

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Christ is the first-begotten of the dead! He went through the grave into the glory of eternal life as the Head of the Church! *The* resurrection is begun! And it cannot possibly stop until all that belong to Him, and believe on His name, and look for the city that has foundations, have followed Him in that glorious resurrection. O, death! where is thy sting? O, grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

*Herman Hoeksema*

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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## MEDITATION

## The Guilt of Sin

Rev. C. Hanko

*Doth not God then do injustice to man, by requiring from him in his law, that which he cannot perform?*

*Not at all, for God made man capable of performing it; but man, by the instigation of the devil, and his own wilful disobedience, deprived himself and all his posterity of those divine gifts. Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 4, Question 9.*

## A new concern

Do I love God? Do I love Him with my whole being, so that He is always first, first in my desires, first in my thoughts, first in importance in all that I say and do? Is it the zeal for His Name and cause that characterizes my life? Do I rely on Him so completely that I say with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him"? Is the chief ambition of my life to enjoy fellowship with God, to walk and talk with

Him, to reach out in eager anticipation for that day when I shall see Him face to face?

It is the child of God who is confronted with this question, as only a child of God can be confronted with a question of this kind. True, when we read the question and answer of our Heidelberger as it is written above, we notice that our Catechism speaks of *man* in a very general way, as mankind is confronted with God's holy law. Yet that mankind



includes me. It is of personal concern whether or not I am motivated by the desire to keep God's law. My only comfort in life and death, my inner peace demands that I, in submission to my God, can say, "Have Thine own way, Lord." The new life within me pleads, "Search me, O God, and try my heart. If there be any evil way in me, lead me in the way eternal."

Already in Lord's Day 2, question 5 we were confronted with the question, "Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?" There we answered, "In no wise, for I am prone by nature to hate God and the neighbor." Instead of love to God we reveal the very opposite, we hate God and the neighbor. There the emphasis fell on the words "*canst* thou?" In Lord's Day 3 we confessed that we cannot keep God's law, because we are born in sin, wicked, depraved, incapable of any good, capable only to sin. There our depravity received all the emphasis. But here, in Lord's Day 4, our attention is focused on the *guilt* of our sin. Today I stand as a guilty sinner before the tribunal of a righteous God. The burden of guilt presses heavily upon me, condemning me. I deserve whatever chastisement God may deem good to lay upon me. Were He to cast me away from before His face into everlasting condemnation of hell, I could only admit that I deserve exactly that. I have transgressed every commandment of God's law. I have kept none of them.

### A bold question

Let us take another look at the question placed at the heading of this meditation. I would suggest that we read it slowly, allowing its full import to penetrate into our consciousness.

We make bold to ask, "Does God not do injustice to man . . . ?" Our first reaction to that question must be, Perish the thought! When Paul in Romans 9 raises the question, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" he immediately adds in deep offense, "God forbid! . . . Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" Let God be just, and every man a liar. He is in His holy temple, let all the earth be silent before Him.

Why ask a question like that? Obviously our Catechism intends this as a rhetorical question that demands a strong denial. Yet our Book of Instruction does this with good cause. We may as well face it, our sinful nature always questions the justice of God in regard to the guilt of our sin. We like to rationalize sin, particularly our own sins, in order to condone them. When I was still very young, I made bold to ask my mother, "Why did Adam have to sin, and why must we suffer because of it?" The answer I received, as I recall, was a strong reprimand for raising a question like that. But that and similar questions keep coming up in the human mind. There are those, for

example, who ask, Is it just of God to predestinate some people to eternal life and others to everlasting condemnation because of their sins? Or, is it just of God to make Adam the representative head of the whole human race, so that the whole world stands condemned by his fall? Or again, is it just that God should give His Son as a ransom for the sins of His people, and not for the whole world? Or even, is it not unjust of God to save some by the preaching of the gospel and to harden others by that same preaching? Or, finally, is it not unjust that God turns all things for good to His people, while He uses those same things unto the destruction and condemnation of the wicked? Many have found this to be such a hard, cold doctrine, that without exploring the Scriptures to find the answers to these questions, they conclude from their own reasoning that God must be a God of love, and not of justice. They create for themselves an imaginary god, a weak, helpless god who appeals to their own sinful pride.

Our Catechism makes itself very bold in bringing up the subject of God's justice. Or let me rather say, the child of God places himself before the tribunal of God as he seeks an honest answer to the questions that persist in arising from his sinful nature. But he is confident in this, and persists in maintaining this as his main premise: My God is just in all His dealings with me.

### The Issue

Once more we carefully read the question that is before us. "Doth not God then do injustice to man, by requiring from him in his law, that which he cannot perform?"

What does God require of us in His law?

Does God require that a husband love his wife, that he treat her well, care for her and for his children, and make a good home for them? Does God require of the wife that she respect her husband, have children, do her housework well, and show a good deed to her neighbor? Does God require that we ply an honest business, that we do not squander our earnings, that we go to church on Sunday, pay our alms, send our children to the Christian School, and show real concern for their training and future welfare? Is that the extent of what God expects of us?

If so, our conscience should be at perfect ease as we stand before the tribunal of the living God. We are reminded of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus with the burning question, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Matthew 19:16). The Lord referred him to the commandments on the second table of the law. This was nothing new to one taught in the rabbinical schools. He had been taught to keep the letter of the law, and he had tried desperately to do just that. This



young man could honestly say, as far as the letter of the law was concerned, "All these things have I kept from my youth up." But he was still troubled with a guilty conscience. He had found no inner peace. Like Luther, he felt the burden of guilt still weighing heavily upon his soul. Jesus reminds this rich young ruler of the basic principle of the law: Love God, and love your neighbor for God's sake.

What a tremendous requirement! God demands that a husband assure his wife that he loves her *in the Lord*, that he treats her well because he is motivated by the love of God, that he cares for her and for his children in devotion to God, that he is always faithful to his stewardship because he seeks only the glory of his God. God requires of a wife that she respect her husband in deepest reverence for Christ, that she have children as a covenant mother for the gathering of the church, and that she do her housework and show kindness to others to give expression to her thankfulness to her God. There must always be but one motivation in all that we do: The love of God!

I hang my head in shame and sorrow. I do not do that. I do not want to do that. I cannot do that. I cannot want to do that, because of the depraved nature in me. The very suggestion is so repulsive to my depraved nature that I sneer at the very suggestion of it, as if to say, "Who can live up to such a high ideal anyway?" May God ask the impossible of me? May He demand of a blind man to see, of a deaf man to hear? Is that just? Does not God then do injustice to me and to mankind by requiring of us in His law that which we cannot perform?

### The answer

At this point I find a definite conflict within my soul, that while my flesh rebels against the demands of God's law, my heart breathes forth the prayer, "O how love I Thy law, it is my meditation all the day." With my Book of Instruction in my hand I go back to paradise, to our first creation, our original state of righteousness, our willful disobedience that brought about our fall. My Catechism points out to me that God endowed us with divine gifts which made us capable of loving Him as our highest Good. We did not merely lose those gifts through some accident; we wilfully deprived ourselves of them by our disobedience.

It can hardly escape us that the fathers do not hesitate to refer to the sin of Adam as the sin of mankind. *Man* was made capable of keeping God's law, but *man* deprived himself and all his posterity of that capability. Our fathers simply accept the fact that God created Adam as our representative head and that the whole human race was included in him. When he deprived himself of his original righteousness, we deprived ourselves. His guilt is our guilt; his

condemnation is our condemnation. Our fathers humbly bow before the testimony of Scripture, as, for example, in Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, *for that all have sinned.*" Do not fail to see the import of those words: Death passed upon all men, because all have sinned in Adam. On the other hand, we also see already here the wonder of grace. For, as all those who were in Adam died in Adam, so also all those who are in Christ are made alive in Him. (I Cor. 15:22). O the depths both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! (Romans 11:33).

Our Catechism speaks of gifts. God created us in His likeness and gave us gifts of true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, to know Him, to devote ourselves to Him, and to serve Him in love. We were like God. Satan so completely perverted the truth, that he made us believe for a moment that to become like God we should do something ourselves, we should defy God and eat of the forbidden tree. What fools we mortals be! We squandered our most excellent, divine gifts. We died.

Let it be granted that the fall came through the instigation of the devil. I often wonder whether the fall could have come in any other way. But the fact remains that we listened to the wicked, God-defying lie of Satan. We did that in willful disobedience. We deprived ourselves of the capability to love God, to trust in Him, to have fellowship with Him as a Friend with a friend. That is our guilt for which we are accountable. A cashier in a bank may steal and squander a million dollars before his crime is detected. Can he make the plea, "I can't pay the money back; I don't have it"? Will the law say, "You poor fellow, how can anyone be so cruel as to demand the impossible of you"? Or does justice demand that the man pay his debt or bear the penalty.

God is just! The love of God compels me to bow before that justice. The wonder of grace is, that I will the good, even though the evil is present within me. I join the rich young ruler; arm in arm we sorrowfully approach the cross where our debt was paid, our salvation was merited, the adoption to sons was sealed, our hope in the heavenly inheritance was secured, once for all, even forevermore.

Forgiven! Saved by grace!

Know the standard  
and follow it.

Read  
THE STANDARD BEARER!





## EDITORIALS

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

### Parochiaid Revived-In Disguise!

Last time we began to consider the proposal for a referendum in Michigan which would submit to the voters a constitutional amendment providing for a so-called "voucher system" of paying for education. This would include the children of *all* parents; and these vouchers, which would be provided to the parents, could be used at both private and public schools. We saw, too, that this proposal is under the guise of an alleged more sensible method of financing education: it would get rid of the real estate tax as a means of paying for general education costs, and substitute some other method of taxation (probably increased income taxes) which would be up to the state legislature.

The elements mentioned above — and criticized in our previous editorial — constitute parts of the *disguise* of this parochiaid proposal. In the first place, the voucher system constitutes an *indirect* method of state support of private schools. In the second place, the elimination of the local tax millage, while it does by no means guarantee a more sensible method of financing, nevertheless does enable this parochiaid proposal to *parade* as a tax-reform proposal.

The next section of the informational bulletin addresses the parochiaid issue directly. It is entitled "Non-Public School Student Participation." Under this heading we find the following questions and answers:

**15. Q. — Isn't this just another attempt to get Parochiaid approved and implemented?**

A. — No. This proposal presents a complete reform of the system of financing all education K-12, not merely of the dispersal of funds. This concept would consider the educational needs of each child individually, without consideration for religious or economic circumstances. It would give the same right of choice to all parents.

**16. Q. — Is this proposal constitutional?**

A. — It is impossible to predict what the U.S. Supreme Court, or the Michigan Supreme Court, will do, especially in cases that involve the religious freedom rights of parents in the education of their children. But it appears that this voucher proposal, as

designed, would be *general* legislation benefiting all children in all schools, and would meet the accepted criteria of constitutionality which the Court has previously laid down in many different cases.

**17. Q. — Would parochial schools be able to maintain their standard admission requirements and their own religious philosophy under the voucher system?**

A. — Yes. Civil rights laws allow such schools to restrict enrollment to "own religion only" status and states have no jurisdiction in this regard. In addition, civil rights laws could be more strictly enforced, preventing the maintenance of racially segregated schools by imposing sanctions upon voucher reimbursement.

Now it should be perfectly obvious to any reader that Question and Answer 15 are *dishonest*, and deceptively so. The answer to this question is not *No*, but *Yes*. If I am having meat and potatoes for dinner, and someone asks me, "Are you having meat for dinner?" I do not answer, "No," but, "Yes, and I am also having potatoes." So here the answer should be, "Yes, and it is paired with a proposal to reform the system of financing all education, K-12." Not only so, but there is evidence that parochiaid is one of the *main elements* of the proposal. Furthermore, according to information which I have received from the office of Citizens For More Sensible Financing Of Education, "some of the Board members are also members of the Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools." In fact, no fewer than seven of the total Board membership of sixteen are in some way directly connected with non-public schools. Of the other nine it is impossible to tell from the information furnished whether they have any such connection. Now you may depend on it that such people as Dr. Philip Elve (National Union of Christian Schools), who also recently plugged this proposal in *The Banner*, and Sister Maryellen Harmon (Archdiocesan Office of Education, Detroit) and Supt. Donald L. Kell (Lutheran Schools of Mich.-Missouri Synod) and other such private and parochial school personnel have their eye chiefly on this one element of the proposal: parochiaid. It was outlawed once before in



Michigan. But they are determined, in one way or another, to win the day for parochiaid! Beware of them!

But there is a fundamental fallacy also in Answer 15. The last sentence states: "It would give the same right of choice to *all* parents." This is a myth which has long been promoted by parochiaid pushers. The simple fact is, however, that parochiaid as such has nothing to do with *rights*. It has nothing to do with *equal* rights. Parochiaid, whether in this form or any other, has to do with *money*. And this voucher proposal apparently has to do with *equal* money. We already have the *rights*. All parents have the same right to choose whether to send their children to a public school or a non-public school. That right is already guaranteed by law. Parochiaid proponents should quit talking about rights and should frankly admit that they are interested in somehow obtaining state funds for private schools.

In the third place, it should be pointed out that a proposal such as this will mean that, in effect, we Protestant Reformed parents will be helping to pay for Roman Catholic schools, for Lutheran schools, for non-religious private schools, and for any others who choose to come under the voucher system.

In the fourth place, the grave danger of all parochiaid, of whatever form, is not avoided by this proposal. The assurances of Question and Answer 17 are insufficient to quiet fears in this regard. The simple fact is — and history shows this to be increasingly true in every sphere in our country — that what the government pays for the government controls. And it is easy to see how the state simply by holding over our heads the club of threatened withdrawal of voucher funds or voucher eligibility could exercise control over schools and parents. In this regard we should not be lulled to sleep by allusions to civil rights laws and constitutional guarantees. Do not be deceived into thinking that the government(s) in our land have fundamentally a benign and generous attitude toward the cause of Christ, and that they will be more than happy to lend support to genuinely covenantal and antithetical education. Nor must we dream that the public school forces will be happy to see Christian schools placed on an even footing financially. The contrary is true. Another campaign for parochiaid will only serve to arouse the ire of the public school forces and to move them to seek the destruction of the Christian school movement, as they have before.

In the fifth place, while I certainly do not pretend to be any kind of expert on constitutional law, it seems to me that a child can understand that this is unconstitutional. Article VIII, Section 2 of the Michigan Constitution is pertinent here, and is one of the articles which this referendum purposes to amend.

The first paragraph requires the legislature to maintain a system of free public schools without discrimination. The second paragraph now reads as follows:

No public monies or property shall be appropriated or paid or any public credit utilized, by the legislature or any other political subdivision or agency of the state directly or indirectly to aid or maintain any private, denominational or other nonpublic, pre-elementary, elementary, or secondary school. No payment, credit, tax benefit, exemption or deductions, *tuition voucher*, subsidy, grant or loan of public monies or property shall be provided, directly or indirectly, to support the attendance of any student or the employment of any person at any such nonpublic school or at any location or institution where instruction is offered in whole or in part to such nonpublic school students. The legislature may provide for the transportation of students to and from any school. (*italics added*)

In the proposed amendment the italicized words above ("tuition voucher") will be eliminated. Then the last sentence will be made to read as follows:

The legislature may provide for the transportation of students to and from any school, and notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution, the legislature shall provide for the issuance of an educational voucher to each child in attendance at public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools to be applied toward the cost of that child's education in the school of his or her parent's or guardian's choice.

Notice that *twice* the words "directly or indirectly" occur in this article, and that it is plainly the emphatic intention of the constitution to prohibit any kind of state financial support of nonpublic schools. The proposed amendment clearly seeks to avoid a formal contradiction by the words "notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution." Nevertheless, the contradiction of the intent of Article VIII is obvious. An "educational voucher" (the same as a "tuition voucher") is an *indirect* way of paying public monies to maintain a private, denominational, or other nonpublic school. And it is a *direct* way of supporting the attendance of a student at a nonpublic school. For according to the brochure from which we have quoted our information, "A voucher is a certificate representing a sum of money issued by the state to parents for the education of their children."

How any court of law could wink at this obvious attempt to circumvent the plain intent of the constitution is beyond me.

There are a few more questions and answers in the brochure, but they are of no importance with respect to the parochiaid issue. We will not discuss them.



Our advice is:

1. Do not sign the petition for a referendum if you are approached. If the whole proposal can be kept off the ballot, so much the better!
2. If the proposal appears on the ballot, be sure to vote against it!

3. If you get the opportunity, speak up against the proposal and warn other Christian school supporters of its dangers.

It is nothing but an attempt to revive the same old parochialism — but in disguise!

## — A Threatening Labor Law-U.S. Senate Bill 1883 —

According to literature furnished in part by one of our readers and in part by my colleague, Prof. Hanko, there is pending before the United States Senate a "Labor Reform Act." The House of Representatives approved this bill last October. Originally I was informed that the Senate would vote on it in February; and therefore I did not write about the matter, thinking it was too late to publish anything before the vote. Now, however, the vote has been delayed; and perhaps it will be delayed long enough for you to write to your senators and express your opposition and displeasure. To urge you to do so is part of the purpose of this editorial.

I will not quote the technical language of the proposed legislation. But let me point out the following:

1. Organized labor has made this bill its number one priority. That in itself is sufficient testimony to the fact that it is a bad bill to the Christian who is opposed to worldly unions.

2. Labor unions have been losing ground over the last twenty years. In 1976, only one in five American workers belonged to a labor union. Besides, unions are now losing more secret ballot elections than they win. Hence, labor wants a shot in the arm from the Federal government to assist in union organizing efforts.

3. S. 1883 is designed to strengthen the hand of the unions. It seeks to require "quickie" union elections. It would allow professional union organizers to campaign on an employer's property and time. It would create stiff new penalties which would apply chiefly to employers. And the bill does nothing

at all to recognize the rights of workers who do not want to join a union.

Moreover, this is but the first step in big labor's program. If they succeed in this step and gain strength, they will, in turn, have more influence on the Congress; and this will in turn give them a better chance of success in getting other legislation passed. On labor's program are such items as repeal of right-to-work laws, giving public employees the right to strike, and the legalization of common situs picketing.

We all know that the place of the Christian worker who will not make common cause with ungodly labor unions is in many areas of our country already very small and narrow. This proposed legislation would serve to make that place even smaller. We know, too, of course, that eventually there will be no place in this world for the child of God. The latter fact does not mean, however, that we may or should sit idly by with a fatalistic attitude when legislation such as this is pending. We may and we should, as Christians, protest. And if by our testimony we can also succeed in maintaining for a time some place for ourselves in the midst of the world — for the kingdom of God's sake — so much the better!

We suggest and urge, therefore, (if this legislation has not been passed by the time this appears in print) that you write the Senator(s) from your state, and let your testimony be heard. You can address your senator as follows:

The Honorable John Doe  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Compose your own letter. It will get more attention than a mass mailing of a form letter.

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## FROM OUR FOREIGN MISSION COMMITTEE

# Singapore!

*Rev. M. Kamps*

At the last meeting of the Foreign Mission Committee the chairman instructed the undersigned to write an informative article concerning our labors in

Singapore. It is our desire to inform our people of our activities because of your interest in the spread of the gospel and because we as a committee represent you.



As I am writing this article Rev. James Slopsema of our Edgerton, Minnesota congregation and elder Dewey Engelsma of our Hope, Walker, Michigan congregation are making final arrangements in preparation for their departure to Singapore later this month. Hopefully, they will begin their labors in Singapore on the 24th of March. Our emissaries have been asked to labor there for from one to two months. The time for the actual termination of their labors is left to their discretion. The consistory of our Edgerton congregation has graciously granted our request to send Rev. Slopsema to Singapore. We ask that you remember these brethren before God's throne of grace as they bring rejoicingly the gospel of Christ Jesus in a foreign land and among people of another culture.

The mandate given our emissaries is to investigate this field through preaching and teaching the gospel of sovereign grace in Christ Jesus. They are to determine, if possible, whether or not God has indeed prepared the hearts of some to receive the Word. We want to know if God has given us as churches an "open door" and thus a field of missionary endeavor.

Let me at this time give you some specifics concerning the physical and spiritual characteristics of the group of people who have asked us for this help. They are all young, English-speaking Chinese men and women. They are all unmarried individuals, predominantly in the age bracket of from eighteen to the early twenties. Some of these individuals are university students. The group numbers about one hundred souls. They have organized as an evangelistic society and call themselves the G.L.T.D., that is, the *Gospel Letters and Tract Department*. They are not an organized church nor are they affiliated with any ecclesiastical body. They have no minister, nor elders or deacons. There are three young men who hold positions of leadership in the group.

These young Chinese believers have come to the knowledge of the Christian faith evidently through the labors of a missionary who held to some Baptist tenets. The group has experienced considerable turmoil in the past year. The missionary of Baptist convictions has resigned and no longer is affiliated with the group. The group has committed itself to the doctrine of infant baptism. The interesting thing about this group is that, in all their correspondence with Prof. Hoeksema and with our committee, their

concern has been exclusively to gain answers to theological or doctrinal questions. They want desperately to be instructed in the truth of God's Word. Their correspondence with us reveals therefore an earnest spirituality. Especially did I appreciate the emphasis of a certain Mr. Johnson See Choon Hock, who in his letter to brother Hoeksema expressed himself thus: "I want to seek the truth and let the truth to set me free."

You may ask how the Foreign Mission Committee came in contact with this group? Prof. Hoeksema submitted to our committee, in October of 1977, correspondence which he had with a leader of this group. Originally, this group was introduced to our churches by a Mr. Van Rij, of Christchurch, New Zealand, who had arranged for Rev. C. Hanko and Prof. Hoeksema to visit this group on their Australasian tour.

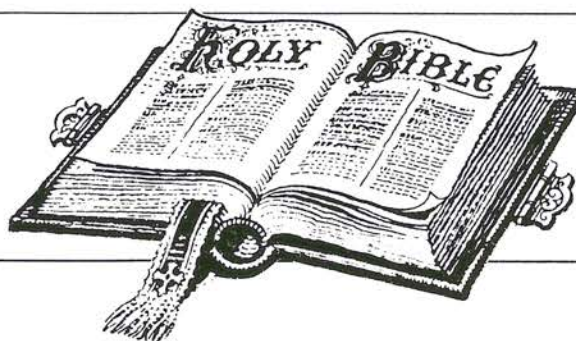
It would be good to point out that our committee sent this group a detailed letter asking many specific questions concerning exactly who they were and what they believed. We asked for a written response signed, not only by a leader or two of the group, but by as many representatives of the group as possible. Thus we received an answer to our inquiry containing the signatures of some thirty-five members of this group.

These young believers asked for help and guidance in their journey to an understanding of and establishment in the truth of God's Word. We felt obligated to investigate and, if possible, assist them. In just a few months we will present a full report to Synod for its consideration.

May the blessing of our covenant God rest upon the labors of our emissaries as they bring the precious gospel of Christ crucified and raised from the dead for the justification of all those given Him of the Father from all eternity.

"Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John." Acts 8:14. "And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas that he should go as far as Antioch." Acts. 11:21-22.

**The STANDARD BEARER  
makes a thoughtful gift  
for a shut-in.**





## THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

# The Marks of the True Church

Prof. Robert D. Decker

"We believe, that we ought diligently and circumspectly to discern from the Word of God which is the true Church, since all sects which are in the world assume to themselves the name of the Church. But we speak not here of hypocrites, who are mixed in the Church with the good, yet are not of the Church, though externally in it; but we say that the body and communion of the true Church must be distinguished from all sects, who call themselves the Church. The marks, by which the true Church is known, are these: if the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if Church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin: in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. Hereby the true Church may be certainly known, from which no man has a right to separate himself. With respect to those, who are members of the Church, they may be known by the marks of Christians: namely, by faith; and when they have received Jesus Christ the only Savior, they avoid sin, follow after righteousness, love the true God and their neighbor, neither turn aside to the right or left, and crucify the flesh with the works thereof. But this is not to be understood, as if there did not remain in them great infirmities; but they fight against them through the Spirit, all the days of their life, continually taking their refuge in the blood, death, passion, and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, "in whom they have remission of sins, through faith in him." As for the false Church, she ascribes more power and authority to herself and her ordinances than to the Word of God, and will not submit herself to the yoke of Christ. Neither does she administer the sacraments as appointed by Christ in his Word, but adds to and takes from them, as she thinks proper; she relieth more upon men than upon Christ; and persecutes those who live holily according to the Word of God, and rebuke her for her errors, covetousness, and idolatry. These two Churches are easily known and distinguished from each other.

Article XXIX, *The Belgic Confession*

In its previous article the *Confession* presents the truth that everyone is bound to join himself to the true Church and no one ought to withdraw from it and live in a separate state from it. This article naturally follows. If it be the duty of all men to join themselves to the true Church, they must be able to distinguish clearly the true Church from the false Church. This article tells how this is done. We believe according to the teaching of the Word of God that there are certain marks by which the true Church is easily distinguished from the false. The necessity for this lies in the fact that there are many sects in the world which assume to themselves the name Church. By sect the *Confession* means any group which purports to be the Church but which teaches false doctrine. Often, we might add, this false doctrine is accompanied by evil conduct. (Cf. II Peter 2:1ff.) It is characteristic too of the sects that they exalt one doctrine or a few at the expense of the rest of Biblical truth. Not infrequently they claim for themselves or their leaders special revelation from the Holy Spirit. These have proliferated in the recent past making it all the more incumbent upon us to maintain the truth as it is set forth by the *Confession*. The fundamental

presupposition of the *Confession* is that the true Church does in fact exist in the world. It must be distinguished from all sects which claim to be the Church and it may easily be distinguished from these sects by the marks of the true Church. It remains, therefore, the duty of everyone diligently to search for the true Church, join himself to it and remain in its fellowship.

This search is often very difficult and even painful and must be put in its proper light. The Church, after all, for the most part is gathered in the line of the generation of believers. The Covenant is established with believers and their seed: (Genesis 17:7) "the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:39) This means that children indeed belong to the Church to which their parents belonged, and because their parents belonged to that Church. This is not bad as is sometimes asserted. But the point is that one must constantly be on the alert that the Church to which he belongs does not begin the journey toward the false Church. That journey, as the history of the Church abundantly witnesses, is



often very long. A manifestation of the true Church does not become false over night. But long as that journey may be it is irrevocable! Once an institute of the Church embarks on the journey toward the false Church there is no turning back. If, therefore, after careful and diligent study of God's Word one discovers that the Church of which he is a member is on the way to becoming the false Church he is under solemn obligation to leave that Church and either re-establish the institute by way of reformation or find an institute of the Church which manifests the marks of the true Church.

In general concerning those marks of the true Church we must understand that they are defined in the Word of God. They have not been determined by men to be the marks of the Church but the Scriptures teach us that by these marks the true Church may be known. Scripture, after all, is the objective standard for all truth. Scripture tells us what the Church is and how it may be distinguished. We must also understand that the three marks mentioned by the *Confession* are not really coordinate. By this we do not mean to say that all three must not be present. They must. But the preaching of the pure doctrine of the gospel is the chief mark of the Church. Apart from it the other two marks could not exist. If there were no preaching there could be no proper administration of the sacraments and there could be no exercise of Church discipline. Thus these marks are essentially one mark: the preaching of the pure doctrine of the gospel. That is the one mark that matters! Where the preaching of the pure doctrine of the gospel is, there will be the proper administration of the sacraments and the faithful exercise of Church discipline, and there is the true Church! On the other hand, where the pure doctrine of the gospel is not preached, the sacraments are soon profaned and Church discipline becomes non-existent.

The chief mark of the Church is, therefore, the preaching of the pure doctrine of the gospel. This is abundantly evident from the Scriptures. I Corinthians 1:18-24 teaches that: "... it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (vs. 21b.) It simply pleases God to use the means of preaching (considered "foolishness" by the world) to save His people and to make of no effect and destroy the wisdom and understanding of the world. Likewise Scripture teaches that the ascended Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to His Church for the perfecting of the saints and the edifying of the body of Christ. Through the work of the ministry of these officebearers who are preachers the saints are brought into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of God and are no more tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. (Ephesians 4:7-16) Jesus said: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27) That

cannot mean just the disciples and other followers of the Savior at that time. Jesus means that all of His sheep hear His voice, are known by Him, and follow Him. But how can this be? How is it that we today hear not just about Jesus, but actually hear the voice of the Good Shepherd? Romans 10:13-15 supplies the answer: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" This passage teaches that one must call upon the name of the Lord in order to be saved. In order to call upon the name of the Lord one needs faith. In order to receive faith one must hear Christ. Note that one must not hear of or about Christ, but one must hear Christ Himself. And one cannot hear Christ without a preacher, and no one can preach except he be sent. Thus it is that by the means of preaching the sheep of Christ hear His voice, know Him, and follow Him.

That preaching must have as its content "the pure doctrine of the gospel." That stands to reason. The pure doctrine of the gospel is simply the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God in Christ. If the voice of Christ is to be heard, then the Word of Christ, nothing less and nothing more, must be preached. And that marks the true Church. There one will find the proper administration of the sacraments, the exercise of Christian discipline, and all things managed according to the Word of God. For where the preaching of the pure doctrine of the gospel is, there is Christ. And where Christ is, there is the true Church. "Hereby the true Church may be certainly known, from which no man has a right to separate himself."

By way of contrast the *Confession* mentions the marks of the false Church, i.e., those Churches which have over the course of time become false. In particular, considering the historical occasion of this Reformation Creed, the *Confession* has reference to the Roman Catholic Church. The false Church trusts in the authority of men (popes and bishops *et.al.*) than in the Word of God and will not submit to the yoke of Christ. The false Church adds to and subtracts from the sacraments appointed by Christ and persecutes the Godly instead of excommunicating the ungodly. This latter was reality at the time the *Confession* was penned; indeed its author, Guido de Bres, himself died a martyr.

Evidently because it is one's calling not only to seek the true Church, but also to seek the communion of the saints, the *Confession* speaks of the marks of the members of the true Church. To be sure, where one finds the true Church he will also find the people of God. These marks are: a walk of Godly



sanctification in separation from the world and a seeking for refuge in the blood, death, passion and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is what characterizes believers, members of the true Church.

This does not mean, however, the article warns, that believers are perfect in this world. There remain in them many infirmities against which they must fight all their life long through the power of the Holy Spirit. The members of the true Church are but sinners and even the holiest of them have only a small beginning of the new obedience. This is precisely why they need the preaching of the pure doctrine of the gospel, the sacraments, and the discipline of Christ.

And, let it be understood, the weaknesses and sins of the members of the Church are neither a reason to leave nor a reason to refuse to join that Church where the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached, as some allege. The one thing that matters is this: is the pure doctrine of the gospel preached in this Church? If so, that is where I belong. That Church I must never leave, not for any reason: not for a husband or wife, not for a job; no, not for any reason! There I shall be fed with the Bread of Life; there I shall drink from the fountain of Living Water; there I shall hear the voice of the Good Shepherd Who laid down His life for me; there I shall be built up in the knowledge of the Son of God; there I shall be saved!

## FROM HOLY WRIT

# Exposition of the Book of Galatians

*Rev. G. Lubbers*

## THE FAITH WHICH WAS ABOUT TO BE REVEALED (Gal. 3:23) (continued)

If this "faith," which is about to be revealed, is the full salvation in Christ crucified, dead and buried, then we can also understand that Paul can speak of this faith as a mystery of grace which must be "revealed." The term in the Greek is one which means: take the covering off. This faith was hid prior to this revelation by God. It was hid in the secret counsel and purpose of God in Christ before the foundation of the world. (Eph. 3:1-12; I Peter 1:20) Yes, this faith was foreknown, indeed, before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last days because of us. All through the Old Testament Dispensation this "faith" was hid. It was hid even from the very prophets who all prophesied until John the Baptist, who was more than a prophet. (Matt. 11:11-16) Many prophets desired to see the things which we now see, but could not see them, and to hear the things which we hear now of this "faith" and could not hear them. These prophets, who had the Spirit of Christ testifying in them, inquired and searched diligently concerning this faith. They searched for the salvation which was to be revealed, focusing their attention upon the two main points, namely, the sufferings of Christ (Isaiah 53) and the glory to follow. Dimly they saw all this glory in the laws and shadows of the Old Testament laws given by angels into the hands of Moses the Mediator for them.

How Israel waited in hope! They waited year after

year, when each day of atonement proclaimed that this salvation was "not yet." Never could these laws and ordinances make those coming to the temple perfect. (Heb. 10:1) Never did they feel in their hearts and consciences that sin had been forever removed by a perfect sacrifice for their sins. When finally the Christ-child is brought to the temple the aged Simeon, in rapturous joy of the Holy Spirit, cries out: Now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. (Luke 2:30)

This was the great moment for which the law had kept Israel in ward and had corraled them unto Christ, separated from the nations. Ever Israel felt that this moment on God's clock was about to strike. It was always a faith which was "about" to be revealed. Even so the prophets were told, that this was not for themselves that they were searching out the time of the sufferings of Christ and the glory of the Church to follow. This was for us, the people of the New Dispensation. It was a "light to lighten the Gentiles (be revelation to the Gentiles) and the glory of thy people Israel." And this was *prepared* before the face of all the peoples. (Luke 2:29-32; Is. 40:5; 52:10; Is. 42:6; 49:6)

Until that moment of the revelation of "faith" Israel was kept, shut up together *unto* this great and glorious revelation! O, there was such beauty in these Old Testament sacrifices which all pointed to the great Lamb of God, Who would take away the sin of the world. Even while all things were, by God's



verdict as Judge of heaven and earth, placed under sin, there was ever the promise of better things to come. But now that the awful moment of Calvary has come, and all is "finished," shall we now once more go back to these ordinances which were forever removed by the perfect sacrifice of Christ, who was made a curse for us under law? God forbid!

#### THE LAW A SCHOOLMASTER TO CHRIST (Galatians 3:24)

We need not be tedious in this matter. We have really entered into this matter already in the former paragraphs. However, there are a few matters which we need to underscore here in this text in verse 24.

The term "schoolmaster" in the Greek text is *paidagoogos*. The term means: a guardian or guide of boys. "Among Greeks and Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves, who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them, before arriving to the age of manhood. The name carries with it the idea of severity, as of a stern censor and enforcer of morals." (Thayer's Lexicon)

Now this is a very helpful metaphor of speech. It points up that the laws and ordinances, under which Israel was kept, shut up to Christ, was serving a purpose for the "sons of God" in the Old Testament dispensation. These sons were really heirs of the promise. But under law they were treated like children who needed to have their entire life regimented from the cradle to the grave. Yes, these were good laws. Christ was the end of this law. We see this in all the feasts and the sabbath days, in their temple and priesthood, in their ceremonial, Levitical, as well as their civil laws. These all brought the word nigh to them. In faith they could see the "end" of these laws, when one day the time would come when all nations would be blessed in the promise to Abraham and his seed. These, who understood the promises, entertained no "Jewish hopes," but clung to the hope of Israel, the hope of all nations. All the prophetic psalms which were sung by them in the temple and in their homes were Messianic of the future glory of the nations. (Psalm 87:6; Psalm 117; 48:2; etc.)

The entire pedagogy of the law was to impress on the hearts and minds of the Old Testament saints, that justification was not out of works of law, but that it was exclusively out of faith. This means that Paul is here giving to us the "key of knowledge" to understand the Old Testament Scriptures. These truths are profound; however, they are clear and perspective. No one who understands this will ever desire to go back to the law of the Old Testament. He will desire to retain substance of this Pedagogue, which pointed to Christ, for the truth and substance

of them remain in Christ Jesus for us. (Belgic Confession of Faith, Art. XXV)

Paul would clinch this all with the pithy sentence, "Now that faith has come we are no longer under a schoolmaster." The law-pedagogue has served well when it was needed by God's dispensation from Sinai. The children-heirs were all placed under law, the many laws and ordinances. But now that "faith has come," all that the pedagogue could do was forever finished. The ordinances were nailed to the Cross as a hand-writing against us! (Col. 2:14,15) We are now no more under law! The law, as we read it each Sunday morning, is no longer such a pedagogue which minutely tells us what we must do in every individual case. Christ has made this law His "precepts," which are a light burden and an easy yoke. (Matt. 11:28-30) He has now given us this law as a "new commandment" in his blood. (John 13:34) This is the "law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2) which we must keep by faith which is energized by love. (Gal. 5:6) Nothing else profits or avails in Christ Jesus!

We are no longer under law-principle. We are under grace. (Rom. 6:15-23) All is gift of God. All is fulfilled promise in Christ Jesus. If ye love me, keep my commandments out of sheer gratitude and holy fear, which God energizes in you, both to will and to do according to His good pleasure. (Phil. 2:12) That is the spiritual incentive which is ours by faith always to obey God in holy fear and love, which would not grieve the Spirit of God by whom we have been sealed unto the day of redemption. (Eph. 4:25-32)

Yes, since faith has come we are no longer under a schoolmaster! The severity of the law is gone. God makes us very willing in the day of His power. (Psalm 110:1-3)

#### SONS OF GOD THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS (Galatians 3:26-29)

Our text assigns a reason why we are no longer under a schoolmaster of the law. We are now not any longer *de facto* servants, but we have arrived at the permanent *status* of being legally sons of God. Thus we are on the statute books of God.

This is the case with "all" of us, whether we be Jew or Greek. Christ came to redeem all his sheep who were given him by the Father. All must be one fold and one shepherd. There is no difference any more as there was in the Old Testament when the law served as a middle-wall of partition. This wall consisted of commandments and ordinances. But Christ is our peace. He has fulfilled the law and has taken this law away, so that the vail in the temple is rent from top to bottom. It was the vail of his own flesh through which he accomplished this. (Eph. 2:11-22; Hebrews 10:19-22; Matt. 27:51)



Of course, that is not true of every Jew and every Gentile in the world. It is true of "as many" (*hosoi*) as have been baptized into Christ. As many as have not been baptized into Christ, who do not have the Spirit, are none of His. (Rom. 8:9.) But as many as walk by the Spirit these have the Spirit dwelling in them, and they are baptized into Christ. Such are made one plant with Him, even as the branches in the vine. (John 15:5-8) These are the ones who are predestinated, called, justified. For to be baptized into Christ means not simply to be baptized with water, but it means to be baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, and to be joined with Christ the head of the body. (I Cor. 12:13) By one Spirit we have *all* been baptized into Christ, whether bond or free, Jew or Greek. *All* the children are baptized into Christ. We are *all* sons. It is not so that the Gentiles must once more pass through the state of being under law. They, too, are free, and with the Jews are fellow-heirs of the promises in Christ. All received the Spirit consciously by faith, and not by the works of law.

Here we breathe the pure air of liberty in Christ. There is here not a different category for the different nationalities, social distinctions or difference

between male and female. In the Old Testament, under law, there was this difference. For instance, only the male members in the church bore the sign and seal of the covenant and of the righteousness which is by faith: circumcision. But now both male and female are baptized. No, they are not baptized *as* male and *as* female; they are baptized *as believers* and their seed. The sole question is: does one believe in Christ. Hence, this does not put away the social and God-ordained difference between man and wife, slave and master, between Jews and Greeks, as the clamoring civil-rights people assert, and as is the bold assertion of those, who champion for the equality of men and women in Church and State, but this only means that this unity in Christ is such that all of these relationships are embraced in a higher spiritual unity. (Eph. 5:22-33; I Cor. 11:4-13; I Peter 3:1-7; Eph. 6:1-9) This is expressed in the Belgic Confession, Art. XXVII: "... Furthermore, this holy Church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same spirit."

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## THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

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# Letter from Christchurch, New Zealand

Rev. R. Van Overloop  
100 Sparks Road  
Christchurch 2  
New Zealand

February 23, 1978

Young People of the  
Protestant Reformed Churches,  
c/o *The Standard Bearer*

Dear Young People:

Greetings to all of you in the name of our Lord and Savior.

It has been two months since we last saw you face to face. We have been busy here in Christchurch, and so it has not seemed as if that much time has already gone by. Yet when I think of you, whom I love in the Lord, it does seem a long time ago that I have seen you. Some of you have written, and I and my family certainly have enjoyed that correspondence.

I have waited as long as this to write to you

because I knew you would want to know what the church is like down here. It is not easy to learn what a church is like in a brief period of time. And it is even harder to describe it to others. It would have been very hasty if I had told you about the church immediately after we arrived here. That is why in my first letter to you (in the *Beacon Lights*) I told you about New Zealand life in general.

As you probably know, my consistory (upon the request of the Contact Committee) sent me to labor in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Christchurch, New Zealand, and in the Orthodox Presbyterian denomination in New Zealand.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Christchurch is a small congregation. The directory of the members shows eight families and six individuals. Most of the families are young (five of the families have been married for less than four years). Therefore, all but one of the six children of the congregation are infants or toddlers.



Most of the people of the congregation have been members of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand before they joined or started the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Christchurch. (This congregation was organized in December of 1974.) Two families were members of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. But that the majority of the congregation comes from the Presbyterian Churches, and that their own name includes the word "Presbyterian" are indications that this congregation and the denomination which it joined have adopted as their ecclesiastical ancestry the Reformation in England. There is generally an appreciation for the works of the Puritans.

Before I was permitted to labor within the congregation it was necessary for the Session (consistory) to examine my doctrinal position. A thorough and complete examination was not necessary because the Session has knowledge of the position of the Protestant Reformed Churches. This type of examination is also a necessity in our churches before one from another denomination would be allowed to preach and teach in one of our congregations. This is a very good way for the church to safeguard herself from heresy.

Before I could do any work within any of the other two congregations of mission stations in the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches of New Zealand, I had to be examined by the Council of the denomination. (The Council is similar to a Classis meeting in our denomination.) This took place at a meeting of the Council in Wellington on Saturday, February 11. The Council accepted me with my doctrinal position and advised their congregations that I was available to help them when their respective Sessions would see fit. At this time there are no definite plans for any work outside of the congregation in Christchurch. Let me tell you a little about the activities in the church.

The first day of the week, of course, is the Lord's Day. The activities of the church begin at 9:45 with Sunday School. Four adults of the church lead these classes. All of the children who attend, with the exception of my two oldest children, are from the neighborhood. The worship services are held at 11:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. The manner in which these services are conducted is with the same solemnity and sincerity that all of you know in your own churches. The order of worship is a bit different from that to

which we are accustomed, but we are now used to it. The *Trinity Hymnal* is used for the songs.

Every Tuesday evening there is a prayer meeting held in the home of one of the members of the congregation. This is a meeting which is very common among Presbyterian churches all over the world. It is a meeting which I appreciate, for it is a time of rich spiritual fellowship. The meeting is begun with prayers, and sometimes there is also a hymn. Then there is a meditation. The purpose of the meditation is to prepare one for prayer which follows. The meditations are on a text of Scripture or on a Scriptural truth. At this time we are going through the beatitudes of Matthew 5. The meditation is followed with prayer, with different people leading in turns.

Every other Wednesday evening there is a meeting which is similar to the Mr. and Mrs. Societies that you know. This meeting is held in our home, and we are studying marriage and the home.

Alternating weeks with the couples' meeting is a doctrinal study class. This is also held in our home, and we are studying together the Westminster Confession.

Every Thursday afternoon there is a catechism class for the one young person (a 13 year old boy) of the church. This class is held after school at the only Christian school in this city of almost 300,000. My two oldest children also attend this private Christian school. The school has an enrollment of about 650 students, ranging in ages from 5 to 17.

There is also a catechism class for a young man of the neighborhood who wants to join the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

I am going to stop for now. I shall, the Lord willing, write again and tell you more. If any of you desire to write us, you can be assured that your letters will be gratefully received.

Often we remember you in our prayers. We pray that you will be faithful to God in your work, in school, in catechism, in play, and in whatever you do. Do all things to the glory of God.

We also covet your prayers.

May the Lord bless all of us.

Yours in Christ,  
R. Van Overloop

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## TRIUMPH THROUGH TRIALS

# Earthen Vessels

Rev. J. Kortering

Flower pots.

Stoneware.

Pottery.

Earthenware.

Call them what you will, they are made from mud, turned on a wheel, baked, and used either with or without painting. Though durable, they are somewhat fragile.

This kind of pottery is an earthly picture of our bodies.

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels," II Cor. 4:7.

Good comparison!

Hark back to the beginning: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," Gen. 2:7.

Still more: "For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return," Gen. 3:19.

Yes, in one word, earthen vessels. We get sick very easily. It doesn't take much to get hurt. We may try to "paint" the outside, but the hair soon turns gray, the skin becomes dry and wrinkled, the driving spirit weakens, the keepers tremble, the grinders cease because they are few, and man goes to his long home.

Though true, we have a *treasure* in this earthen vessel.

In the context of II Cor. 4:7 it becomes obvious that Paul is talking about the treasure of the gospel, more particularly the preaching of the gospel. As a preacher, he realized that it was a treasure to be able to preach the glorious gospel.

Though this has special meaning for all who stand with Paul and say, "We have this ministry," verse 1, the idea carries over into all of our lives. Every God-fearing husband and wife views marriage as a station of service to God. When the Lord blesses that marriage with children, the treasure of parenthood prevails. It is a treasure to be able to arise in the morning and have work to do. It is a treasure to sit at the table and eat and drink with our children. They are treasures because they involve us in the development of the covenant of grace. God uses us to further His cause in this world.

Yet, that treasure is in earthen vessels. We may set high goals, but seldom are we able to realize them

fully. We sincerely plan our days so that we may accomplish as much as possible in the few short hours, but night-time has a way of measuring our shortcomings. As preachers, teachers, workmen, parents, whatever our occupation, we must confess with Paul, we have this treasure in earthen vessels.

There is a reason for this.

"That the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us," I Cor. 4:7.

Power refers to that which is accomplished. Indeed, sermons are preached, lessons taught, children cared for, work done, programs rendered, and on and on.

Do we boast in our labors?

Our earthen vessels remind us that the power is not in us; it is in the God Who is pleased to use us. Paul had to learn that personally. His earthen vessel had a thorn in it. Three times he prayed God to take that thorn away; yet the answer came, "My grace is sufficient for thee," II Cor. 12:9.

The excellency of power is that of grace.

That keeps us going.

We appreciate the comparison that Paul makes in the verses that follow: troubled—not distressed, perplexed—not in despair, persecuted—not forsaken, cast down—not destroyed.

My dear reader, how many times have you wanted to do something, but you were prevented from doing it because you have an earthen vessel? Remember those days of sickness, heartbreaking sorrow, being down in the dumps; you suffered some spell in which you blacked out; you had a lapse of memory; fear gripped your soul; somehow you had to go on but you didn't know how.

Yes, we all get these from time to time.

It's our earthen vessels.

Returning to dust.

That the excellency of what power we do have, may be unto God!

Though the earthen vessel crumbles back into the dust, we arise with a greater awareness of the power of God.

We sing, saved by grace!

All glory be to our God forever!



## GUEST ARTICLE

## Dooyeweerd's Passing- An Evaluation

Bernie Postma

(Note: This is the second installment of brother Postma's article on this subject. The first installment appeared in our previous issue. HCH)

## II. Dooyeweerd's View of the Bible

It really concerns me that Runner does not make any reference to Dooyeweerd's view of the Bible. Must we assume, then, that Runner shares Dooyeweerd's view? We do get that impression by reading his article. In fact, it seems rather obvious that Runner backs up Dooyeweerd all the way, giving him and his brother-in-law all the credit for changing "the whole course of my life."

Furthermore, he defends Dooyeweerd by saying: "Dooyeweerd's preference in his later years for the term 'ecumenical Christian' instead of 'Calvinistic' to designate his philosophical work was *in no wise* (italics added) a departure from his Reformed heritage, as has been charged."

Question no. 1: Was Calvin perhaps too Biblical in his approach to all of life, so that Dooyeweerd did not want to use the designation "Calvinistic" for his philosophical work?

Question no. 2: What really does the expression "ecumenical Christian" mean? Does it mean to suggest that we must discard the Reformed Creeds as Dooyeweerd suggested in 1961, during his meeting with the A.R.S.S. board in Canada? Does Dooyeweerd mean to suggest that philosophy is so much more able to unite Christians all over the world than the Reformed Confessions would be able to?

Question no. 3: Does Runner mean to suggest that Dooyeweerd was thoroughly Reformed in the true sense of the word? Is it Reformed to say, as Dooyeweerd did, that the Bible is not God's Word, but that God's Word is in the Bible next to a fallible human word? Is it Reformed to say that not all of the Bible has been inspired by the Holy Spirit? Is it Reformed to say, as Dooyeweerd did, that the holy apostle Paul contradicts the Scripture? Or, that there are mistakes in the Bible?

We must leave it up to God, Who knows the

innermost thoughts of each and every man and Who tries the hearts, to judge whether or not Dooyeweerd was a child of God. But that he erred with respect to the Bible is without any doubt.

Although Runner often makes mention of the Word of God in his appreciation for Dooyeweerd and even speaks of a Biblical foundation in regard to the principles Dooyeweerd stood for, we do well in this time and age of boundless confusion to ask: what is meant by the Word of God? About a year ago I heard a Christian Reformed minister — there were other witnesses present — make the remark in regard to what I termed an unbiblical phenomenon in our churches and school as follows: "Well, that's your Biblical interpretation, but I have mine; the Baptist has his, the Roman Catholic has again another interpretation, and the Presbyterian has his; so, who are you going to believe?" I was amazed and stunned and let him know in no uncertain terms that I do not expect such kind of confused reasoning from a minister of the Word, and certainly not in the Christian Reformed church.

If the Bible is treated that way, then each one may interpret it according to his own fancies, philosophical or not, we'd better realize that we have removed ourselves a long way from what our Reformed forefathers stood for.

The Bible allows only *one* interpretation, and that is the interpretation according to the sense and the meaning of the Holy Spirit. If this would not be true, then the Bible has ceased to be our only absolute and infallible rule of faith and life. To make the Bible subject to all kinds of human opinions, however philosophically clever, renders our only rule for faith and life arbitrary and frivolous.

Dooyeweerd was a proponent of Limited Inerrancy with respect to the Bible. He believed "indubitably" (his own word, B.P.) that next to the infallible word of God in the Bible there is a fallible human word. He believed firmly that not all of the Bible is infallibly inspired by the Holy Spirit. He did not believe that the Bible is God's Word, but that God's Word is in the Bible. He believed, furthermore, that there are mis-



takes in the Bible, yes, that even the Apostle Paul contradicts (!) God's Word.

What does such a position of Limited Inerrancy lead to? It leads to limited authority (divine!, that is), and via limited authority the entire Bible is taken away from the people of God. And, losing the Bible leads to losing God Himself. They have forsaken my Word, I have forsaken them, says God.

Our Reformed forefathers believed in *Unlimited* Inerrancy, so that they knew what it meant to stand in awesome wonder before the absolute, unlimited sovereignty of God.

To take, and for the church of God to allow for the position of Limited Inerrancy, leads to absurdities not only on the pulpit, but school, family life, and all of society is adversely affected by such a stand; since limited authority with respect to God, Who is the Absolute Sovereign over all things, degenerates to anarchy.

Besides, when it is taught and believed that the Bible contains fallible human words, who then, I pray, is to say which portion of the Bible is fallible?

That such a concept of the Word of God, the Bible, carries much further than one might ever suspect, and influences the hearts and minds of even God's people much more strongly than one might wish superficially, is clearly demonstrated by Dooyeweerd's pupils and the facts with which we are confronted every day. Dooyeweerd's pupils, better known probably as the leaders of the A.A.C.S. movement, have indeed carried this principle of "Limited Inerrancy" farther than Dooyeweerd would have perhaps ever presumed. We have now come to the third part of our criticism.

### III. How the Bible Is Viewed By Some of Dooyeweerd's Pupils

In the Netherlands there is a saying which goes something like this, "Zoals de ouden zongen, piepen de jongen," or freely translated, "As the older ones sang, so the young squeek." Now, obviously, there is quite a difference between singing and squeeking. But what can be expected of the young ones when the older ones produce an unclear sound? This becomes very apparent when one reads the various pamphlets, brochures, and books, or attends some of their so-called "discovery" series meetings, where a number of A.A.C.S. leaders have expressed their views about the Bible. A few illustrations might be sufficient to show that the A.A.C.S. movement is not as Christian (in the Biblical sense) that is, as it might sound on the surface.

Dr. Paul Schrottenboer, secretary of the RES, had this to say when he wrote in the *International Reformed Bulletin* in the January-April issue, 1968:

"Scripture is *only* (italics added) one form of the Word of God." One wonders how many other forms he had in mind! And this: "Scripture is *only* (again that limiting word 'only,' B.P.) so many human words, unless we see that it is the only means there is to connect us with the revelation of God in Christ." By the way, John Calvin says that it is the Holy Spirit which connects us to Christ through the Word (the Bible). We are further informed that "the Bible in isolation is not the Word of God. Scripture is *only* a form of revelation and if we do not recognize that it is *only* a form (italics added), we shall exalt the Bible above its due and do despite to Christ." This might sound rather pious, but in reality it is nothing but philosophical hullabaloo! Fact is that we, as sinful as we are by nature, are never able to exalt the Bible too much. In fact, the more we respect and exalt the Bible as the living Word of our God, the more we exalt God, Whose Holy Name is to be exalted above all else. We wish that the Bible would be more exalted than it is today. No further comment should be necessary.

And what about these words of wisdom (philosophical, that is) by Dr. Hendrik Hart in a book, *The Challenge of Our Age*: "As such, as inscripturation, there is nothing unique about the Bible, for God's revelation is certainly not limited to *that* book (italics added). Nor is the inspiration of the Bible something limited to it alone. For we certainly do not believe that after the Bible was complete, God stopped inspiring authors." Nothing unique about the Bible...! Nothing about the God-breathed, infallibly inspired Word of God, which He in His infinite grace gave to His church! Nothing unique about the Bible and its glorious unity in spite of more than four thousand years of writing! Where does Dr. Hart get the audacity to write such blasphemous words?

Perhaps we might be looking forward by and by to a new Hart Bible, just as we have been "entertained" not too long ago on the campus of Dordt College by Dr. C. Seerveld in a talk (announced in the church bulletin!), "How to read the Bible aesthetically," when he read his own peculiar version of the Bible, calling it God's Word! Well, a few more or less flimsy versions of the Bible won't make any difference. Let's add to the confusion!

The same writer, Dr. Hart, informs us that "the Word of God is not a textbook. . . because it is not a book at all!" Furthermore, he says: "The Bible is, thank God, not the pure revelation of God's Word, because then we could not see it." Anyone who wants to swallow this philosophical hodge-podge should read and study Article 4 of the Belgic Confession before attempting to do so.

Another one of the A.A.C.S. leaders, Dr. Arnold DeGraaf, states emphatically that the Bible is not a



textbook for any science, not even *theology* (italics added). "And therefore," so he writes in *The Educational Ministry of the Church*, pp. 156-158, "Dr. Abraham Kuyper's effort to derive his theology solely from the Scriptures was a mistake, since the Bible does not contain scientific theological concepts." He adds: "A person wanting to derive his theology from the Scriptures alone will invariably be *mised*." (italics added) What an audacity against God Almighty and His Holy Spirit! "The meaning of Scripture," so DeGraaf informs us further, "cannot be grasped without considering the creational ordinances." He says he found the ground plan for these ordinances, these "law spheres," in the philosophy of Law of Dooyeweerd. DeGraaf informs us that "as a systematic discipline, theology cannot do without such a theoretical account of the order of creation." Poor Augustine, poor Calvin, poor DeCock, and others, who all had to do it without such a theory! In *Understanding the Scriptures*, the same DeGraaf tells us that the Bible does not teach us specifically the origin of man and beast, because it does not contain propositional truths about God, about Who and what He is, and about man!

Many more examples could be cited, but we would like to suggest the reader avail himself of the booklet *Some Questions and Answers About the AACS*, by Rev. Peter DeJong, of Dutton Christian Reformed Church. It is made available by the Reformed Fellowship, Inc., Box 7383, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501.

There is indeed a lot of talk about the Word of God among the adherents of the AACS movement, and consequently it sounds so pious. But if the Bible is only one form of the Word of God, to mention only one aspect of this whole matter, how many other forms of the Word of God are there? And who is going to explain, to exhort, and to exegete the other various "forms" of the Word?

Let me conclude this third part with a word from Abraham Kuyper, taken from his *dictatum* on *Loci*

*Sacra Scriptura*, where he writes on p. 35 that philosophers do indeed construct cosmologies; but each philosopher in doing so constructs his own image of God. It is impossible for any philosopher to come to the true knowledge of God based upon fact gained from nature. Since a philosopher makes his own image of God, every philosophy is idolatry!

In summary let me point out the following:

1. There is very little mention of the true and horrible character of sin, which has deadly infected all of life in all its relationships.
2. There is a wrong emphasis on the redeeming and saving work of God through Jesus Christ. There is an unbiblical stress upon the salvation of the world through so-called Christian organizations, rather than stressing the calling of the individual child of God.
3. There is very little mention of the need for regeneration; but without this regeneration by the gracious operation of God's Holy Spirit in the hearts of His children, there is no possibility at all of even spiritually seeing the kingdom of God.
4. There is a high-minded arrogance (spiritual high-mindedness!) in the AACS camp, shown by a belief that there has never been a truly Christian philosophy until Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven developed it! Dooyeweerdians admit that their doctrine cannot be traced farther back than Dooyeweerd or Kuyper. They arrogantly believe that everyone before Dooyeweerd was wrong, but everyone after him will be right in as far as he agrees with Dooyeweerd. The same spirit comes to expression in Runner's article.
5. Thus, Dooyeweerdianism, as carried out by the leaders of the AACS, is a new system of thought, new doctrine, if you will.
6. Our Reformed forefathers embraced this principle, that if the doctrine is true, it is not new! If it is new, it is not true. We do well to take these words to heart, so we may watch and try the spirits, whether they are of God.

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## MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

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April 1, 1978

Dear Timothy,

In our correspondence together we have been discussing the rise of the special offices in the Church: the offices of minister, elder, and deacon. And in connection with this discussion, we have also examined the basic meaning of the offices as they stand related to the one office of Christ which He holds in His Church.

It is time now to discuss a slightly different aspect of this question, that is, the relation between the

special offices in the Church and the office of all believers. This question quite naturally arises from the fact that the special offices in the Church are all the reflection in the Church of Christ's three-fold office of Prophet, Priest, and King. You are fully aware of the fact that our own Heidelberg Catechism, in discussing the name Christ, discusses also this three-fold office of Christ. But then it adds the significant question and answer: "But why art thou called a Christian? Because I am a member of Christ



by faith, and thus am partaker of his anointing; that so I may confess his name, and present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to him: and also that with a free and good conscience I may fight against sin and Satan in this life: and afterwards reign with him eternally, over all creatures.” (Lord’s Day XII, question and answer 32.)

The whole point of this beautiful paragraph in our Heidelberg Catechism is that all believers also share, by the anointing of the Spirit, in the three-fold office of Christ. All believers are also prophets and priests and kings. If therefore believers hold this three-fold office, and ministers, elders, and deacons hold this three-fold office, what is the relationship between believers and their officebearers? This is a very fundamental question of Reformed Church Polity. In a way, I would almost say that it is the most fundamental of all. It stands at the very heart of all the life of the Church of Jesus Christ in her institutional form. In a way too, it is a very difficult question. I recall that at the time of various court cases in connection with the split in 1953 efforts were made to make this point of Church Polity clear in the civil courts of the land. But all such efforts proved to be fruitless. The courts, erected on a system of higher and lower courts, each higher court with supervision over a lower court, simply could not get this point through their heads. Of course, this question arose also in connection with the relation between the broader ecclesiastical assemblies and the consistories; but at the heart of it stood the relation between the office of believers and the special offices in the Church.

There is no question about it that the Scriptures teach that these special offices were ordained and instituted in the Church by the command of Christ Himself through His holy apostles. We have looked already at some of this Scriptural proof and need not go over it again. It is also clear that, by the gift of the Holy Spirit which was poured out upon the Church at Pentecost, all God’s people are prophets and priests and kings. To cite but one passage, Peter writes to the Church that “ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” (I Peter 2:9) Here, literally, God’s people are called a royal priesthood. And the office of prophet is implied in the words: “that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light,” for this is exactly the fundamental idea of the office of prophet.

If, therefore, the people of God hold the three-fold office of Christ, while officebearers, in their respective offices hold only one part of that office — ministers that of prophets, elders that of kings, and

deacons that of priests — it would seem that the office of believers is the main office in the Church and that those who hold the special offices hold offices which are subordinate to that of the office of believers. The result, of course, would be a kind of democracy in the Church where all decisions and all authority are exercised by the office of believers and the officebearers are some kind of representative assembly voted in to carry out the will of the majority, or some kind of “Board of Trustees” to act in the name of the congregation as a whole.

But this is not the Scriptural idea. Scripture also makes it very clear that those who hold the special offices in the Church hold a position of authority. Hebrews 13:7 leaves no doubt about this at all; “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.” Paul speaks to the elders of Ephesus of the authority which they have over the Church when he says: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. . . .” (Acts 20:28) And so it is clear that there is an authority which officebearers possess by which they rule over Christ’s Church.

This authority rests first of all in their office. The relation between authority and obedience, as defined by the fifth commandment, extends also to the Church of Christ. Officebearers hold an *office*. They represent Christ. They are given the *right* to rule in Christ’s name. They are authorized to speak for Christ. Obedience is their due. But their authority rests also in the Word. There have been, and always will be, men who hold an office in the Church who do not come with the Word of Christ, but rather come with their own word. Insofar as they speak their own word, they have no authority whatsoever. No man is obligated before God to bow to the word of a man. Only when they speak the Word of Christ, as that is recorded in the Scriptures, do they have authority. But these two belong together. They do not have two separate sources of authority. Their authority as officebearers is directly connected to the authority of the Word. Christ has placed them in office with the express purpose of speaking His Word to His people. That is really the sole function of their office. And because Christ alone has authority in His Church, Christ’s Word alone has authority over the lives of the sheep. So the two come together. They are united in officebearers appointed by Christ to bring Christ’s Word.

Now the question is: what is the relationship between these special offices in the Church and the office of believers? Quite obviously, if believers also hold an office from Christ, they too have authority.



One cannot hold an office without holding authority at the same time. How then can believers exercise the authority of their office and still submit to the authority of special officebearers in the Church? It is the answer to this question which forms the heart of Reformed Church Polity.

We must narrow down the problem just a bit more before we specifically answer it. The fact of the matter is that the believer, in his office, functions as officebearer in all his life. The believer, be he man or woman, is prophet, priest, and king in all that he does. He is not simply on occasion and in certain aspects of his life an officebearer. This is impossible. This world, with all its relationships and responsibilities, is God's house. God, through Christ, calls every child of God to function as an officebearer in all His house and in everything which he does. He is prophet, priest, and king in his family, in his work, in relationship to his employer and his magistrate. He is prophet, priest, and king every step of his pilgrim's pathway, and nothing can ever relieve him from the responsibilities of that office. The question, in the narrower sense therefore, is: how does the believer function as officebearer, prophet and priest and king, in the Church of Jesus Christ? What is the unique nature of his function in that part of his life which is characterized by his membership in the institution of the Church where the Word is preached, the sacraments administered and discipline exercised in the name of Christ? That is the question which now concerns us?

The answer to that question is that he functions within the Church as institute in such a way that the exercise of his office is always *through* the special offices which Christ has ordained and instituted. And the determinative word here is "through." When he exercises his office in this way, then you have, in the Church of Christ, the officially appointed means of grace.

There is a certain sense of the word in which believers are specifically prophets, priests, and kings even in relation to their fellow saints. For example, believers must function as prophets and bring the Word of God to their fellow saints. They must do this

when they visit their fellow saints in suffering and distress. They do this when they come to admonish a fellow saint because of his sin. They do this when they witness to the truth both within the Church and outside it. And even then that Word carries the authority of the Word of Christ which they speak as believers. There is a sense in which they even "rule" over their fellow saints. This is especially evident when they fulfill the mandate of Christ in Matthew 18:15-17: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church. . . ." Those to whom believers come are obligated to "hear" the Word of admonition which is brought. There is emphatically a certain sense in which believers show the mercies of Christ when they help one another with material gifts when their brothers are in great need. In all these senses they function in the office of believers apart from the church institute.

But, within the church institute, they exercise their office only through the special offices in the Church. It is very important that we understand this. It is always the office of believers which functions in the Church of Christ. It is the office of believers which preaches the Word on the Lord's Day — but through the office of minister. It is the office of believers which rules in the Church of Christ and exercises Christ's discipline — but only through the office of elder. It is the office of believers which shows Christian mercy— but only and ever (within the Church institute) through the office of deacons.

We must stop for the moment. We shall have to demonstrate in a concrete way how exactly that works out in the Church. But it is this singular fact which forms the "anomaly" of Reformed Church Polity and is at the same time its real genius.

Fraternally,  
H. Hanko

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## ALL AROUND US

### The "Homosexual Battle"

Rev. G. Van Baren

One would be inclined to ignore what can only be a very sickening and deplorable development within many churches today. One would tend to insist that

when Scripture so clearly condemns a thing, we simply remember what Scripture says — and pretend that these evils do not exist. That Scripture condemns



homosexuality is indeed so clear that even the most ardent heretic in this regard does not dispute it. Those who support a "homosexual life-style," and now support the ordination of such into the ministry within the churches, insist that the teachings of Scripture are not applicable to our own day.

All of this comes down to the old evil: the denial of the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture. Where Scripture is questioned and denied, all kinds of errors must enter. If there is no standard of judgment, a reliable standard, then anything goes.

Various magazines, and even secular news broadcasts, have been calling attention to a battle within some of the large denominations in connection with the ordination of homosexuals into the ministry. The question appears to stir enough people within these churches to threaten some sort of division. Yet one wonders whether those who have accepted and gone along with such a degree of apostasy within the churches, will not inevitably go along with all of this too.

*Christianity Today* reports in its Feb. 10, 1978 issue on the United Presbyterian Church (Northern Presbyterian):

Schism in the United Presbyterian Church? It might happen if the UPC's General Assembly this May adopts the proposed policy statement of a denominational task force that spent fifteen months studying whether self-acknowledged practicing homosexuals can be ordained. In summary, the task force said that according to constitutional mandate ordination decisions must be made by the presbyteries (area governing units) and congregations involved, not by the General Assembly. But it also said that ordination of homosexuals who are otherwise qualified should be permitted.

Two years ago the Presbytery of New York City asked the UPC General Assembly for guidance on whether to ordain an avowed homosexual under its jurisdiction. The assembly replied that the ordination of such a person was "at the present time injudicious if not improper," but it asked a representative group of clergy and laity to study the issue and make recommendations. The nineteen-member group finished its work many weeks ago. It issued both a majority and minority report. The majority report contained about 150 pages of study material and a twenty-eight-page proposed policy statement approving the ordination of homosexuals. It was written by Byron E. Shafer, chairman of the religious studies department of Fordham University. The minority report, signed by five persons, asked the General Assembly to rule that the church's constitution precludes the ordination of homosexuals. . . .

Much of the material in the background paper is summarized in the proposed policy statement. Among the major points in the proposed statement are these:

Sexual orientation is best understood as affec-

tional attraction rather than sexual behavior, and homosexuality "is a strong, enduring, not consciously chosen and usually irreversible affectional attraction to and preference for persons of the same sex."

Homosexuality is "a minor theme in Scripture" and is not mentioned either by the prophets or by Jesus himself.

In the full context of Scripture, "...we must conclude that Paul's understanding of homosexual behavior does not adequately encompass the modern phenomenon of multiple forms of homosexuality arising from a variety of psychosocial causes. . . ."

Homosexuals may be admitted to church membership or the ordained offices if they can give honest affirmation to the vows required and if the deciding body is satisfied that the candidates meet all the criteria for membership or ordination. (Deacons and ruling elders in UPC churches are ordained and take nearly the same vows as the clergy.)

Nothing in the church's constitution either prohibits or requires the ordination of avowed homosexuals; the judgment of the ordaining body as to fitness of any candidate — judged as an individual — is the decisive factor.

Ordination does not set a person apart "into a class or status separated from other Christians."

Continuing and widespread study is needed, including efforts to heal the church of its "homophobia," described as the irrational fear of homosexuality and homosexuals.

Now perhaps the above hardly needs comment in our churches. Yet, notice the many obvious heresies in that which is taught. Strikingly, sin is not mentioned. Evidently, in the minds of those who draw up such a report, there is no such thing as sin — certainly not in the sense that Scripture speaks of it. Notice how these separate that which Christ taught while He was on earth from the rest of Scripture — as though Christ did not speak through the apostles when they wrote Scripture. Notice that homosexuality is termed a "minor theme" in Scripture — hence dismissed as not of particular concern to God. Yet on such basis we would soon dismiss many of the teachings of the church of God. Certainly the truths of Scripture are not established by the number of times these are mentioned in the Bible. If homosexuality is mentioned only once in Scripture as sin — that is sufficient. Notice how Paul is put down as one who didn't know much about the different degrees and forms of homosexuality—as though all of this was Paul's invention and not the writing of the Holy Spirit for the church through the ages. And one could continue. The fact of apostasy is so clear that all those who love God and His Word can only be repelled by the corruption and must flee all such.

The *Lutherans Alert*, January 1978, reports on a publication for Lutherans called *Gay Lutheran*. The



magazine professes to represent the homosexual viewpoint of Lutherans who are "gay."

Another magazine, *Christian News*, January 23, 1978, reports:

Full acceptance of homosexually-oriented persons by the church was advocated by a Protestant theologian who addressed more than 200 clergy here.

Dr. James B. Nelson, professor of Christian ethics at United Theological Seminary, New Brighton, said he had concluded that such acceptance is "a Christian mandate" and "fully in accord with the Christian gospel."

In his address to the Minneapolis Ministerial Association, Dr. Nelson emphasized he was speaking for himself and not for his seminary or his denomination, the United Church of Christ.

... Dr. Nelson said the Bible "nowhere says anything about homosexuality as a psychosexual orientation."

The Old Testament, he noted, does refer to certain kinds of homosexual acts. The "real sin" in the Sodom and Gomorrah story, he said, was "inhospitality and injustice."

... Dr. Nelson said there was no record of any words by Jesus about homosexuality. The Apostle Paul, writing in Romans 1, makes the strongest New Testament condemnation of homosexuality, he added.

While accepting Paul as "a peerless interpreter of the heart of the Christian gospel" Dr. Nelson said the apostle was "an historically conditioned fallible human being." He noted Paul's negative views on the status of women and his support of human slavery.

In view of this, he said, Paul's judgments on homosexual acts ought not be exempted from moral examination.

Such is the fruit of the denial of the inerrancy of Scripture.

## Evangelism Efforts

Often the church is rebuked because it does not carry on an effective "evangelism campaign." Examples of zealous people in this field are mentioned: Billy Graham and Bill Bright, among others. But a report from the "Institute for American Church Growth" is quoted in the *Banner*, February 24, 1978, that points out that these efforts are not all they are made to be.

Of the 434,100 people who came to the Graham crusade, 18,000 "came forward" to profess faith in Christ. Of these 18,000, 54 percent were people rededicating their lives to Christ. Local churches received 8,400 cards signed by converts. Only about 15 percent of these ended up as active church members. Moreover, eight out of ten of the persons who had joined churches after attending the crusade already had friends or relatives attending the churches they joined.

Graham's results do appear to be considerably better than those of "Here's Life, America." According to the institute's study, of the hundreds of thousands of people who made "decisions to accept Christ" over the telephone, 97 of every 100 never joined the church.

What were their conclusions concerning the most effective way of bringing people "into the church"? The study claims that "people brought into the church by a relative or friend" represented 70-80 percent of the new membership within a church. If such a study is valid, and there is no reason to believe it is not, it should tell us something. First, all the gimmicks and tricks to bring people into church do not even outwardly succeed in their design. The tremendous campaigns in the name of evangelization of the nation fail. But secondly, the testimony and walk of the child of God are used by God to bring people to church and under the preaching of the Word. God is not limited as to the means He uses to save His people. He does, however, save them in harmony with what His own Word declares. And He uses often the lives of His own people as the means to bring others to the consciousness of salvation. Does your life also show your love for and concern about the Kingdom and its righteousness — so that others see and know where you stand?

### NOTICE!!!

The NorthWest Iowa Protestant Reformed School, Doon, Iowa, will be in need of three (3) teachers for the 1978-79 school term. Lower room — K., 1st. and 2nd. grades, Middle room — 3rd., 4th. and 5th. grades — Upper room — 6th., 7th. and 8th. grades. Application can be made by writing to: The NorthWest Iowa Protestant Reformed School, Doon, IA 51235, c/o Mrs. Ed Van Egdorn or Henry Bleyenburgh, 909 - 12th St., Rock Valley, IA 51247

### NOTICE!!!

The Hull, (Iowa), Protestant Reformed Christian School is in need of two teachers for the 1978-79 school year. Teachers are needed for the kindergarten, 1st. and 2nd. grades and for the 3rd., 4th. and 5th. grades. Please contact Mr. Alvin Kooiker, Boyden, Iowa 51234 or phone 712-725-2491.



**RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Society of Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Walker, Michigan, express their sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Fred Haney in the passing of his mother, MRS. BEAULAH HANEY.

May they experience that the strength of the Lord is sufficient.

Dave Moelker, Pres.  
Mrs. Jonathan Engelsma, Sec'y.

**RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Society of Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Walker, Michigan, wishes to extend their sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Greg Engelsma in the loss of his father, MR. MELVIN ENGELSMA.

We pray that the Lord will sustain them in their sorrow.

Dave Moelker, Pres.  
Mrs. Jonathan Engelsma, Sec'y.

**RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Council of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church of Wyoming, Michigan, wishes to express its sympathy to our brother Elder, Gerrit Boverhof, and his family, in the recent death of his father, MR. RALPH BOVERHOF. May they be comforted in the knowledge that our Saviour promises us that "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." (John 11:25, 26).

**RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church expresses sincere sympathy to our leader, Phil Lotterman in the death of his mother, MRS. MINNIE LOTTERMAN.

May the Lord comfort him and may he know that He who controls all things, doeth them well.

Joyce Kraima, Sec'y.

**RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Mary-Martha Society and the Mens Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, expresses their sincere sympathy to Mrs. Evert Van Voorthuysen, Sr., to Mr. and Mrs. Everett Van Voorthuysen, Jr. and to Mr. and Mrs. John Ekema and their families in the loss of their husband and father, EVERT VAN VOORTHUYSEN, SR.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 116:15).

Rev. Jason Kortering, Pres.  
Charles Van Meeteren, Sec'y.  
Mrs. Otto Gaastra, Sec'y.

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

On April 10, 1978, the Lord willing, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. MAURICE KLOP will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary.

We thank our Heavenly Father for the many years of Christian love, guidance and instruction given us by them. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless them in the years which are yet to come.

Their children and grandchildren  
Ed and Mary Lotterman  
Amy Andy  
Becky Heidi  
Jack and Jayne Klop

— Kalamazoo, Michigan

**CALL TO ASPIRANTS TO THE MINISTRY**

All young men desiring to begin studies this fall in the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches, located at 4949 Ivanrest Ave., S.W., Grandville, Michigan 49418 are hereby notified of the Theological School Committee meeting to be held on April 20, 1978 at 7:30 P.M. in the Theological School Building.

**Pre-seminary Department:**

Permission to pursue the pre-seminary course of study shall be granted by the Theological School Committee. A transcript of grades from High School and College (if any), a letter of testimony from a student's pastor or consistory, and a certificate of health from a reputable physician shall be submitted along with the student's application.

**Seminary Department:**

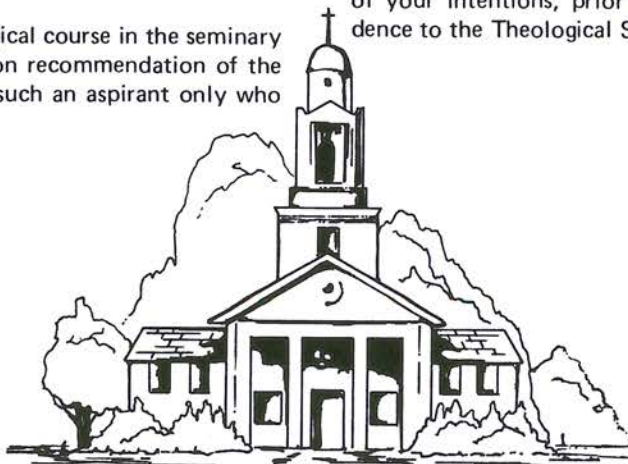
Permission to pursue the Theological course in the seminary shall be granted by the Synod, upon recommendation of the Theological School Committee, to such an aspirant only who

comes supplied with a testimonial of his consistory that he is a member in full communion, sound in faith and upright in walk, and also a certificate from a reputable physician showing him to be in good health.

A complete high school education and the equivalent of a four year (125 hour) college education are required for entrance into the seminary department. Moreover, each entrant into this department must produce evidence that he has credit for the required college courses. Requirements are listed in the school catalog, available from the School.

All applicants for enrollment in the seminary department must appear before the Theological School Committee for interview before enrollment. In the event you cannot be present at this meeting, please notify the undersigned secretary of your intentions, prior to the meeting. Mail all correspondence to the Theological School.

John Buiter, Secretary





## Report of Classis West

March 10, 1978

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches convened on March 1, 1978 at South Holland, Illinois. Classis lasted a full day, adjourning about 6:00 P.M.

All twelve churches of the Classis were represented by a minister and an elder. Elders R. Ezinga (Love-land) and H. Zandstra (Randolph), delegated for the first time, signed the Formula of Subscription. Rev. G. Lanting, president of the previous Classis, led Classis in its opening devotions, reading from I Kings 19 and speaking on vs. 1-4. At the request of Rev. G. Lubbers, scheduled to preside over the Classis, Rev. Lubbers was relieved of the task, and Rev. D. Kuiper served as president.

One of the main matters on Classis' agenda was the request of the Pella Consistory that Classis approve their decision to grant the request of their pastor, Rev. G. Lubbers, for emeritation "by reason of age." Classis gave its approval. The date for Rev. Lubbers' emeritation is tentatively set for May 1. Rev. G. Lanting expressed to Rev. Lubbers, on behalf of the Classis, the churches' gratitude to God for his faithful labors in the office of the ministry of the gospel and the desire that God will richly bless him and Mrs. Lubbers in their remaining years. Rev. Lubbers is in the 44th year of his ministry, having been ordained in 1934. He has served churches in Doon, Iowa; Pella, Iowa; Randolph, Wisconsin; Creston, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Southwest, Wyoming, Michigan; and, again, in Pella, Iowa. Besides, he has twice served the churches and his Lord as missionary, once as home missionary and then as missionary to Jamaica. After May 1, Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers plan to reside in Jenison, Michigan.

A protest against a decision of Classis to take action to secure distribution of a legacy, prior to 1983, was sustained.

Several reports were treated. In connection with the report of the Reading Sermon Committee, Classis asked all the ministers of Classis West to prepare a

new reading sermon for the Reading Sermon Library. This library, available to all our churches, is under the supervision of the Edgerton Consistory (c/o Rev. J. Slopsema).

Pella was given classical appointments: May 14 — Rev. R. Miersma; May 28 — Rev. M. Hoeksema; June 11 — Rev. K. Koole; June 25 — Rev. M. Kamps. Rev. M. Hoeksema was appointed counselor of Pella during her vacancy.

Six churches requested subsidy in the amount of \$48,450. Lynden informed Classis that she has decided to become self-supporting; in fact, Lynden decided not to receive the subsidy already granted for 1978.

The results of the election of various functionaries were the following: Stated Clerk — Rev. D. Engelsma; Assistant Stated Clerk — Rev. R. Miersma; Classical Committee — Rev. M. Kamps; Primus Delegate ad Examina — Rev. D. Engelsma; Secundus Delegate ad Examina — Rev. R. Miersma; Church Visitors — Rev. J. Kortering and Rev. G. Lanting.

The result of the voting for delegates to the 1978 Synod was the following: Primi minister delegates — Rev. D. Engelsma, Rev. M. Kamps, Rev. J. Kortering, Rev. G. Lanting; Secundi minister delegates — Rev. W. Bekkering, Rev. D. Kuiper, Rev. R. Miersma, Rev. J. Slopsema; Primi elder delegates — L. Huisken (Redlands), A. Lenting (South Holland), L. Regnerus (South Holland), D. Zylstra (Edmonton); Secundi elder delegates — R. Ezinga (Loveland), B. Menninga (Pella), J. Sugg (Houston), R. Wimberley (Houston).

Classis accepted Doon's invitation to hold the next meeting of Classis there on September 6, 1978, the Lord willing.

After the questions of Article 41 were asked, resulting in some discussion, Classis adjourned; and Rev. G. Lubbers closed with prayer.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk  
Classis West