Gibraltar. The foundation is laid here by Paul as the master-builder; let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. Let it be precious stone, gold and silver, and not mere wood, hay, and straw which do not befit the temple of God. (I Cor. 3:10-13)

THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL IN PAUL'S LIFE (Galatians 2:19-21)

Here we are given an insight into the deep spiritual psychology of a great and profound apostle and preacher. We see that he is first a christian and then a workman in God's church, as the wise master-builder. A stream cannot rise higher than its source. In Paul this water is very high. It is as high as it is in the fountain-source, Christ. Paul is a new creature in Christ. A great change has taken place in this erstwhile persecutor of the church. Christ has been *revealed* in him as the Son of God. (Gal. 1:15, 16) Whether Paul spoke these words to Peter as part of rebuking to his face before all (Gal. 2:14) is perhaps a question to which no definite answer can be given. It is both affirmed and denied by expositors of orthodox stature. We leave it an open question of no great consequence. What is important is that we try to understand the argument here set forth. Here is a greater than Luther, who says, "I cannot do otherwise than preach the Gospel of Christ, so help me God!"

Paul opens here the secret of his strength and devotion to the Gospel. And the implied argument is that this is normative for any preacher of the Gospel, yes, for any confessor of the truth of the Gospel. Paul is not a lone exception to the rule of being a new creature in Christ. (Eph. 2:9,10; 4:20-24) Hence, this is a mighty spiritual-psychological appeal to the new man in Christ, of Peter and all who are in Antioch. Paul will pursue this appeal in Gal. 3:1-5. This is ever the appeal in Scripture in all the exhortations, pleadings, and precepts of the Gospel. The appeal is *always* to what we *are* in Christ, and that, too, by the "mercies of God"! (Rom. 12:1,2) Yea, such is ever the case where the "law" is held before us, as renewed christians, in all of the Scriptures, whereas Christ is the end of the law for all who believe. And so we have here more than a mere autobiographical statement from Paul concerning his inner life in Christ, but we have here still an integral part of his powerful polemic for the truth of the Gospel, as this is a reality in his own life, and in the lives of all the redeemed and regenerated children of God, who are born out of the Father.

We are dealing here with some striking and meaningful sentences of Paul. He says very emphatically, "For I through law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." (Verse 19) There is an emphasis in this sentence which is scarcely reproduced in the English of the KJV of the Bible. Literally translated the sentence reads, "For I through law unto law I have died, in order that unto God I might live." What should be noticed is that here is a double emphasis by Paul on what has happened to him by grace. First of all in the Greek he

says twice "I" with the verb "have died." That is emphatic. Besides he places this "I" in the emphatic position in the sentence. This indicates, in our judgment, that Paul says to his audience in defense of the Gospel power, that no matter what happened to others, this has happened to him. He has come to stand before God in a new relationship to the law. The "law" has not died. It is eternal as God is God. But Paul's former relationship to the law is like one who died. Just as the law of the husband only had force for the wife as long as he lived, but is no longer of force when he has died, so also the law of commandments in ordinances has no more power over Paul and over all the redeemed saints. (Rom. 7:6) Paul will now serve in newness of the spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. I died to law! It is no longer the motivation of my life, keeping me in bondage, but the motivation is now that I am "under grace," the law of liberty. (Rom. 6:8-14)

Paul has died unto the law-principle (Rom. 10:4,5) that the man who "doeth the same shall live thereby" through law. When he died to law the righteous demand of perfect obedience was not forgotten, overlooked, negated, but was so maintained by God, that rather than one sin to go unpunished, he has punished the same in his only begotten Son. The law received its due, when I died unto law. It is quite evident that his is a radical death, once and for all. This is evident from the verb itself. The verb means to

"die off." It expresses completeness. The tense here indicates, too, that it is not a gradual process but that this took place at one time! It is a once and for all dying. One cannot return to the state which was ours before this death had occurred. This dying refers to the legal status of Paul now by virtue of the judge of heaven and earth, by which Paul is no longer a slave, but he is a son of God with legal rights to serve God in His family, His temple, His church, as a true son of Abraham, a free-born son of God!

The purpose of this dying unto law is grand in its design. This design is both negative and positive.

It is negative in that Paul no longer lives "under law." He is crucified with Christ. He says emphatically, "with *Christ* I am crucified." He will develop this theme more in depth in Chapter 3. For the time being he merely states the fact without the deeper interpretation of it and without the dogmatical and exegetical basic implications of it. The term means in the Greek that this crucifixion "with" Christ was simultaneous with Christ's crucifixion at Calvary! As really as Christ was nailed to the Cross, so really all of Paul's transgressions were nailed to the tree. The Lord caused all our iniquities to come upon Him. That is the pivotal fact upon which it all hinges. There at Calvary Paul died through law into the demands of the law: that the one that doeth the same shall live thereby.

GUEST ARTICLE

Responsibility to Church or School Versus Responsibility to Family

Rev. R. Van Overloop

(The following is the substance of a speech given at an officebearer's conference on April 5, 1977.)

The choice of this topic by the committee shows that the dual responsibility of the member of the consistory or of the school board member puts the family man in a difficult position. It is to be assumed that the committee is not referring to those who will take on responsibilities in the church or school because they want to escape the family. Nor do they refer to those who use the family as an excuse not to be an officebearer or school board member. Rather

the committee had in mind those men who very seriously bear the responsibilities of their families, but also seek to fulfill their responsibilities towards our churches and our schools.

It is best then that we consider what one's responsibilities are towards the family and towards the church. Finally, let us consider what the proper relationship might be between these two.

When we speak of the family, we really refer to one's responsibilities towards his wife. The reason why the emphasis should fall on our responsibility to

our wife, rather than to our children, is that God says that a man must leave father and mother and cleave to his wife. This speaks not only to one just married who must concentrate his attention on his wife rather than his parents, but also to the family man who must remember that the basic relationship in the home is not the relationship between parents and children, but that relationship which exists between the husband and the wife. Simply put, this means that the way one can be the best father to his children is to be a very good husband to their mother.

The question which must be faced then to determine one's responsibility to the home is: what is involved in being a husband? The Song of Solomon 2:16a and 6:3a says that the husband possesses his wife. The wife becomes a part of him and he is incomplete without her. He needs her to be complete and can never do without her as long as it is God's will to keep them alive. Because the husband possesses his wife he must therefore care for her by nourishing and cherishing her. But these verses in the Song of Solomon also say that the husband is not his own, but belongs to his wife. He leaves father and mother and is joined to his wife by God. Nothing may be allowed to interfere in this relationship. And the husband is not his own because he gives himself to his wife in love. As the husband's love for his wife must be a reflection of God's love for the Church, so he must love her so much that he gives his all to her and for her. That the husband is not his own but belongs to his wife is so much a fact that it can be said that "the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife." (I Cor. 7:4)

The intimacy of this relationship between husband and wife is also shown in I Corinthians 11:12, "For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God." This text teaches that the man does not live apart from his wife, as if he were independent of her. Rather the husband must live his life by, or literally through, the wife. Wherever he is or whatever he is doing the husband must live through his wife. Not to do so is to be independent of her, and such independence is rebellion against the ordinance of marriage. A very practical example of the application of this truth to the work of an officebearer is that he may not forget that he is married as he counsels a woman of the congregation. (Parenthetically, every husband, no matter how long he may be married, should know how he lives his life through his wife, just as he must know how he lives his life to the glory of God.)

The intimacy of this marriage relationship shows the need for the importance of communication between husband and wife. They must maintain communication as it is described in Ephesians 4:25-32. This is obviously true because one cannot be com-

patible unless he is open and honest and truthful with his wife. It is through communication that the marriage relationship is established, grows, and is maintained. The husband (and also the wife, of course) therefore must tell his wife everything. He should not be selective in that which he tells her. Only the deepest recesses of one's heart in which he speaks personally and secretly with his God is to be kept to himself. What kind of relationship exists when the husband and wife tell each other only a part of their everyday life? Such a relationship would be a very poor example of the perfect union between God and His people.

Because he is the head of the home, the husband and father also has responsibility to his children. That he has this responsibility is well known to many of us and is shown to us very clearly in Scripture. It is the father who is admonished to provoke not his children to wrath, but to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Ephesians 6:4. Dwelling within God's covenant and loving Him with our all, we must educate our children in the testimonies of God, so that they will keep God's covenant and testimony, Psalm 132. As the head of the home he has promised that he will instruct his children to the utmost of his power. This requires all of his strength as he must diligently teach in the house, on the way, going to bed and rising up.

In conclusion, to be married, let alone having children, is a full-time job with very great and grave responsibilities. For the fulfillment of these responsibilities he must answer to God.

The responsibilities of an officebearer or of a school board member are also very great.

First of all, let us remember that an officebearer (and the same is true of a member of the school board) is called of God and is placed in his position by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28). He does not take this upon himself, but God takes him out of the home and takes his time, his talents, and his energy and uses them for the cause of His kingdom, in the church and in the school. The question arises, "May we then say 'No' to God?"

The responsibility of an officebearer is taught us in Hebrews 13:17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." The responsibility of an officebearer is to watch over the souls of God's people. This watching is the constant vigilance of a shepherd who can give an alarm at the nearness of danger. He bears this responsibility at all times. Knowing that he must answer to God, for the watchfulness and care of God's people weighs heavily upon him.

The child of God learns to love the cause of God in the church and in the school. Acts 20:28 teaches us that the responsibility of officebearers is the flock of God which He purchased with His own precious blood. No love can compare with that of Calvary. Being mindful of that love gives great incentive to devote oneself eagerly and carefully to the care of the flock. It follows that unless one is faithful in carrying out these responsibilities, he becomes guilty of profaning the precious blood of the Son of God. Therefore it must be a work of love. An officebearer must be careful to say that he does not have time for that for which God gave the blood of His only-begotten Son. Officebearers must express that love to the extent that they are ready to give their life for the sheep of God. David was ready to give his life when he fought a lion and a bear for a single lamb. We may never grow weary of our love for the church of God, but must give ourselves wholly to it.

Very great, very important, and very serious are the responsibilities one has as a husband and father and as an officebearer or school board member.

It is the humble opinion of the undersigned that when these two responsibilities are compared with each other, one's responsibility as husband and father is more important. That the family is more important than one's responsibility towards church or school is implied in I Cor. 7:32 and 33: "But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife." A married man's ability to work in the church is curtailed. John Calvin in his commentary on this passage speaks of the fact that marriage brings many distractions along with it: "Paul had good reason for reiterating the recommendation of celibacy for he says that the responsibilities of marriage are far from light." One married must provide food and many other necessities for the support and sustenance of his family. The married man must reckon with the fact that he is married. He may not withdraw from the duties his family imposes upon him.

That one's responsibility towards his wife and children is more important than that responsibility towards the church and school is also implied in I Tim. 3:4, 5, 12. These verses speak of the fact that one must rule well over his own household to be qualified as an officebearer. It is obvious then that he must maintain that good rule over his household while he is in the office. To maintain that good rule one must be home sometime.

There are some practical problems which one faces when he bears this dual-responsibility of being a proper husband and father and of being a faithful officebearer or school board member. Let us face some of them.

First, there is the problem of not being able to talk to one's wife about everything. It is obvious and needs no proof that as an officebearer and school board member there are many things about which he may not go home and tell his wife. He may not do this no matter how much they may bother him. It has been said that this makes the husband independent from his wife in this aspect of their life. That one may not tell his wife everything does not make one independent. It *can* make one independent, but it may not be allowed to do so. Extra effort must be made and will have to be put forth not to allow this to interfere. Also in this regard, the husband and wife can talk without going into the details. A wife can meet the needs of her husband without knowing every little detail of his life. A good wife knows him and his needs without knowing every detail. And she can meet his needs then, too. She can encourage him. She can direct him to pray and commit his anxieties to God. She can talk with him about the faithful and good care of God over His people in the past. She can tell when he is feeling sorry for himself and must be encouraged to go on diligently. She can comfort him.

Secondly, it is obvious that because time, effort, and energy are expended for the church and school, extra effort must be put forth to be with the family, especially the wife. This time set apart for his family should be flexible, but must be of high priority. It is never the quantity of time one spends with the family that is important, but the quality of it. Whenever there is a consideration of the time spent for the church in comparison to the time spent for the family, one must also take into account all of the rest of his time and how he spends that. It is unfair to pit the time spent for these two responsibilities over-against each other without taking into consideration the time we spend for so many other things.

In conclusion, I am firmly convinced that God gives grace to qualify those whom he has called to work in His kingdom. This means that He not only gives grace to fulfill the responsibilities towards the church or school, but that He also gives grace to that man as a husband and a father. Also this means that our merciful Father gives more grace to the wife while her husband is faithfully dispensing an office of Christ, because of the increased duties which might be hers. Also this means that He gives grace to the children of those families. This grace does not just fall from heaven. It comes from God to us through hard work and diligent effort by the husband and father, as he seriously strives to fill his God-given responsibilities.

(Even as there is opportunity given for a question and answer period after a speech at an officebearer's conference, feel free to contact the writer if you have any question.)

THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

Covenant Youth

Rev. J. Kortering

How easy it is for us to envy the wicked!

But our estimate of the wicked depends upon our standard of comparison.

Follow the standard of our flesh; the wicked carry the balance.

Use the scale of faith, and the balance swings in our favor.

What blessings we have! They reach from the pit of hell, deliverance, to the splendor of heaven itself. In comparison with the ungodly, we have direction, we know from whence we have come and whither we are going. And that's a lot more than most young people can say today. We have a purpose in life, strength to accomplish it, and hope for the future. If we consider these things, we will never envy the wicked.

THE COVENANT OF GOD

The line that separates us from the wicked is the covenant. It is God's mark of distinction. Within the covenant, one has God as His Friend; outside the covenant, God is a terrible enemy. The covenant makes all the difference.

Just what is the covenant?

To begin, let's go back into the quiet of eternity. There is no heaven; there is no earth. There is only God!

Strange to speak that way, isn't it? *Only* God? Where God is, there is everything. In fact, there is the covenant. The covenant is as eternal as God is. The reason for this is that God is a vocenant God. He is never lonely. As Triune God He is a friend unto Himself. That friendship means love. Friendship without love is no friendship. Love is the moving power to become and remain friends. This is true in the highest sense in God Himself. He loves Himself and that powerful bond of love draws the three Persons of the trinity together, the Father loves the Son in the Spirit, and the Son returns that love to the Father in the Spirit. There is in God the perfect cycle of friendship. God is love, I John 4:8. That love is perfect. There is no unfaithfulness in His love, no adulteration, no distraction, only perfect and complete devotion.

The friendship that results from this love is expressed in most intimate conversation. We see this in our own lives as young people. When you are with your friends, you jabber all the time. Put a stranger in your midst and the atmosphere changes. You make polite talk, try to get acquainted, and if you find some common interest, you begin to speak more openly and, as this develops, the conversation flows freely. The degree of friendship is seen in the ease of conversation. Think how this must be true in God! In Him is perfect love, hence perfect friendship. The conversation that results from it is beautiful. In Reformed doctrine we call this the counsel of God, the decrees of God. Within that counsel, God expresses to Himself His perfect will for Himself and all things. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit speak from the heart to One Another. What the Father says stands, for He is the Father and His speech is music in the ears of the Son and Spirit. What the Father says deals with the glory of the One God: the glory of God in His own perfect covenant life, the glory of God in the way of election and reprobation, the glory of God in the way of sin and grace, the glory of God in the way of time and eternity.

The contemplation and expression of all this is the covenant in God.

WE ARE IN THIS COVENANT

You may ask, why should this truth make it so that I won't envy the wicked?

The answer must be both negative and positive.

The positive side is this: the covenant of God includes His people. All we have said about God's covenant in Himself affects us in that God is pleased to include us as His children in that very same covenant. The negative side is this: such a covenant friendship is exclusive, it does not include the wicked and ungodly. The opposite is true, the wicked are the objects of His wrath and hatred. Rather than speak to them His words of love, He thunders at them words of judgment and condemnation.

Let's consider this in greater detail a moment.

God loves us, as covenant young people, and speaks

His secrets and words of promise to us. We are, as Abraham, the friends of God, James 2:23. That friendship goes back in eternity when God spoke the counsel of His will in election. Already then, God has us on His divine mind. The beauty of election is that God spoke our names in His counsel; we were in His heart; already then He loved us in Jesus Christ His Son. Ephesians 1:3-6 expresses it so warmly, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. According as He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love? having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

That's what it means to be in the covenant.

This same love comes to expression within the moments of time. Again God has us in His mind and talks to us as His friends. Look at the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve walked with God and God sought them in the cool of the day. God so created them that they could not only understand His speech to them, but also return it. Added to this, they could understand what God was saying to them in the creation and return that to Him in praise and adoration.

More amazing is the fact that even sin did not destroy this covenant between God and His people. After Adam and Eve sinned, God continued to talk to them, and that too, not in wrath but in love. Only now the covenant love is not based on creation, for that was forfeited by their sin. The basis now is the promise of the coming of Christ, Genesis 3:15.

In Christ, the covenant friendship of God and His people is sealed in perfect righteousness. Christ was promised in order that He might take away the barrier of sin for His people and establish the perfect covenant of grace between God and them.

Hence the Bible is full of the joy of the coming of Christ.

And in Christ the Bible is full of God's love and conversation with His people. Just listen to a few: "With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold; wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" Add to this, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him and he will shew them His covenant," Psalm 25:14. Finally, "I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him."

All this because Jesus prayed from the cross,

"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Our place in the covenant is real, for Jesus said, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but I have called you friends for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you," John 15:15.

Isn't this precious? Within the covenant, God loves us, speaks to us, saves us, and promises us an eternal inheritance.

Envy the wicked? How can we? They are the objects of wrath.

THE COVENANT SPHERE

Not only are we members of God's covenant. That in itself is rich and beautiful; but there is more. God nurtures this covenant by means of a covenant sphere. Let me illustrate. When a baby is conceived in a mother, that baby is a person who undergoes certain stages of fetal development. The development of that baby takes place in a wonderful sphere, the womb. In that womb the baby is to a great measure protected from the hostile world of germs, disease, injury, etc. The fluids, life support system, nourishment of the mother are all in wonderful supply. It is the sphere for growth.

Similarly, God provides a covenant sphere for us. This is marvelously provided by the parents in the home, school, and in the midst of the church. Not only are we born as physical babies, we are born as spiritual babes. We need a protected environment; we need to be kept from the hostile world of lies and sins. We must be taught to discern truth and lie. We must learn to love God and our neighbor in the midst of a wicked world. The years of youth and adolescence is such a growing-up time. Soon we become adult and then we are called by God to begin our own covenant sphere through marriage and children.

Within this covenant sphere, home, church, and school, we have not only the friendship of God, we also have the friendship of the people of God: godly parents, godly teachers, godly office bearers, godly children and young people. Together we share the love of God and the true love of one another. We love God's Word and His instructions. We are called to help one another and lead one another through this world of sin and death.

This too is precious.

Treasure this as covenant young people.

There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Think of David and Jonathan. You won't find such a friend in the unbelieving world; you will find him in your parents, your brothers and sisters at home, your fellow members of the church and your Christian school friends.

The reason for this is that they too possess the love of God, and that love of God attracts us to one another. Together we listen to Christ speak these beautiful words, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down His life for his friends. Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you, John 15:13, 14.

Look at the world of ungodly; see them in their pleasure and sin. What kind of homes do they have? Do they really love one another? They are selfish and vile. No wonder, for God's judgment is upon them.

Don't envy them, count your blessings.

A COVENANT HOME

One more consideration: members of the covenant need a place to live. Friendship and love is best expressed in the home. There, husbands love their wives and wives love their husbands; parents and children love one another. This is the most intimate expression of love and friendship on this side of the

grave. A home is full of love and friendship when it is truly a covenant home.

We have such a home with God.

It is still coming. It is Father's house of many mansions to which Christ has gone to prepare a place for us.

Heaven is our home.

The friendship of God and His people will be perfect then, for we will see Christ face to face.

The ungodly go to a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Envy not the wicked!

In heaven we will have all distraction of sin and death taken away and we will be able to return God's friendship to Him in perfect love.

How we long for that! God is worthy of such praise forever.

Thank God for His covenant.

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

June 1, 1977

Dear Timothy,

While we were discussing some practical aspects of the minister's life, we were concentrating more specifically on what Paul has to say to Timothy in vss. 7 & 8 in the fourth chapter of his first epistle: "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

We talked already about what Timothy must not do. He must not busy himself with profane and old wives' fables. He must not put very much emphasis in his life on bodily exercise, for that is not very profitable. In this letter we ought to talk a bit about the positive part of the verse. Timothy must engage in exercise all right; but this exercise must have as its goal, godliness.

The Christian virtue of godliness is rather often mentioned in Scripture, and it is, by no means, a virtue which must be limited to ministers of the gospel. It is a virtue which ought to be found in all God's people, and for it they ought to strive. Nevertheless, it is extremely important that those whom God has called to be ambassadors of the Word possess this godliness, for they are examples in the midst of the flock, and their conduct has a profound effect upon God's people.

So it is rather important that we have a clear understanding of what godliness really is.

The basic meaning of the word is interesting and important. In the Greek language in which Paul wrote to Timothy this word comes from two other words, one of which means "well," and the other of which means "revere" or "reverence." To be godly is to revere well. That's rather emphatic. "Revere" is a strong word in its own right; but to it is added "well" which makes it all the stronger.

There is only One Whom we must revere, and that is God. By the way, this is one reason why the title "Reverend" is by far not my favorite title by which to designate ministers. It would be good if we could get away from that practice and use "pastor" instead. But this is a parenthesis, and we ought not to be distracted by this question.

God is the only One Who is the object of reverence because He is so much higher than we are. We cannot reverence someone who is essentially our equal. Or, if we do reverence a man — our equal, then we are guilty of idolatry, or, as we sometimes call it, hero-worship. God is the object of reverence because He is infinitely exalted, the God of all glory, high and lifted up above all the works of His hands. In fact, the more we are able to understand how very great God

is, the deeper will be our reverence, too. Reverence is an acknowledgement of God's greatness.

In this sense of the word, reverence comes very close to fear. We know that fear is not terror. In Scripture the two are by no means the same. Even in this respect, though, I sometimes could almost wish that people who claim to be religious and who claim to worship God could have just a bit more terror in their hearts. It would maybe help. The tendency in our day to drag God down from His high and lofty throne, and to put Him on some pedestal constructed by men's hands; the tendency to speak carelessly and profanely about God and to God; the tendency to make Him Who is infinitely holy, common and profane; all this is surely very evil. It is, in fact, the opposite of fear and of reverence. People would not dare to address the president of the United States the way they address God. In fact, it seems as if they address their friends with more respect than that with which they address God.

But fear and reverence are born from the work of grace. That is, they are not only acknowledgment of the supreme and exalted majesty of God as such; but they are an acknowledgment of God's supreme glory in the work of grace and salvation — and even that from a very personal point of view.

I know figures are always inadequate. But supposing for example that an utterly wretched bum who was the offscouring of society attempted to assassinate the king of a very glorious realm; and supposing further that this man was caught and haled before the king to stand trial; there would no doubt be, under those circumstances, abject terror in his soul. This terror would arise from an awareness of the awesome splendour of the king's court not only, but also from the consciousness of his own horrible deed and the fear of just punishment. But if the king would say not only that he completely pardoned this wretch, but that he made this wretch a high prince in the realm with authority to rule over many cities, and he told this wretch that he had done this because the king's own son had chosen to suffer the penalty for the crime in the place of the wretch, then this poor bum would be filled with fear. It would be almost too good to be true. And when he was persuaded that it was true and he received the robes fitting his office, then he would indeed fear that king. But that fear would arise out of a heart bursting with love and would be for all the king's wonderful goodness.

That kind of fear, Timothy, is true reverence.

The term godliness, however, means more. And it means more because that reverence is a kind of dominating principle in a man's life if he is truly godly. The wretch in the illustration would never for a moment forget what the king had done for him. The wretch would, from that moment on, conduct

his entire life in such a way that the reverence he felt for the king would shine through in everything he did. Reverence means, therefore, not only fear and awe and respect, but also a whole way of living in which it was evident that his king's honor was upheld. He would live from the principle that he could do nothing contrary to his king's wishes because in so doing he would hurt his king who had done so much for him.

When we are godly, then we live all our life out of that principle. We dare do nothing contrary to the will of God, for in so doing we hurt Him Who has done all this for us.

This is why this word is sometimes translated "piety." The reference is not to some sanctimonious piety which a hypocrite has. It is a deep piety that flows from the heart. It is a piety that does not have to be talked about or explained or adorned with many high-sounding words. It is not a piety which has to be defended and blared from the housetops. It is a piety which is so deeply imbedded in a man's soul that it is there — in the look on his face, the words he speaks, the character of his life, his walk in all life's relationships. He is fearless of evil because he fears God. He has steel in his soul and compassion and love in his heart. He is utterly devoted to the defense of the glory of God.

Paul says that we must exercise ourselves with godliness as our goal. Exercise belongs to the world of sports. In Paul's day, exercise was particularly required for those who engaged in various public games, and especially for those who wanted a place in the Olympic games. What does one do when he engages in exercise to run, say, the 1000 meter race? In the first place, he puts aside many, many things which he would like to do in order that he may devote all his attention without distraction to preparation for the race. He devotes himself single-mindedly to doing all he can to make himself ready. In the second place, he goes on a specially prepared diet in order that he may eat the best of foods to give all the strength and stamina to his body that can come by way of nutrition. In the third place, he engages in a regular schedule of exercises which are specially devised to develop to the full those particular muscles which he will need to run swiftly. In the fourth place, he engages in much practice. He will perhaps run as much as forty or fifty miles a day, not only to develop his wind; not only to develop his muscles; not only to study his style so that he will run with greatest efficiency; but also with the purpose of making running so totally natural that he can do it without thinking.

All these things apply in a spiritual sense to spiritual exercises.

The very fact that Paul speaks here of exercise

suggests the idea that to be godly takes a great deal of practice. One does not become a godly man overnight. Godliness is emphatically rooted in the work of grace. But God does not give grace in the same way that a doctor gives us a shot of penicillin. In dependence upon God and upon the power of His grace we are called to exercise ourselves. This takes time, effort, single-mindedness, constant attention, even practice. And only in this way do we become godly ministers of the gospel.

There are genuinely godly people in the Church of Jesus Christ. There are genuinely godly ministers in the pulpits. When we meet them it does not take very long to know that they are godly. It is there. It is evident. It is unmistakable. It is a wonderful experience. And the godliness of these people is so natural, so unself-conscious that those who are godly are themselves the least aware of it. They would almost certainly be astounded if you mentioned it to them. It has become a genuine "way of life."

The exercise of godliness comes, of course, in many different individual exercises. But chief among them are Bible study and prayer. No man can be godly without these. But even these require discipline, practice, concentration, continuous effort. These are not easy to do when first we start these exercises. The spiritual "muscles" required are often flabby and atrophied. And the use of such muscles is not a very enjoyable experience. The muscles begin to

ache and cry out for relief. This is the sin which remains in us. But through constant use they become strong.

How important godliness is in a minister of the Word. It is important in all God's people, indeed. But especially so in ministers. It is a strange thing, but I have observed it again and again. The example of poor parents, of ungodly teachers, of profane ministers is an example which all concerned are ready and eager to follow. And the sins in children, pupils, and parishioners are easily blamed on the sinful example of those who should be different in their life. A good example is not so easily followed. While many (if not most) in a congregation will easily and happily slide into the same patterns set by their pastor, there will be only the few who follow his godly example. But this makes this matter of godliness more urgent than ever. The spiritual effectiveness of a godly minister is beyond our measurements. While the spiritual effectiveness of an ungodly minister is nil.

An ungodly man in the pulpit is an anomaly, an insult to God and His cause, an agent of untold harm in the Church of Christ. A hypocritically pious minister in the pulpit is a repelling force to all who desire to live godly lives. A godly man is a blessing to himself and God's people.

Fraternally in Christ,
H. Hanko

ALL AROUND US

What's up at the C.R.C. Synod?

Rev. G. Van Baren

This month the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church meets. Many recurring problems will be considered. It will be a matter of interest what is done with each. Judging from past decisions, it might be safe to surmise that the Synod will "waffle," if one may use that term oft repeated in the last presidential campaign. What will the Synod face this year?

There is a "Marriage Guidelines" report which presents ten "guidelines for pastors and consistories" and eight "guidelines for the church." It appears to be a further attempt to liberalize the stand of that church on the question of divorce and remarriage. Back in 1956 the Synod already began to do this when it took the position that the remarriage of the guilty party was not an act of *continuing* adultery, but rather a *single act* of adultery which need be

confessed once — and the new relationship would then be recognized as legitimate. The sad consequences have been seen in the C.R.C. where divorce and remarriage becomes increasingly common. Now we await the decision of the Synod which may well adopt a more liberalized position still.

A committee appointed by the Synod of 1975 to study the "hermeneutical principles involved in a proper understanding of relevant Scripture passages" and their application of these principles as concerns women in ecclesiastical office, asks permission to be continued a year in order to report to the Synod of 1978.

One committee report concerns the "ethical decisions about war." This is to provide the church with guidelines to determine one's proper attitude in pos-

sible wars the country may face. Reports of this nature mark the growing trend of the C.R.C. (as well as other denominations) to become "involved" in the social issues of the day.

Another report is concerned with the lodge oath and church membership. There is growing pressure within areas of the C.R.C. to admit lodge members into the church as members. The Synod thus far (and the committee advocates continuance of this) maintains that lodge membership and church membership are incompatible — particularly in light of the oath required of lodge members.

There is a call to Synod to assemble a "task force on world hunger." Another committee, appointed to "help the churches make better use of women's gifts," reports that "unfinished business" in this regard makes it advisable for Synod to appoint another committee to respond to the "problems" of this "unfinished business" over a period of the next three years.

Perhaps of greatest concern this year to conservatives in the C.R.C. will be the question of what Synod does with many protests and appeals concerning the "Verhey Case." The Rev. Peter De Jong reports on this, in a very capable way, in the April 1977 issue of the *Outlook*. He and his consistory were involved in the appeal to the last C.R.C. Synod against their Classis Grand Rapids East. The Synod rather neatly (though I would agree, illegally) declared that since Rev. A. Verhey was already installed in office, the Synod could not treat this protest against the classis. It recommended Dutton consistory rather to proceed against Verhey by way of the formula of subscription. Now there are many protests or appeals at the Synod concerning the whole affair. One would hesitate to say that the decisions of Synod 1977 will mark a turning point in the history of the C.R.C. That turning point was evident already years ago — and today is seen the consequences.

Verhey, you recall, in his classical examination denied the Biblical events as recorded in Genesis 3:1-5 and Matthew 28:2. Now De Jong points out further error of similar nature evident in public writings of Verhey. Concerning Matt. 5 and 19, in which Jesus speaks of divorce, Verhey wrote in the *Reformed Journal* of May-June 1976:

It would be interesting historically to know precisely what position Jesus took. It is difficult, if not impossible, to identify the "very words" of Jesus behind the record of them in Paul and the gospels.

What we have, then, are not the "very words" of Jesus about divorce, but rather the accounts of them by Paul, Mark, Luke, and Matthew.

The content of the original words of Jesus was very likely an absolute prohibition of divorce . . .

Now whatever difficulties surround the quest for the historical Jesus, he was at least a rabbi convinced that the kingdom of God was breaking in or would soon break in. The command, then, is to be understood not as a moral rule but as an invitation or permission to share in the freedom Jesus gives to live marriage as God intended and intends.

In a second installment in July-August, Verhey concluded:

With this perspective on scripture and its use in moral reflection, it is possible, I think, to discern the voice of God amid the variety of voices. God does not give us specific legal requirements.

But divorce is sometimes necessary "between the times" for the protection and honoring of marriage itself . . .

De Jong continues by quoting from Verhey's doctoral thesis, presented in May, 1975. In that thesis, Verhey repeatedly attacks the historic truth of *sola Scriptura*. Verhey would rather emphasize the importance of man's own *experience* of what the Bible teaches on moral issues. De Jong rightly concludes that Verhey is in conflict with Scripture, the Confessions, and even the earlier decisions of the C.R.C.:

1. The more closely and extensively one studies this material, the more evident it becomes that we are dealing with a view which is in sharp conflict with the teaching of the Bible itself. Although Dr. Verhey may declare his belief in an inspired Bible, he "interprets" it in a way that contradicts its claims concerning itself. That Bible, claiming that it conveys to us "all things that pertain to life and godliness," insists that no "prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit. . ."

2. The position which Dr. Verhey has been advocating cannot possibly be brought into harmony with that which we confess in the creeds of our churches. One cannot deny what the Scriptures say in Genesis 3 and I Corinthians 11:3, in Matthew 28:2, and what Jesus said about divorce, and at the same time consistently confess that we "receive all" of the Scriptures as "canonical, for the regulation . . . of our faith; believing without any doubt all things contained in them" (Article V, Belgic Confession). . .

3. The view we find here advocated conflicts with the decisions of our Synods regarding the Bible. It conflicts with the decision of 1961 that "the faith of the church is to be formed by the self-testimony of Scripture concerning its own infallibility." It does exactly what the Synod of 1972 warned must not be done. It uses a "method of biblical interpretation which excludes or calls into question . . . the event-character of biblical history, thus compromising the full authority of Scripture as the Word of God."

De Jong concludes:

More could be said about the (doctoral) thesis (of

Verhey). Reading it clears up some otherwise puzzling things in Dr. Verhey's examination, his repeated remark, "That is the wrong question," and his repeated reference to the resurrection as a kind of "canon" to decide what has to be maintained, for examples. Equally striking is the first of his own conclusions which deals with what is called "rhetorical and audience related uses of scripture." By these he means using arguments you yourself do not believe valid but which you believe may carry weight with your hearers. He finds Rauschenbusch using them while Carl Henry (the evangelical) does not. Personally, he expresses approval of their use, reminding "moralists and Christian communities of the possibility and need to make audience-relative arguments at certain times and in certain contexts where authorization for the use of scripture may be different or

absent (p. 215)". While one may in argument try to show another the consequences of his own faulty position, may a Christian pretend to hold positions he considers invalid? Was not that procedure the "hypocrisy" the Lord often exposed as particularly obnoxious in the scribes and Pharisees?

No doubt the C.R.C. has a problem. A big problem. What will the Synod do with it this year? Are there enough men, and sufficient spiritual courage, to face the issue or not? And if not, what will the "conservative" do in the C.R.C.? In all good conscience, he could surely not remain with a denomination which will not root out such evil from its midst. To remain would be tantamount to submission to and approval of the decisions of synod and an expression of oneness with Verhey.

Book Reviews

Foundations of Christian Scholarship, Essays in the Van Til Perspective, Edited by Gary North; Ross House Books, 1976; 355 pp., hard cover. (Reviewed by H. Hanko)

This book is a Chalcedon Study; i.e., it is sponsored by Chalcedon, Inc., a group of conservative Christian scholars of which Rousas Rushdoony is the President.

The justification for this book is found on the blurb of the outside cover. The authors believe that Christian scholarship has suffered from a kind of "intellectual schizophrenia . . . Secular textbooks are baptized (sprinkled, usually) with a morning prayer or daily required chapel. Sometimes students do not even get this. The students and their parents find themselves paying high tuitions for educational content which is not noticeably different from that provided by tax-supported public universities. People are in effect, paying for very expensive morning prayers."

The authors plead for a Christian "reconstruction in every branch of the college curriculum." "The essays in this volume represent a beginning. Too many academic disciplines are absent from its pages, but at least a preliminary start has been made. The writers are committed to the interpretive principle of biblical *a priorism*: the Bible judges both the framework and the content of each academic discipline." As the subtitle of the book suggests, the authors are heavily indebted to Cornelius Van Til, long time professor of apologetics in Westminster Theological Seminary, for their basic viewpoint; and the book is an effort to put the epistemology of Van Til into practice in Christian higher education.

The first section of the book deals with basic epistemological questions, and gives the epistemologi-

cal basis for Christian scholarship. The second section has to do with the application of these principles to various academic disciplines: Psychology, History, Economics, Education, Political Science, Sociology, Mathematics. The third section deals with "Foundations for Christian Reconstruction" and has chapters on Apologetics, Philosophy, and Theology. While this section was in this reviewer's opinion, the most interesting, the chapter on Theology by John Frame was the best because it gave an excellent and helpful insight into the thinking of Cornelius Van Til.

There is much in Van Til with which I agree; there are some aspects of his apologetics with which I sharply disagree. Although this is not the place to go into these questions, the whole book emphasizes the importance of genuine Christian scholarship in Christian education. As was Van Til's thinking, so also this book is highly philosophical, and therefore, not easy reading. It is however a book that ought to be read by those who are interested in this question of genuine Christian education. (Reviewed by H. Hanko)

John Calvin & Jacopo Sadoletto, A Reformation Debate; Baker Book House, 1976; 136 pp., \$2.95 (paper). (Reviewed by H. Hanko)

In 1539, while Calvin was in Strassburg after his banishment from Geneva, Cardinal Sadoletto from the Romish Church sent a letter to the Council and citizens of Geneva which was intended to lure the people of Geneva back again to the Romish Church. This letter was given to Calvin to answer. He answered it in his own powerful way and with such persuasive arguments that God used this answer to preserve Geneva from the clutches of Rome.

The significance of these two letters is chiefly, however, that they bring into sharp relief the central

issues of the Reformation: the authority of the Church of Rome vs. the authority of the Scriptures, and justification by faith and works vs. justification by faith alone.

I reread these two letters once again and enjoyed them perhaps more than the first time, now many years ago. They have been published by Baker in a small book with a forward by Lester De Koster, a rather lengthy and interesting introduction and an

appendix which includes the portions of *The Institutes* which deal with the subject of justification by faith and the decrees of the Council of Trent which deal with the same subject.

Although these letters are also included in Calvin's "Tracts and Treatises," if any of our readers do not have this three volume work, they are urged to purchase this small volume and read these crucial documents of the Reformation.

R.F.P.A. PUBLICATIONS

Behold, He Cometh!	\$9.95	Mysteries of the Kingdom	\$5.95
<i>by Herman Hoeksema</i>		<i>by Herman Hanko</i>	
(An exposition of the book of Revelation)		(An exposition of the parables of Christ)	
Believers and their Seed	\$2.95	Peaceable Fruit	\$5.95
<i>by Herman Hoeksema</i>		<i>by Gertrude Hoeksema</i>	
(An exposition of the truth of God's covenant of grace)		(Instruction concerning the nurture of covenant youth)	
God's Covenant Faithfulness	\$5.95	Reformed Dogmatics	\$9.95
<i>edited by Gertrude Hoeksema</i>		<i>by Herman Hoeksema</i>	
(Commemorative volume, 50th anniversary of Protestant Reformed Churches)		(A systematic study of theology)	
In the Beginning God (paper) \$1.00		Therefore Have I Spoken	\$5.95
<i>by Homer C. Hoeksema</i>		<i>by Gertrude Hoeksema</i>	
(An exposition of the truth of creation)		(A biography of Herman Hoeksema)	
Marriage: The Mystery of Christ and the Church	\$3.50	Triple Knowledge (3 vol.) \$24.95	
<i>by David Engelsma</i>		<i>by Herman Hoeksema</i>	
		(An exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism)	
		"Whosoever Will" (paper) \$1.95	
		<i>by Herman Hoeksema</i>	

REMINDER

Don't forget to take advantage of the pre-publication sale of *When I Survey*... announced in the May 1 issue. Our Business Manager reports that orders have only begun to *trickle* in. Don't be a procrastinator! Look up that order-envelope, and send it in immediately!

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 27, 1977, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. TED ENGELSMA will celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary.

We, their grateful children and grandchildren are thankful to our faithful covenant God for the many years of love and Christian instruction they have given us. We pray that God may continue to bless them in the years which lie ahead of them.

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Selvius
Mr. and Mrs. Ron Engelsma
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Engelsma
Mr. and Mrs. Al De Young
Mr. and Mrs. Phil Kraima
and 14 grandchildren.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 19, 1977, our parents, MR. & MRS. CLARENCE PRINCE, will celebrate their thirty-fifth wedding anniversary.

We, their children, are grateful to God for their covenant instruction throughout the past years. We pray that He will continue to bless and keep them in His care in the years to come.

Mr. & Mrs. Chester Haveman
Janna and Michael
Douglas Prince

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Faculty of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches announces that the following seminarians have been licensed to speak in the churches under faculty supervision: Messrs. Ronald Cammenga, Carl Haak, Ronald Hanko, Steven Houck, and David Zandstra.

— H. C. Hoeksema, Rector

MEMORIAM

It pleased the Lord in His infinite wisdom and goodness to take unto Himself our beloved husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather

JACOB A. SCHUT

As wife and children we keenly feel the loss, yet we are sincerely thankful for all that the Lord has given to us through him these many years.

"God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the sea." Psalm 46:1, 2.

Mrs. Anne Schut
Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Lubbers
Mr. and Mrs. Henry John Holstege
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Van Overloop
Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Van Overloop
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Van Overloop
28 grandchildren
58 great-grandchildren
4 great-great-grandchildren

News From Our Churches

Rev. David Engelsma, pastor of our church in South Holland, Illinois, declined the call extended to him by our new congregation in Houston, Texas.

Rev. and Mrs. Robert Harbach planned to move to the Grand Rapids area by the 1st of May. Rev. Harbach spent the last couple of years in Houston, where the Lord graciously brought a positive fruit upon his labors as Home Missionary with the formation of a congregation. Rev. Harbach's new address will be: 2879 Taft Apt. D, Wyoming, Michigan 49509. Rev. Harbach will stay in Grand Rapids until he can be sent to a new area to take up his labors anew.

At a special congregational meeting on April 13, the congregation of our Hope Church in Walker, Michigan decided to assume payment for the salary of our home missionary beginning in April for the rest of 1977. If some procedural questions can be worked out, this may become a continuing part of Hope's regular budget.

Faith Church in Jenison, Michigan, also held a special congregational meeting, this one on May 9. A proposal to build a sanctuary for the congregation was approved.

Yet another special congregational meeting was held this spring — this one in South Holland. In South Holland the proposals of the Council to purchase a new mimeograph machine and a high speed tape cassette copy machine were approved. One would assume that the mimeograph will be used to produce such things as the church bulletin and perhaps some church extension materials. The tape copy machine will be used to make cassette recordings of sermons and lectures for shut-ins within the congregation and to fill tape orders which have come in as a result of various radio broadcasting activities South Holland has undertaken.

The Consistories in our churches in Hull, Iowa, Loveland, Colorado, and Randolph, Wisconsin have recently made changes in their worship services. As a result of questions that were asked on family visitation, the Hull consistory has decided to change the time of the second Sunday service to 7 P.M. starting the first of July and continuing through the month of August. These two months will constitute a trial period for evening worship, on the basis of which the consistory and congregation can later decide whether

this change for the summer months should be made permanent. At present, Hull schedules their second service at 1:30 P.M. Beginning on Sunday, April 10, the consistory of Loveland asked the congregation to stand for the prayer, the congregational singing, the doxology, and the benediction following the sermon. In past years, the Loveland congregation has been accustomed to standing for prayers and sitting during the singing of most songs. In Randolph, the consistory has decided to add to the reading of the law the New Testament summary of the law found in Matthew 22:37-40.

This time of year many social and fund-raising activities are scheduled in our churches across the land. There have been breakfasts, lunches, dinners, coffees, baked goods sales, car washes, auctions, and more. The various ladies' societies and young people's societies seem to be most active in these activities. The following from the Southeast bulletin in Grand Rapids will give an indication of how hectic the scheduling of these events can be. "The date for the Casserole Supper, sponsored by the Young People's Societies of First Church at First Church, has been changed to Thursday, May 26th, instead of Wednesday, May 11th. There is evidently a conflict in dates, for the Young People of Southeast plan a pot-luck supper on the same night. Hopefully this conflict will be straightened out." The first schedule change was also made to avoid a conflict with another dinner.

Another dinner was scheduled in the basement of our South Holland Church on April 28. The minimum donation to attend was set at \$25.00 per couple. This would seem to substantiate rumors about the high cost of living in the Chicago area. The real reason for this amount and for the dinner was to raise money for our South Holland Christian School.

This is the time of year when many of our number plan a summer vacation trip. You would do well to include in your plans a stop in one of the cities across the land where one of our congregations is located. You will be blessed by worshipping with fellow saints — and they will be pleased to make your acquaintance. I am sure that Prospect Park, N.J., and Houston, TX. and Redlands, CA., and Linden, WA., and Edmonton, Alberta, and all the churches in between would welcome summer visitors.

K.G.V.