

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

...Our final and perfect and wonderful and glorious salvation is absolutely sure. The knowledge of this doctrine ought to fill the heart and soul of the Christian with abounding joy and confident assurance. The Reformed Christian ought to reveal himself practically, in all of his life, as one who is profoundly happy.... Surely when the Reformed Christian constantly goes around complaining and murmuring in his life he denies his faith.

See "The Practical Implications of Calvinism"

—page 395

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## MEDITATION

## The Full Assurance of Hope

Rev. H. Veldman

*"And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."*

*Heb. 6:11-12*

Two impossibilities confront us here: the impossibility of being renewed again unto repentance, and the impossibility of perishing. The context speaks of them. That they cannot be renewed again unto repentance implies that such renewal had occurred once—not really, of course, but according to their confession. For such an one to be renewed to repentance again, we read, is impossible. However,

according to verse 9, we are persuaded better things of you, things that accompany salvation and which therefore lead to salvation. Fact is, verse 10, God is not unrighteous. The congregation had been zealous in the work of God, in the labour of love. This had been their work, but it had been their work as being active in God's work in them. And God will never forget His work in them. He will re-



ward it. Their eternal salvation is sure.

Only, we desire of every one of you, that you shew forth the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. You were diligent in your work of love. Shew forth the same diligence to come to the full assurance of hope. This receives all the emphasis here and to the very end of this chapter. This is ever our calling: make your calling and election sure.

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Hope — how wonderful it is!

Nothing is surer, more certain, than the Christian hope. It is not merely a pious wish, but an unshaken certainty. Hope never doubts. Whoever hopes is never uncertain; whoever doubts does not stand in the hope. If faith be a certain knowledge of, a cleaving fast unto the Lord Jesus Christ, as He suffered and died and is now glorified for us, hope is the operation of that bond uniting us with the Lord Jesus Christ as it reaches out to the future. Hope takes hold of what is above, the future of the everlasting and heavenly salvation, Christ's heavenly and resurrection life drawing us heavenward.

We can, in the light of Holy Writ, speak of the hope in a twofold sense of the word, subjectively and objectively. The subjective hope is the hope within us, our act of hoping, as we read it in I Corinthians 13:13, the operation of the resurrected life of Christ in our hearts as it reaches out to that which is above, the fount and source of our life. And the objective hope is the hope as the object of our hoping, the final and heavenly salvation.

Although this twofold hope is one and can never be separated from each other, they do not always receive in Scripture the same emphasis. It is obvious that this Scripture emphasizes the hope in the objective sense. When we read in verse 12 that we inherit the promises through faith and patience, it is obvious that this is the same as the obtaining of the hope — hence, the hope here lies at the end of our inheriting in the way of faith and patience. Besides, in verse 18 we read of the hope that is set before us which we have as an anchor of the soul, which is both sure and steadfast, and which lies in heaven, in that which is within the veil.

And now the holy writer speaks of the full assurance of hope unto the end. The thought of the apostle here is plain. He desires that the church of God may stand and increase in the full and unshaken consciousness of the hope; may stand, as a rock, in the glorious and blessed expectation of eternal life. We must have our eye continuously fixed upon the goal, the end of the voyage or journey, the haven. We must walk and struggle with that eternal hope

ever before us, continually holding fast to that hope assured fully of everlasting life, never doubting but always walking as with head uplifted and with the eye upon the things above. This assurance of hope must be full, must fill us, never leave us, but always accompany us upon life's pathway. And this, we read, even unto the end. There are so many and various things which would divert our eye from the eternal rest; cause us to lie down, discouraged and utterly despondent; fill us with unrest and doubt and fear; cause us to stumble and stagger as a drunken man, as a ship without a compass and rudder. These are the powers of sin within us and all around us. Hence, we must exercise all diligence to stand in the full assurance of hope, and that even unto the end, until we shall have reached and received that hope, everlasting salvation in heavenly immortality.

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"Every one of you do shew forth the same diligence." In verse 10 the holy writer had spoken of their work, consisting of the labor of love which they had showed toward His Name. And now they are exhorted to shew forth the same diligence in coming to the full assurance of hope, even unto the end. The word "diligence" means haste, and it refers to a runner who exerts himself to the utmost to obtain the prize. Only, this applies to every one of us, that is, to every one of the beloved, of whom we read in verse 9. None is exempt from this calling. And this diligence applies to the following of those who inherit the promises through faith and patience. In the following verse Abraham is quoted as an example.

We must inherit the promises through faith and patience. We read of promises here in the plural. Sometimes Scripture speaks of promise in the plural because of the wonderful richness of the promise of God. What riches of glory awaits the child of God! And these promises we must inherit. To inherit something means that it is given us legally, that it is bestowed upon us judicially, legally. Often to inherit means that we receive the right to a certain possession without actually obtaining it as our own. I can be an heir without actually possessing it. In this text, however, this inheriting means that we actually obtain these promises; that which the Lord has promised us actually becomes our own possession. Only, however, when understood thus, we *inherit* it. We do not merit this everlasting glory; we do not receive it because of anything in or of us. We receive it as an inheritance, as something which the Lord gives us, in sovereign grace, only for Jesus' sake, as something which is utterly dependent, not upon me or my faith, but wholly and absolutely upon the unchangeable faithfulness of



my God, revealed in and founded upon Jesus Christ my Lord. This inheritance is a good whose possession in everlasting glory depends exclusively upon the eternally Faithful One Who promised it to me.

These promises we inherit through faith and patience. We must, of course, inherit these promises through faith. Fact is, our Lord Jesus Christ has merited this everlasting and immortal glory. We can, therefore, receive these promises, not because of our faith, as its ground, but only through faith in Christ Jesus, because of His atoning and meritorious suffering and death. Besides, we cannot see that life. That life is heavenly and we are earthly; besides, judging things in the light of what we see, we would surely conclude that we will never obtain these promises of the Lord. And, therefore, we understand that we can inherit these promises only through faith, inasmuch as faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen, the unshaken reliance upon God whereby we know that that hope which we cannot see, will be bestowed upon us for Jesus' sake, because of God's unchangeable faithfulness.

And to this the holy writer adds "and patience." This patience receives undoubtedly the emphasis in this second half of Hebrews 6, inasmuch as in verse 15, in connection with the example of Abraham, we read only of patience. Literally we read here of "long-suffering." Patience here means "long of courage or spirit," or literally "breath." It presupposes suffering and opposition, that one restrains himself, checks himself, and this in the midst of various afflictions. Long-suffering, closely related to patience, emphasizes suffering and adversity. It refers to that power of faith whereby we willingly bear all suffering and affliction, even unto the end, and that in spite of all the powers that oppose us.

Indeed, how necessary is this faith, yea this patience or long-suffering through faith, if we are to continue in the full assurance of hope even unto the end. Are not all things apparently against us? Think of all the suffering of this present time, in general and also for Jesus' sake! Then, there is the biting sarcasm of the mockers, who ridicule the Lord's promise of His coming, as in II Peter 3. We may also speak of the deceiving and enticing offers of riches and enjoyments if only we decide to follow no longer the example of those who inherit the Promise. And, finally, think of all the false philosophy of our present day and age! Indeed, much is required to keep one's eye, unbrokenly, upon the eternal haven, to stand in the full assurance of the eternal hope. This is possible only through faith and patience, with our eye fixed upon the unchangeable faithful God of our salvation. He alone can save us even unto the end.

How urgent is this admonition of the apostle! We read: "And we desire." Here we have in the original a very strong expression. We read literally: we have set our heart upon it. We, the apostles, ambassadors of our Lord Jesus Christ, we all desire, have set our hearts upon this, that you, all of you, beloved, show the same diligence to stand in the full assurance of hope, even unto the end. Do not say, therefore, that we must not proceed from election or must not live out of election. Do not say that we must not stand in the full assurance, consciousness of the hope, that to doubt is an earmark of piety. Speaking thus, we strike directly at the heart of the apostles of our Lord. Fact is, we desire, have set our hearts upon this, that you all, every one of you, stand in the full assurance of hope.

Fact is, we desire that ye become not slothful. "Slothful" stands here in contrast to the "full assurance of hope." This word means: slow, lazy, indolent. The opposite of "slothful" is that we with uplifted head expect, reach out unto the eternal hope, assured of our eternal salvation, and bearing all suffering for the sake of the inheritance. "Slothful" is spiritual sluggishness. Then we have no spiritual joy and cheerfulness, no assurance, no walking with uplifted head, no certainty but doubt, no seeking of that which is above; then we appear to be lifeless, as it were, with respect to our eternal salvation. O, we may then be able to discuss the stock market, and many things of this present time. But when the things of the eternal inheritance are mentioned, we become strangely quiet. We are slothful, lazy, sluggish, apparently wholly indifferent.

Indeed, we desire that ye do not become slothful. On the contrary, we show forth the same diligence to stand in the hope, to walk with uplifted head, to fix the eye upon the things that are above, that as strangers and pilgrims in the midst of the world we may be traveling to the city that has foundations, the city of our God.

Be not spiritually lethargic.

Stand consciously in the full assurance of hope.

Only, as inheriting it through faith and patience.

*The Standard Bearer  
makes a thoughtful gift  
for many occasions.*



## EDITORIALS

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

# The Calling of Our Protestant Reformed Churches to be Specific (3)

We are in the process of answering the question: in what sense are we called to be specific?

To be specific is not the same as being distinctive. It rather implies and presupposes that we *are* distinctive, that we do occupy a singular position as churches. And it means that in clear, pointed, unambiguous, exact, and antithetical language we give expression to our distinctive Protestant Reformed position.

Last time we emphasized that we are called to be specific, in the first place, in distinction from and over against all modernism and the modernistic church.

Narrowing things down further, we now emphasize that it is our calling to be specific, secondly, in distinction from what may be termed orthodox Christianity in general.

By orthodox Christianity in general I mean the church in as far as it still confesses the great truths to which I referred in my May 15 editorial, the truth that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, the truth of the vicarious atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, the truth of Christ's Godhead, of His incarnation, of His bodily resurrection, of His personal second coming, the truths which modernism denies and grossly distorts. This orthodox Christianity is represented by those who stand, generally, on the basis of the Apostolic Confession, who distinguish themselves, as we do, from the modernists. In fact, they often emphasize the great truths of historic Christendom.

There is, of course, a very broad spectrum of churches included in this second classification. Included are those who are sometimes referred to as Fundamentalists, a name that has somewhat fallen into disuse in our day, but which was and is used to refer to those who hold to the "fundamentals" mentioned above, and that, too, in distinction from the modernists. In our day it has become more common to refer to a very broad class of churches as "evangelical." And in recent years there has even been a distinction made between "evangelical"

and "neo-evangelicals" —due undoubtedly, in part, to the fact that these very classifications are so broad and umbrella-like that they spontaneously require further classifications when various differences in the very broad class come to light. But in this classification one finds, of course, all kinds of Arminians, Baptists, Methodists, Dispensationalists, Pentecostals, and even sometimes Roman Catholics. And there is a wide variety of both denominational groups (sometimes very loosely connected and congregationalistic in polity) and independent or undenominational churches (who sometimes associate with one another without having formal ecclesiastical ties). Besides, in our day there are some break-away denominations who, though they have split from larger, mainline denominations which have become thoroughly liberal, do not themselves represent a thorough and complete return to their original confessions, but are little more than "fundamentalist" or "evangelical." They are not distinctively Reformed or Presbyterian, but only in a rather general sense evangelical.

Now in distinction from such generally orthodox groups, we must be specific. In distinction from them we are *Reformed*!

What does that mean?

It implies, of course, that we stand historically in the line of those great churches of the Reformation which trace their doctrinal and spiritual descent from the Reformation as it took place under Calvin. And this, in turn, implies that we emphasize especially two great truths. The first is the truth of the absolute sovereignty of God in the salvation of His people. Fundamental here is the truth of sovereign, double predestination. This truth is the heart of the church! As Reformed, therefore, we are—and are called to be—specific over against all Arminianism. This is important: for so-called orthodox Christianity today is simply shot through with Arminianism. As soon as one steps outside of the rather limited sphere of Reformed churches today, the degree to which he finds Arminianism in the churches today is simply appalling!



The second of these great truths is the truth of God's covenant. This is a central truth. It is the truth that God establishes His covenant of friendship with believers and their seed, with His elect, in the line of continued generations. Re-

formed it is to maintain this truth, and to do so in distinction from all Baptists and dispensationalists.

To be specific in this respect is our calling.

(to be continued)

## Our 1983 Synod—On the Agenda

By the time most of you read this, the Synod of our Protestant Reformed Churches will already have accomplished some of its work; and, in view of the slowness of our postal service, perhaps in some instances you will read this when *most*, if not all, of synod's work will be finished. For this year our synod will convene on Wednesday, June 1, the very date when this issue of our *Standard Bearer* is scheduled to appear. However, due to the fact that our *Agenda* is not published until early May, it is not possible to furnish a preview of synod any earlier than this. And since we usually make a rather detailed report *after* synod has met, we will now furnish a very condensed preview.

First on the program for our 1983 Synod will be the examination of two young men who have completed their seminary training, Messrs. Barry Gritters and Kenneth Hanko. Each must preach a sermon before synod, must submit written exegesis of Old Testament and New Testament passages, and must be examined orally in several branches of theology. This work will undoubtedly take up most of the first three days of synod's meetings. Graduation of our two candidates-to-be will take place, D.V., on June 7 at our Hope, Walker Church.

While on the subject of the examinations, I may add that other items related to our seminary will be before synod. These include: 1) The Report of the Theological School Committee. Much of this report is routine. Some items of special interest are: a) A proposal to strengthen the academic standards of our seminary. b) A proposal that in the future "All unrestricted and/or undesignated gifts and bequests received in excess of \$500.00 will be deposited in a Gifts and Bequests Fund and will be used" for expenditures serving the long-term needs of the school and for the establishment of a faculty development fund. This proposal was occasioned by the receipt of two bequests to the seminary in recent years. c) A report of the admission of a new pre-seminary student, Mitchell Dick. d) A report that the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore is sending to us for training Mr. Jaikishin Mahtani. 2)

The report of the Student Aid Committee, the committee charged with administering financial aid for our seminary students. 3) An overture about student aid from our Southwest Church, which, however, comes without the adherence of Classis East.

Undoubtedly a large part of synod's time will have to be devoted to the Report of the Domestic Mission Committee. Looming large on the agenda in this respect are: 1) Matters pertaining to Jamaica, including a proposal of policy and a proposal to call a missionary to labor in Jamaica. 2) Matters pertaining to the labors in Birmingham, Alabama and Ripon, California. 3) Matters pertaining to the labors of Missionary S. Houck. 4) A matter involving a jurisdictional dispute concerning the rights and duties of the local churches in mission work. 5) Matters pertaining to the labors in New Zealand.

The Foreign Mission Committee Report includes a favorable report concerning Missionary den Hartog's labors in Singapore and concerning our "baby sister" church there, the ERCS. Also included is a report concerning tape programs and book distribution in various other places. There are two proposals which require synodical action. One is a request for what amounts to standby permission for Doon to call a second missionary for Singapore should this prove necessary and acceptable to the Session of the ERCS. The other is a request for offerings for the Singaporean Seminarian Fund, i.e., to help with the support of Jaikishin Mahtani.

The Contact Committee reports especially about its contacts with the Evangelical Presbyterian Churches of Australia, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. The latter church will have a visitor-delegate to our synod, and the Contact Committee expects to visit the RPCNA's synod and confer with their representatives later this summer.



For the rest, most of the committee reports are rather routine, though, I may caution, these routine reports involve matters which are crucial to the ongoing life and labors of our denomination. Routine does not mean unimportant and unnecessary!

Three more items may be mentioned: 1) An appeal by a member of Lynden concerning the decision of Classis West regarding a case in Lynden concerning the rights and privileges of the office of believers in regard to the approbation of nominees for the office of elder or deacon. 2) An overture from Hull concerning membership of the Domestic Mission Committee, an overture which comes without the adherence of Classis West. 3) An overture from South Holland, with the adherence of Classis West, to include in our *Psalter*, "the three early-church Trinitarian Creeds: The Apostles' Creed, The Nicene Creed, The Athanasian Creed, with a brief historical introduction to each creed."

Besides, synod will have to make several decisions concerning subsidies for needy churches, concerning budgets for the various denominational activities, and concerning assessments for the new fiscal year.

Without a doubt, it will be a busy week and a half for the delegates.

May our gracious covenant God bless the delegates in their labors, and be pleased to use also the labors accomplished by our synod for the maintenance and furtherance of the cause of His church and of our churches in their place in His Zion.

We will try to include a rather detailed report of synod's decisions in our July 1 issue.

## MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

# Our Order of Worship

*Prof. H. Hanko*

The question of liturgy has always intrigued me. I mean especially questions of liturgy which belong to what we call our order of worship. This interest includes the elements and order of worship as they were practiced in the early apostolic and post-apostolic church, as gradually they were changed by the Romish Church until it became a highly liturgical church with liturgy replacing the preaching of the Word, as radical and significant changes were made at the time of the Reformation and as these liturgical changes developed in different branches of the churches of the Reformation — the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Reformed, and, later, the Baptist branches.

Recently, in Hope Church, the monthly-held discussion groups on the evening of the Lord's Day turned their attention to these questions of the order of worship. I think that the material came originally from Faith Church, but the discussion group in which we participated was a very lively group that evening and a great deal of interest was shown in these questions; and my interest was once again quickened.

A number of things struck me as we were discussing these things. One thing which struck me was the obvious fact, known to all, that the Protestant churches are undergoing radical liturgical change in our day. And these liturgical changes seem to me

to be of such a kind that liturgy is once more often taking a dominant place in the worship services, to the extent that it is crowding out the preaching. Preaching receives less and less time while liturgy receives a greater share of the available minutes spent in the worship of God.

Another thing which struck me is that our own congregations have, over the past several years, made a number of significant changes in the order of worship and in the elements to be included in the liturgy of the church. I well remember the time when it made no difference what Protestant Reformed congregation we worshipped in: the liturgy, i.e., the order of worship, was the same. One felt immediately at home and did not have to guess what was coming next in the order of worship. All was like it was in one's home congregation. But now things are different. Perhaps I notice that especially because I have opportunity to preach in many of our congregations; and I have to be sure, while I am sitting in the Consistory room prior to the service, to check on the order of worship printed on the back of the bulletin and consult with one of the elders concerning any unique elements in their practices so that I do not bungle what is the adopted order of worship in the congregation where I am a guest preacher.

Yet another thing which struck me is that



changes are often made in the order of worship for the mere sake of change. There is little knowledge and understanding of various rather important questions which arise in this area. People do not always know *why* various elements are included in the order of worship; they do not know *why* changes are made; they do not know what purpose each element serves in the worship service; what is the history of many of our practices; why in some cases changes are beneficial and in others they are not. It is not even always clear exactly how a particular practice is *worship*, i.e., how some of the things we do in the worship services constitute an act of worship — the worship of our God. And the old Dutch proverb came to mind: *alle verandering is geen verbetering*, i.e., change is not necessarily improvement.

And so the thought came to mind that it would be worth our while to discuss these matters in the *Standard Bearer*. We ought to know and understand clearly not only *why* we worship God on the Lord's Day, but why we worship God in the way that we do. And if we make changes in our order of worship, we ought to understand why these changes are made and we ought to consider the question of whether these changes are conducive to a better worship of God. Our worship of God ought to be intelligent: we ought to know what we are doing and understand as much as we can the reason for doing what we do.

Now the field of liturgy is a very broad one and includes many different elements which we do not propose to discuss, at least for the time being, in these articles. For example, liturgy includes also the use of our Liturgical Forms such as the Form for the Administration of Holy Baptism, the Form for Excommunication, etc. We are not of a mind, at least for the present, to discuss these matters. We want to concentrate on what is generally known as, The Order of Worship: what the minister does and says, what the officebearers do, what the congregation does. And we want to discuss why these things are done and what order these things are to be carried out to make our worship conform as much as possible to the Scriptures. It is our hope that these articles will provoke discussion and debate within our churches, in the societies, discussion groups, among our people, and in our Consistory rooms. If the result is that our worship becomes more intelligent, more meaningful, then the efforts will not have been in vain.

Having said all this, it ought to be immediately evident that the norm for our order of worship ought to be Scripture itself. There are those who deny this. It is argued that, while Scripture is the norm and rule of what we must believe, it does not give us the rule for ecclesiastical life. Principles of

church polity and of liturgy are outside the scope of Scripture's regulative principles. While it may be true, so it is said, that the apostolic church had certain kinds of rules of church polity and liturgy, these were adaptations to the time and are not rules which govern the church twenty centuries later. They are in Scripture because they give us information concerning how the church at that time adjusted to her circumstances and lived her life in the most effective way. But these rules are not normative for us.

This is not true. Scripture is not only the rule and norm of what we must believe in order to be saved, but it is also the rule of our life — it is the rule of faith and life. And what part of our life is as important as that part we spend in church on the Lord's Day worshipping our God? To Scripture we must turn for guidance in these matters, and our worship must be in harmony with the revealed will of God.

But having said this, it is also true that Scripture does not prescribe our worship in such detail that there is no room for differences. Scripture tells us that singing belongs to the worship, but it does not tell us where in the worship service we ought to sing nor how often we should turn to our song books. Reading from Scripture ought to be included in the worship service, but where in the order of worship this reading takes place is not prescribed. Whether to sing doxologies before or after the service (or in both places) or, for that matter, whether to sing doxologies at all is not made a rule in the Word of God. Many things are left to the judgment and discretion of the church to decide for herself. There is liberty and there must be liberty in these matters.

This does not mean that there is no rule at all, that we can make changes willy-nilly, without rhyme or reason, just because we happen to feel like making changes or happen, subjectively, to like a certain thing. There is one general rule which has to be followed: *the edification of the church*. Whatever changes are made in the liturgy, within the framework of Scripture's injunctions in these matters, must be justified on the basis of this principle. We change something because we are convinced that it will better serve the edification of the congregation at worship. If we cannot do that, we ought not to change.

But the fact remains that there is room for differences of opinion on many of these questions. I am not against change, and there are times when change is eminently desirable. What I am asking for is that change be done intelligently and with good reason; that we know what we are doing and why we are doing something. And this means that we know something about what Scripture says about these things; that we know something about



the history of various elements in our order of worship, that we know something about the importance of worship itself in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we discuss these things in future articles I do not expect that you will always agree with me. Nor is that necessary. There are some things which I prefer which you may not prefer, and there are things which you prefer which seem to me to be not conducive to the true worship of God "in Spirit and in truth." These disagreements are healthy, and they will be healthy if only we know *why* we do what we do and prefer what we prefer.

There is another area here which we ought not to forget, and that is our historical heritage. I am fully aware of the fact that we ought not to do things—in our worship services also—just because they were always done this way. We must never worship out of custom or habit, merely because, well, that's the way it was always done. This is not adequate justification for anything. And we do very wrong if we sit tight on past custom. But there is another side to this coin equally as important. We are part of the

church of the past and we trace our ecclesiastical and theological roots back to that church of the past. We have a tradition, after all; and that tradition includes not only our doctrine—although that most importantly—but also our liturgical heritage. And our liturgical heritage includes not only our liturgical forms, but also our order of worship. We ought never to cast all this lightly aside. Our fathers, after all, were much more sensitive to proper worship of God than we often are; they were called upon to develop their liturgy over against Rome and to worship under the pressure of persecution. They knew what they were doing and why they were doing what they did.

This does not make what they did specially holy and does not surround their actions with a halo of infallibility, but it ought, at the very least, to give us pause as we consider changes. And one question which we ought always to face therefore is: Can we improve on what they have done? That question always remains an important one.

So, we shall turn to the subject.

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## ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

# Alcoholism and Drunkenness

A recent issue of the *Banner* contained a heart-wrenching account by Gertrude Haan about an alcoholic. It was an account worth reading. However, in a later issue of the *Banner* (4/25/83), Rev. J. Tuininga, in a letter to "Voices," presents a legitimate criticism against part of that presentation. He objects to the presentation that "alcoholism" is principally a "disease" or "disease oriented." He states:

I realize that it behooves one to exercise restraint in making judgments about alcoholism, but it seems to me that Gertrude Haan is too "disease oriented" about alcoholism (3/21/83). I find the same weakness in the book of Dr. A.C. De Jong.

Is there really such a difference between a drunkard and an alcoholic? Surely when the Bible warns that drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:10; Gal. 5:21), it is not talking about one who occasionally falls into such a sin, but rather about one who *lives* in such a sin. And what about Proverbs 23:29ff?

The fact that the Bible *warns* us indicates that God holds us responsible for this sin, and that it is therefore not merely a disease. The Bible does not warn us about contracting leprosy or cancer.

Alcoholism is indeed a terrible and mystifying bondage, but we do not really help its victims by claiming that it is only a disease.

# Who, Then, Shall be Saved

The above issue of the *Banner* presents another interesting, yet disturbing, article by Dr. Richard S. Wierenga, a retired dentist. He writes about the salvation of infants, perhaps all infants, who die in in-

fancy. What he writes is not especially new, yet it is strange when it appears in a Reformed periodical. He states his position very briefly:



We have gravitated, somehow, to the position that most of the inhabitants of heaven are adults who died in the faith. But is this true?

My position is that (1) the majority of the inhabitants of heaven are those who died in infancy or early childhood; (2) unbelievers' children who die in infancy or early youth can be saved; (3) many, if not all, of unbelievers' children who die in infancy or early childhood are saved. I will elaborate on, and try to defend, these three propositions.

The first proposition can possibly stand. It might be only a matter of speculation, but the possibility exists that "the majority of the inhabitants of heaven are those who died in infancy or early childhood." The second and third propositions are more disturbing. In essence, Wierenga states that most (if not all) of unbelievers' children, dying in infancy shall go to heaven. One can assume, I believe, that his position would also be that all children of believing parents, who die in infancy, are brought to heaven. He presents some Scriptural references to support his propositions. With respect to proposition two, he states:

...Divine revelation, as given in I Kings 14:1-13, supports this view. This passage tells us that Abijah, a son of Jeroboam, was sick. Jeroboam was an unbeliever and an idolator who was cursed of God for turning his back upon God (v. 9). Abijah, the son of unbelieving parents, died, and the Bible tells us that he died "because in him there is found something pleasing to the Lord, the God of Israel..." (v. 13). What is pleasing or good in the child?... There is only one thing that can be pleasing to the Lord, and that was expressed to Nicodemus in John 3:1-15. It is to be born again and to be engrafted by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ.

For this third proposition, Wierenga presents various arguments. He quotes from Matthew 19:14, "Let the children come to Me and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." He points too to Matthew 11:25-26 where Jesus speaks of revealing the things of the kingdom to *babes*. He refers, further, to Revelation 5:9 where we learn "that the saved inhabitants of heaven are made up of *'every tribe and tongue and people and nation.'*" He insists that "there are many tribes and nations that have never heard the message of the gospel. How then can they be saved?... The only conclusion I can come to is that this indicates the salvation of children who die in infancy or early youth." The writer presents two final considerations:

The first concerns abortions recorded in the United States and Canada. Last year (1982) there were one and one-half million recorded abortions in the United States (Canadian statistics unavailable). Probably many more are not even given in the statistics. Is there a divine irony here that we are missing? Many are saying to the unborn, "We have no room for you on earth." Is God saying, "Come to My home, I have room for you in My mansions." Do you hear the

words of Psalm 2:4, "He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord has them in derision."

...A second reason, and for me a very compelling one, is the following. If we know anything about Satan from the Scriptures, it is that he tries to taunt God ....

If only believers and their children are saved, Satan will be able to say after the last judgment, "I took the majority of the members of the human race with me." But if unbelievers' children who die in infancy or at an early age are saved, as well as children of believers, then the vast majority of the members of the human race are saved and the taunter is forever silenced. Then, too, the promises given to Abraham are fulfilled: "In your posterity (that is, Christ, according to Gal. 3:16) shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Acts 3:25, as well as other places)....

One regrets that a magazine which has purported to be a defender of the Reformed faith, increasingly includes articles which are inimical to that Reformed faith. There are plenty of magazines which will print the un-Reformed and heretical. Let Reformed magazines defend the Reformed faith—and not create doubt and confusion in the minds of the readers as to what is and what is not Reformed.

The writer presents in his article the same kinds of appeals to human "feelings" and philosophical reasonings and distortions of Scripture which have commonly been made when this subject is introduced. The Reformed man must not be swayed by these.

A host of questions and thoughts arise in response to the article. If the writer is correct, one would suppose that every Christian could really wish that all his children died in infancy. There would then be the certainty of glory in heaven. Those who grow up do not always remain in the faith. Should we not desire the death of our children then, for the sake of their eternal well-being? Further, if the writer is correct, there are far, far more brought to heaven through the death of infants than through the work of the missionaries who preach at great sacrifice and at great expense to the church. If only the missionaries would stay away from the heathen, if only world-relief organizations would not try to improve the health-conditions and alleviate poverty among the heathen—then likely far more children would die in infancy and enter glory.

And what of that horror of abortion? If the writer is correct, and most or all aborted babies go to glory—what a wonderful thing abortion turns out to be! Though it may be murder, the Christian could only hope the world continues this murderous practice! One might even pray God that the practice might grow—if only to bring more into heaven. But what a terrible thought this is!



Nor does the writer explain his hedging on the issue when he insists that most, *if not all*, children of unbelievers are saved when dying in their infancy. If *most*, why not *all*? Let it then be *all*—but that must be shown from Scripture.

The arguments of Wierenga from Scripture certainly are not support for his propositions. As far as Abijah, the son of Jeroboam is concerned, a far more reasonable explanation can be given than that children of unbelievers are saved when they die in infancy. Consider first, Israel is the people of the Lord, the people of the covenant, though they had separated from Judah and the temple and line of David. The Word of God through prophecy still came there. Consider, secondly, that this son of Jeroboam was indeed a "child" but likely not a baby. One can, then, come far more easily to the conclusion that Abijah (though born of unbelieving parents) was also born in the line of the covenant. He is not one born of the heathen nations about Israel. Further, though Scripture presents no details, he could well have heard the Word of the Lord and believed—he was no baby but a "child" or youth. Why not? Such often occurs in the history of this world.

The writer, in speaking of the "babes" of whom are the kingdom of heaven, and of the gathering of God's people from all nations and tongues, presents an altogether farfetched explanation. It does not even need refutation, I think.

His argument about Satan claiming victory if the "majority of the members of the human race are with me" is nonsense. If the argument were true, then Satan could claim victory if even one of the human race were taken with him to hell. Why could he claim victory only if the majority were taken? No; in the day of judgment the triumph of God in Christ will be evident in that Satan will not

have taken *even one* of God's elect into hell with him. Scripture constantly testifies that God does not work on the basis of "majorities."

Positively, let us understand a couple of things. First, God gathers His people in the line of generations within the covenant God establishes (Gen. 17:7; Acts 2:39). And in Scripture, when the head of the household believed, he *and his household* were baptized. The adult, first, is brought into the church *before* one can speak of the salvation of infants (which baptism does). Nor does Scripture tell us that *every* child of believers, dying in infancy, is saved. In Genesis and Romans 9 are mentioned Jacob and Esau. Of the twin sons of Isaac, only one is saved. Though neither died in infancy, surely the principle of election and reprobation carries through also with infants dying in infancy. Also Canons 1:17 speaks of not doubting the election and salvation of one's children who die in infancy—but it does not explicitly state that every single one is brought to glory.

With respect to the heathen, let it be clearly understood that salvation is in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ His Son (John 17:3). Without that knowledge, there is *not* eternal life. Without that knowledge, there is no part or place in the covenant of God. And outside of that covenant of God with His people, there is no basis whatsoever for maintaining that infants or children, dying in infancy, shall be saved. They are outside even of the sphere of the covenant.

Let us never, then, appeal to human sympathy when judging who are, and who are not, in heaven. God's Word stands. His people, elect from eternity in Christ, are surely saved. With that, let us be content—and thank God for His goodness and mercy.

## IN HIS FEAR

# The Practical Implications of Calvinism(II)

Rev. Arie den Hartog

As Calvinist and Reformed Christians our lives ought especially to be characterized by true godly humility. Our doctrine teaches us the awfulness of our sin. We do not believe that our sin is merely a matter of a few sinful acts that we do occasionally. Rather we believe that we are totally depraved, wholly incapable of any good in the sight of God

and prone to all manner of evil. Such is our natural condition from our very birth. We know that not only are our evil deeds dreadful in the sight of God but our corrupt nature is also an abomination in His holy sight. So perfectly holy and righteous is our God that He hates our sin with all of His infinitely perfect being. As sinners therefore we cannot stand



in the presence of this holy God. Because of our sin we are miserable and wretched and damn-worthy according to the righteous judgment of God. The Reformed Christian is deeply conscious of his sinful nature and this humbles him to the dust in the presence of God. Very few others, including those who call themselves Christians, have such a view of themselves. The world and even nominal Christendom boasts of the inherent goodness of man and of his great dignity. Modern liberal Christianity emphasizes that we must have a positive self-image. The truly Reformed Christian counts himself with the apostle Paul as the chief of sinners. His self-image is that of a miserable wretched and unworthy sinner. From his lips arise no boasting and glorying at all. The consciousness of his sinful nature daily humbles him in the presence of his God. It also humbles him in the presence of his fellow man. The Reformed Christian knows that he is by nature no better than the worst of his fellow man. He therefore finds in himself no reason at all to exalt himself over others nor to condemn others with self-righteous contempt. If we are truly Reformed Christians this attitude about ourselves will be reflected in all our dealings with our fellow man.

As Calvinists we know that even though we are Christians we are still very imperfect. This too is cause for humility on our part. Our continuing sin is highly offensive in the sight of our holy God. It often interrupts our experiences of the favor and blessing of God upon our lives and separates us from the blessed presence of God. The Reformed Christian therefore often is downcast in his soul and is often heard crying out of the depths of his sin and misery to his God for mercy. The life of the truly Reformed Christian is filled with godly sorrow for his sin and daily repentance unto God. This can surely be heard in every prayer of the Reformed Christian. Though most who call themselves Christians today would hardly ever be heard praying a prayer of deep sorrow and repentance over their sin, the prayer of the Reformed Christian is constantly filled with this matter. The Reformed Christian will be long and frequently on his knees sorrowing before God because of the greatness of his sin. Not to pray about this or to pray mere formal prayers is wholly inconsistent with Reformed doctrine.

There is one point of Reformed doctrine that above all others is reason for humility. It is the great truth of God's sovereign and gracious election. The Reformed Christian knows from his doctrine that God has chosen him in love from before the foundation of the world. By this wonderful gracious election he is distinguished from all mankind as the object of the love and favor and blessing of God. He has been made the particular choice of

God to be saved with wonderful and everlasting salvation. He has been chosen to dwell with God forever in the presence of His infinite glory and majesty. The knowledge of this truth above all causes the Reformed Christian to fall down in humble adoration and awe before his God. The Reformed Christian knows that there is absolutely nothing in himself that moved God to choose him while rejecting others. This is cause for ceaseless praise and daily humility for the Reformed Christian. Surely this ought to be reflected in our practical lives!

Finally, the Reformed Christian ought to be humble because his doctrine teaches him about his continual and absolute dependence on God. As Calvinists we believe in God's preservation and our resultant perseverance. But we know that this is emphatically God's preservation. It remains forever true that God alone must preserve us. All of our strength is in the Lord alone. Without the Lord we can do nothing. Practically that means that the Reformed Christian is never heard boasting of his own strength and faithfulness. He knows that if God were to let him stand even for one moment in his own strength he would surely fall. Therefore the Reformed Christian is one who earnestly depends upon his God. This too is reflected in his practical life. It is reflected in the earnestness and frequency of his prayer. It is reflected also in the frequency and the manner in which he goes up to the house of the Lord. The Reformed Christian knows that the preaching of the Word is God's chief means of grace to him. Knowing that his strength is alone in God the Reformed Christian seeks the preaching of the Word not as it is the word of mere men but as it is the Word of God Himself, which is powerful and effectual to save him. The Reformed Christian comes to God's house faithfully again and again to be admonished and corrected in his sin, to be strengthened in all of his weaknesses, and comforted in all of his sorrows. He knows how deeply he needs all of this for his daily life.

The Reformed Christian has a deep sense of the urgency of living a separate and holy life. Again this is rooted in his doctrine. He knows what it means that God is holy. He knows that the world in which he lives is totally perverse and wicked. There is therefore need for him to live radically different from the world, even spiritually opposite to it. The Reformed Christian knows that at no point can he make common cause with the world, at no point can he become unequally yoked with the world. He finds nothing good and nothing redeemable in this wicked world. He finds it necessary to flee from this world and to keep himself spiritually separate from it. He steadfastly refuses to follow after its philosophy, its evil lusts and pleasures. In all of his



purposes, desires, hopes, goals the Reformed Christian reveals himself to be different from the world. His whole manner of life reflects this. He is different in his home, in how he lives with his wife and family. He finds that he cannot go along with the philosophy of the world that seeks to dictate what the calling of the husband and wife should be, or how many children he should have, and how he should raise those children. He finds that he has to live exactly opposite to all of the philosophy and practice of the world on this. The Reformed Christian is radically different in the manner in which he conducts the daily affairs of his business and occupation. While the world is characterized by wickedness, deceit, and corruption, the Reformed Christian knows that all of his life must manifest the justice and truth of God. Practically, the Reformed Christian is distinct even in such things as the books that he reads, the clothes that he wears, how he spends his money, and what he does for entertainment.

The Reformed Christian ought to be one zealous unto good works. This is not something that is inconsistent with his doctrine of salvation by grace alone. The Reformed Christian does not believe that his good works in any way contribute to his salvation. He knows that Christ Jesus has perfectly merited his salvation and has already fulfilled all righteousness for him. The Reformed Christian knows also that even his best works are imperfect and polluted with sin. Therefore there is no reason for him to boast in those good works. If he does good works this is only for the Reformed Christian reason for humble gratitude to God who enabled him. Yet the Reformed Christian is truly zealous to do good works. His great desire and purpose in doing good works is to show his gratitude to God for His wonderful salvation and to reveal the glory of the grace of God that works in him the wonderful power to do good works.

The truly Reformed Christian manifests in his life a practical attitude of hope and joy and assurance. This is not inconsistent with the sorrow that he has over his sin. Though he has sorrow over his sin he has joy and rejoicing and confidence in God. It is not distinctively Reformed to be always in despair, to be morbid and downcast. That is in fact un-Reformed. Our doctrine teaches us of the perfection of our salvation in Jesus Christ. Though we have sinned and do sin daily, yet there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus has fulfilled all righteousness for us. Though we are weak and often fall, yet the Lord is always faithful. Our final and perfect and wonderful and glorious salvation is absolutely sure. The knowledge of this doctrine ought to fill the heart and soul of the Christian with abounding joy and confident

assurance. The Reformed Christian ought to reveal himself practically, in all of his life, as one who is profoundly happy. He is one therefore who is often heard singing songs of joy and thanksgiving to his God. The Reformed Christian is irrepressibly happy and joyous. He has a certain hope and confidence that nothing in this world can cast any doubt on at all. All the sorrows and hardships of this life cannot in any way diminish or drown out the joy and confidence of the Reformed Christian because his joy and confidence are found in God alone and in the wonderful work of His salvation in Jesus Christ. It is an awful shame when the Reformed Christian is found always going around with a miserable and sad countenance.

Finally our Reformed doctrine ought to show itself in our lives in that we are always content with whatever our lot may be. We believe in the absolute sovereignty and goodness and wisdom of God. We believe that our God works absolutely everything in our life for our good. What a tremendous doctrine that is! Surely when the Reformed Christian constantly goes around complaining and murmuring in his life he denies his faith. If he is always complaining about the circumstances of his life, if he is complaining about how poor his business or farm is, how he doesn't get the profits he wants, if he is not satisfied because he does not have as much as his rich neighbor, then he may be Reformed in the doctrine he holds but it doesn't mean much in his daily practical living. All murmuring and complaining is totally inconsistent with Reformed doctrine. Indeed the truly Reformed Christian ought to be one who can bear the greatest adversities and trials of this life in peace and joy and confidence and thanksgiving. Because the Reformed Christian believes that God is sovereign he is sure that nothing in this life can possibly separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus. If he has the love of God in Christ Jesus then it does not matter if he has nothing in this world.

We have a wonderful doctrine, Reformed Christians. That doctrine is truly the blessed, glorious, and wonderful truth of God as it is revealed in the Scriptures. Let us believe that doctrine with all our heart and soul, but let us also reveal that doctrine practically in our daily lives for the glory of the name of our God.

*Take time to  
read and study the  
Standard Bearer*





Protestant Reformed Fellowship in Lower Hutt (Wellington). Arie van Echten standing at the door.



Going to the church. Mrs. Corry van Echten and Mr. Bob van Herk.

## News From New Zealand

Dear Brethren and Sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ:

Allow me, as a member of the Palmerston-North Protestant Reformed Fellowship in New Zealand, to show you two pictures made on 17 April 1983, at 4:30 P.M.

The Fellowships of Wellington and Palmerston-North had come together in the church in Lower Hutt (hired from the Lutherans) to hear the last sermon of Rev. John A. Heys in this country. We were there with a lot of people—the Walter Street was filled up with all the cars. The weather was beautiful. With Mrs. Heys behind the organ we were singing the *Psalms*, as with one voice. Some of us had tears in our eyes.

Rev. Heys had chosen Phil. 2:12 and 13 from the Scriptures as the basis for his theme, encouraging

us to remain steadfast in the faith during the absence of the shepherd. Our salvation lies in the word obedience. Until the day that Christ comes back. Outside, the light of the day slowly disappeared; inside the church a depressed feeling crept in, the awareness that the hour of saying farewell was approaching—fast, O, too fast.

After the service, in the hall, a supper was organized by the ladies, very much appreciated and enjoyed. Some of us had not seen other for years, others had never met before. But we all agreed about the fact that nobody had ever brought us such wonderful sermons like those of Rev. Heys. To God be all the praise and honour and glory, that you decided to send him to us.

Yours in the love of Christ,

J. P. de Klerk

## THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

### Missionary Methods (17)

*Prof. Robert D. Decker*

In the previous article we dealt with the question: upon what system of church government ought mission churches to be established? In that connection we rejected the position of John L. Nevius who contended that the mission church ought

to have the form of church government which is dictated by her needs and peculiar circumstances. (Cf. *Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, pp. 55ff.) We emphasized that the Reformed or Presbyterian form of church government is based



on sound, biblical principles which belong to the eternal truth of God's Word. These principles apply to the church in every nation under heaven in every age. This means that the threefold office of Christ must be there or there can be no church. The office of believer who as partaker of the anointing of Christ is prophet, priest, and king must be expressed in the special offices of elder, deacon, and minister of the Word. At this point there can be no compromise. How can there be the church without Christ? Christ speaks through the preaching of the Word; He rules the flock through the office of elder; and Christ ministers His mercies to the poor through the office of the deacon.

In this same connection we take issue with Dr. Nevius' position concerning the organization of churches "under the charge of elders ...without the addition of a paid pastor, such as is found in most of our Western churches" (p. 61). Nevius claims that "the appointing of such a pastor might prove injurious rather than advantageous" (p. 61). Aside from anything else, what is injurious is that which is contrary to Scripture, and what is advantageous for the church is that which Scripture enjoins. The question then becomes, does Scripture allow for the instituting of a congregation with elders and deacons but without a pastor for an indefinite period of time? This is the position of Nevius. In support of that position Nevius quotes part of an article which appeared in the "Catholic Presbyterian," November issue, 1879. This article was written by a certain Dr. Kellogg, who served as a missionary in India and later as a professor of Theology. The professor wrote: "We fear there is reason to think that our missionaries have often been in too much haste to introduce the one man pastorate of the European and American churches, and that the growth of a church bearing the true individual character of the particular people or race has been seriously retarded. Fixed in the conviction that the primitive form of Church government was Presbyterian, men have apparently jumped to the conclusion that therefore the present form of Presbyterianism is the primitive and Apostolic arrangement,—a point, we may venture to affirm, which has not yet been established, nor is likely soon to be. Under this belief they have not only felt that if they established churches they must give them a Presbyterian form of government—in which they have been right—but that it must be that particular form of development of Presbyterian principles which has obtained among ourselves; wherein, as it seems to us, they have been as clearly wrong. For to take any one of our full-grown ecclesiastical systems and attempt to set it up bodily in our heathen fields, regardless of the widely differing conditions of the case is, we submit, a great mistake.... In too many instances,

the course pursued has proved a mistake by its practical working....But, it is asked with some confidence, What is the missionary to do? Shall we leave the young church without a pastor? We ask in reply, Where in the New Testament is there any intimation that the Apostles ordained pastors, in the modern sense of that word, over the churches which they formed? We read over and over again of their ordaining 'elders' in every church, and that, having done so, they left them and went elsewhere. Where is there the slightest hint that, at this early period, any one from among these elders was singled out and appointed by Paul to a position like that of the modern minister or pastor of a church, or that until such an officer was found they did not dare to leave the church?" (pp. 61, 62)

We certainly would agree that "to take any one of our full-grown ecclesiastical systems and attempt to set it up bodily in our heathen fields, regardless of the widely differing conditions of the case, is...a great mistake." To impose the entire Church Order of Dordrecht upon one of the Protestant Reformed mission fields would indeed be a "great mistake." There are many decisions appended to many of the articles of the Church Order, some of which are interpretative of the article and others of which delineate the proper way the article is to be implemented, which apply to our churches specifically and which would not apply in Singapore or Jamaica. Even the articles themselves differ. There are those articles which set forth both principles and practices of church government which are explicitly taught and commanded in Scripture. Other articles contain principles and practices which are clearly implied in Scripture. But there are other articles which set forth rules which are neither taught nor condemned in Scripture, but which are based on the peculiar needs and circumstances of our churches. These regulations were adopted over the years out of sanctified common sense to meet particular needs. Among these are articles which designate how often a classis is to meet, how many delegates are to be sent to Synod, how often the Lord's Supper is to be administered, etc. Hence to impose the Church Order of Dordt, with all of the decisions of our Synods, upon a mission church in a foreign land would be a mistake not only, but impossible as well. What must be emphasized, however, is that those principles and practices set forth in the Church Order which are either explicitly or implicitly taught by the Word of God must be used by the church wherever it exists in the world. These apply in every circumstance and age. There must be the preaching of the Word or no one is able to call upon the Lord and be saved (Romans 10:14, 15). There must be elders ordained to take the oversight of the flock and to discipline the church (I Peter 5:1-4).



There must be deacons ordained to care for the widows and poor (I Timothy 3:8-13). There must be the administration of the sacraments according to the institution of Christ. All this and more must be or the church of our Lord Jesus Christ cannot be instituted.

What would constitute a great mistake is to organize mission churches with elders and deacons but without a pastor. It is true that churches are organized before they have a pastor. But after organization the first item of business is to call a pastor. Until a pastor accepts the call the pulpit is supplied by the Seminary and/or visiting pastors of the sister churches. This means that the missionary and sending churches may not organize a church if there is no possibility in the foreseeable future that that church have its own pastor. If the latter is the case the group is not ready to be organized. The missionary must continue his preaching and teaching.

This is the plain teaching of the Bible and was the practice of the Apostles. The great apostle Paul himself, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, taught that the ascended Christ gave the gift of pastors and teachers to the church for the work of the

ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16). Both Timothy and Titus were ordained preachers of the gospel. To these faithful men the Apostle wrote letters containing detailed instructions for their work and calling and for the churches they served as pastors. The apostles, especially Paul had many helpers to assist him in the care of the churches. John, the apostle, pastored the church in Ephesus. This is how it must be today as well. Churches organized without pastors will be as sheep having no shepherd.

Those pastors, however, must be native pastors. The black church needs a black pastor, the Indian church an Indian pastor, the Chinese church a Chinese pastor. The missionary must not stay in a field indefinitely, nor must the sending churches send permanent pastors to the mission churches. In addition, those native pastors must be supported by their own churches and not by the sending churches. There ought to be no subsidy coming from the denomination in North America to the foreign mission churches. About this we shall have more to say, D.V., in our next article.

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## **STRENGTH OF YOUTH**

# **Our Approach to the Problem of Alcoholism (2)**

*Rev. Ron Cammenga*

What is the Scriptural view of alcoholism? How do the Scriptures describe this problem? First of all, there can be no question that the Scriptures teach us that alcoholism is sin. This is basic, both as regards our view of alcoholism itself and our approach to the alcoholic. Surely, what alcoholism IS is going to determine what our approach must be to this problem. To go astray here will have inevitable, bad effects on our approach to alcoholism, and our approach will be less than biblical and really be an approach that does not have the best interests of the alcoholic in mind.

From this point of view, the term "alcoholism" is a bit unfortunate and really a euphemism. The problem we're concerned with is the sin Scripture calls "drunkenness." Nevertheless, we'll use the word "alcoholism." It does have the advantage of carrying the connotation of habitual drunkenness, that one is addicted to alcohol, and not simply that

he has once or twice fallen into the sin of drunkenness. But by our use of the word we do not want in any way to take away from the fact that alcoholism is sin.

The biblical proof that alcoholism is itself sinful is clear. That anyone can profess to believe in the authority of Holy Scripture and deny that alcoholism is sin is inexcusable. In Romans 13:13 we read: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying." In this passage the apostle describes drunkenness as a dishonest and unholy walk. In more than one place Scripture speaks of the impenitent drunkard as being outside the kingdom of heaven. I Corinthians 6:10: "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." In Galatians 5:19-21 drunkenness is classified as a work of the flesh. The prophet Isaiah



warns in chapter 5:22: "Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink." In Proverbs 23:20, 21 Solomon warns his son: "Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags."

Alcoholism is sin. This is our basic position on the issue of sin versus sickness as regards alcoholism. We certainly do not deny that alcoholism affects a man physically, that there are even serious and permanent effects. Nor would we minimize the physically addictive power of alcohol. But, at bottom, alcoholism is sin. The physical disorders connected to this sin are the results of the sin itself. The problem of alcoholism is a sin problem. This means that the alcoholic is not primarily a sick person, but a person who is guilty before God, a sinner. I can't help it if I catch a cold; and certainly my becoming sick is not itself sinful. This is not true of alcoholism.

That alcoholism is basically a sin, implies that alcoholism is essentially a *spiritual* problem. Basically the alcoholic doesn't need sobriety, the ability to lead a normal, addictive-free life. Nor is sobriety itself the answer to the problem. But basically the alcoholic needs the forgiving grace of God, a grace that comes only in the way of confession of and breaking with sin.

This position of ours, that alcoholism is sin, is a unique position. This is NOT the position of psychiatrists, counselors, counseling centers, church organizations, and other groups which work with alcoholics today. Both the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association have designated alcoholism as a disease. The most popular group treating alcoholics today, Alcoholics Anonymous (hereafter A.A.), views alcoholism as an illness, an incurable illness.

Secondly, alcoholism is a sin, not only because alcoholism itself is sinful, but because alcoholism leads to other sins. The Scriptures show this plainly. Drunkenness often leads to immorality; for this reason the Scriptures often speak of drunkenness and immorality in the same breath. We have only to think of the wicked scheme of Lot's daughters in Genesis 19:32 ff., according to which they made their father drunken in order to seduce him. Immediately after his warning against drunkenness, Solomon adds in Proverbs 23 a warning against fornication: "Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things," vs. 33. In Ephesians 5:18 Paul exhorts: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." The "excess" to which the apostle refers is not excess of wine; that's been mentioned already

when he spoke of not being "drunk with wine." But the excess is licentiousness, sexual excess, fornication. The effect of alcohol is that it breaks down our natural inhibitions. This exposes us to sin against the 7th commandment.

Besides, drunkenness often leads to violent behavior, wrecklessness, and carelessness. Always drunkenness strains marital and family relationships. It's true of drunkenness as it is of every sin, that by our sins we hurt those the most who are closest to us.

Even the world recognizes the bad consequences and other sins to which alcoholism leads: 20% of all deadly falls, 20% of all drownings, 20% of deaths by freezing, 50% of all fire deaths, and well over 60% of all fatal car accidents are alcohol related. Alcohol is a contributing factor in over 60% of all suicide attempts, and in over 70% of all murders and violent crimes. In the large majority of child abuse and spouse abuse cases, excessive drinking is a major factor.

In the third place, alcoholism is sin because of the damage, often permanent damage, that it does to the body. Drunkenness tears down the temple of the Holy Spirit, which Paul says our body is in I Corinthians 6:19. Drunkenness leads to ulcers and cancer of the esophagus, stomach ulcers, intestinal ulcers; heaving drinking breaks down the lining of the stomach, causes pancreatitis, hepatitis, permanent and fatal liver damage, degeneration of portions of the brain, damage to the central nervous system, impotency, and serious birth defects in babies born from alcoholic mothers.

This, now, is the sin of alcoholism itself, and the sins with which it is connected and to which it leads.

### **The Approach of A.A. to the Problem of Alcoholism**

What now is to be our approach to this problem and to the individual who has this sin problem in his or her life? One of the most popular and widespread approaches to the problem of alcoholism today is the approach of A.A.

The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous is an international organization whose sole purpose is to gain and maintain recovery from alcoholism. The A.A. program is apparently the only program with significant success. A.A. groups exist in nearly every sizable city in the U.S. Nearly all of the treatment and counseling centers in this country use A.A.'s approach, including most of the Christian counseling centers.

A.A. originated with two men trying together to overcome their dependency on the use of alcohol. Bill Wilson, a businessman from New York, and a



certain Dr. Bob, a surgeon from Akron, Ohio, were introduced to each other one day by a mutual friend. Soon they became close friends and visited often. Through their conversations they discovered that both of them were struggling against dependency on alcohol. It seemed to them that the more they talked together, the more they were strengthened in their battle against alcoholism. Soon Wilson and Dr. Bob began helping other alcoholics, using as their main approach group therapy. In 1941 *The Saturday Evening Post* wrote a favorable article describing the approach and accomplishments of Wilson and Dr. Bob. Almost overnight A.A. increased from 1500 members to 8000 members. The movement continued to grow and today has an estimated 750,000 members, in more than 22,000 groups in the U.S. and in 91 other countries around the world.

The approach of A.A. is summed up in what are known as "The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous." These "Twelve Steps" may be regarded as the constitution of A.A. The "Twelve Steps" are as follows:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The "Twelve Steps" presents the basic approach of A.A. to the problem of alcoholism. The "Twelve Steps" reflect A.A.'s view of alcoholism itself and how the problem of alcoholism can be overcome. Next time we will evaluate A.A. and its approach to the problem of alcoholism.

... to be continued.

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## BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

# Titus—The Holy Life of the Church

Rev. J. Kortering

This is the third of the Pastoral Epistles which Paul wrote, the others being I and II Timothy. He wrote this letter to Titus who was working in the church on the Island of Crete.

### HISTORICAL OCCASION

Titus is addressed in this letter as, "my own son after the common faith" (1:4). This indicates that he probably was a Greek Christian, converted under Paul's preaching. Though his name does not appear in the Book of Acts, he is referred to in Acts 15:2. There, mention is made of the controversy regard-

ing the circumcision of the Gentile converts. It was decided to send Paul and Barnabas "and certain others" to Jerusalem for a conference to decide this issue. The "others" include Titus, according to Galatians 2:3. When Titus was in Jerusalem for this conference, the Jews there wanted Titus to be circumcised, but Paul refused to allow this (Gal. 2:5). The conclusion was that the Gentile converts need not be circumcised, Acts 15:13-29; so Titus was a test case.

Titus was also involved in the work in the church at Corinth. According to II Corinthians 12:18, Paul



sent him to Corinth as his representative to deal with the problems in the church there. This tells us that Paul saw him as a gifted pastor who was capable of dealing with difficulties that arose in the churches. He also assisted in the weekly collection for the poor in Jerusalem (I Cor. 16:12; II Cor. 8:6). Paul was eager to know if the circumstances in the church of Corinth had improved and whether they responded to his first epistle which Titus brought to them. He learned of the results when Titus met him in Macedonia (II Cor. 7:6, 7). He then sent Titus back again and gave him the second epistle which he delivered to the Corinthian church (II Cor. 8:16-18).

Titus appears also as traveling with Paul after his release from the Roman prison and prior to his being taken captive a second time. During this interval, Paul went to the Island of Crete and left Titus there to "set in order the things which were wanting and ordain elders in every city" (Titus 1:8). According to early church tradition, Titus became the bishop of the church of the Cretians. Paul later informed Titus that Artemas or Tychicus would be sent to Crete, so Titus was free to leave and rejoin Paul at Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). Whether Titus did this we cannot be sure; he did, however, join Paul in Rome from which he later went to Dalmatia (II Tim. 4:10).

From this we can see that Titus was a close and trusted co-worker with Paul. He was a capable pastor, gifted with words and wisdom in dealing with difficult situations in the church.

Since this letter was sent to Titus to instruct him in how to labor in the churches on the Island of Crete, it quite naturally brings up the question as to how those churches came into being. According to Titus 1:5, Paul says he left Titus in Crete, indicating that Paul also had been there. When did Paul visit Crete? Reference is made to the fact that on his voyage to Rome, after he had appealed to Caesar in order to spare his life from the angry Jews, his ship touched the Island of Crete, Acts 27:12, 13. This hardly seems to be the time that he would have left Titus behind. Rather, it must refer to his travels between the two Roman imprisonments. Paul visited the Island of Crete then, helped establish a church there, traveled on, but left Titus there to continue in the labor. Now Paul instructs Titus in what he should do to help the church in Crete.

The encyclopedia tells us that Crete, an island off Greece situated between the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas, is about 150 miles long and 20 miles wide. It has many mountains and, interspersed in the valleys, people were able to raise crops and make a good living. The people had a reputation for evil (Titus 1:12). The highest mountain, Mt. Ida,

was the legendary birthplace of the Greek god Zeus.

We also learn in Acts 2:11 that "Cretes" were represented in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost. It would seem natural that these converts returned home and thereupon were influential in organizing a church on the island. Paul labored with this group when he traveled to them and subsequently Titus continued the same work.

It is suggested that since the subject matter is so similar to that of I Timothy, the letters were written about the same time, possibly the same day. If so, Paul expressed his concern for Titus who was laboring in Crete and for Timothy who was working in Ephesus. The date would also be about the same, A.D. 64-67.

#### THE MESSAGE

This small letter is a call for holiness in the church of the Lord Jesus. Tenney expresses it well: "The situation in Crete was discouraging. The church was unorganized, and its members were quite careless in behavior. If the injunctions of chapter 2 are indication of what the churches needed, the men were lax and careless, the older women were gossips and winebibbers, and the young women were idle and flirtatious. Perhaps the preaching of the gospel of grace had given the Cretans the impression that salvation by faith was unrelated to an industrious and ethical life. Six times (1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14) in this short epistle, good works are urged upon Christians. Although Paul says that salvation cannot be earned by good works (3:1) he affirms with equal vigor that believers must be careful to maintain good works. The disturbance in Crete had been caused by a combination of ethical laxity which sprang from the natural tendencies of the Cretans (1:12, 13), accentuated by disputation over Jewish fables and commandments which were promoted by a Judaizing group (1:10) who were godless (1:16), unruly (1:10), divisive (1:11), and mercenary (1:11). These teachers differed from those that troubled the Galatians because their error was moral perversity whereas that of the Galatians was stringent legalism. Both are condemned by this epistle" *New Testament Survey*.

Paul's purpose in writing this letter was twofold. First, he wanted to encourage and help Titus deal with the specific needs of the church in Crete. Second, he requested that Titus leave Crete and meet him in Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). In carrying out this purpose, Paul sets forth the need for a holy life as it must be based upon doctrinal purity. Two passages in this letter set forth the Christian doctrine (Titus 2:11-14 and 3:4-7). These truths are to be believed not only, but must influence the members of the church unto holiness. Hence, the Chris-



tian church must be active in discipline, to see to it that the holy life is followed, (2:15 and 3:11).

### BRIEF OUTLINE

1. Salutation (1:1-4). Paul identifies himself as an apostle who is called by God to bring the message of godliness through the gospel preaching (1:1-3). Likewise, he identifies Titus as the recipient, "mine own son after the common faith," upon whom he pronounces the blessing.

2. He gives instruction regarding good order and the need for elders in every city (1:5-9). The qualifications of office-bearers is listed (1:6-9).

3. Titus must be willing to expose those false teachers (1:10-16). Some are Jewish, who are ignorant and teach for money (1:10, 11). They were quick to point out evil in others; though accurate, they did not apply it to themselves (1:12, 13). They heed Jewish fables and commandments of men, profess godliness, but deny Him in their works (1:14-16).

4. Paul instructs the church to be sound in their family and personal life (2:1-15). The aged men must be strong in faith and be sober (2:1, 2); aged women must not be false accusers, but teachers of good things (2:3); the young women must learn to love their husbands, be chaste, keepers at home (2:4, 5); the young men must be sober-minded, sound in speech, and live so that no one can speak evil of them (2:6-8); servants must be obedient to and please their masters, show good fidelity, and adorn the doctrine of God (2:9, 10). The doctrinal basis for all this is in the grace of God which is in Christ Jesus Who redeemed and purifies us (2:11-15).

5. Instruction is given regarding holiness in public life (3:1-7). They must be subject to the magistrates (3:1), not be brawlers nor speak evil of any-

one, but be gentle to all men (3:2). The doctrinal basis for this is that they have been delivered from former evil through the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit through Christ unto the inheritance of life everlasting (3:3-7).

6. Concluding exhortations to holiness (3:8-15). Believers are to maintain good works (3:8), avoid foolish questions (3:9), discipline heretics, for they condemn themselves (3:10, 11). Paul informs Titus that he will send Artemas or Tychicus to Crete so that Titus will be free to join Paul at Nicopolis. He asks him to take Zenas and Apollos along (3:12, 13). All are exhorted to do good works (3:14). He expresses his concluding greetings (3:15).

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Review the Scriptural references to Titus and indicate who he was and what his relationship was to Paul as they worked in the early church. Note that the King James Bible at the end of 3:15 says of Titus, "ordained the first bishop of the church of the Cretians."

2. What do we know about the church in Crete?

3. How is this letter similar to I Timothy? How is it different?

4. Show that the message of holiness for the church was important for the church in Crete and is just as important for our church today.

5. Make reference to the two doctrinal passages contained in this letter (2:11-15 and 3:4-7). Explain how doctrine is the basis for our Christian life. Along this line, show that justification and sanctification are inseparable.

6. Explain how, in light of this letter, we can say that the gospel has social implications.

7. What is the difference between foolish questions (3:9) and wholesome spiritual discussion?

## FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

### Nicene Creed

*Rev. James Slopsema*

#### Article 2 (continued)

In Article 2 of the Nicene Creed the early church confessed that Jesus Christ is "the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made."

We have seen that the first two articles of the

Nicene Creed were based on I Corinthians 8:6: "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him." According to this Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through Whom the Father has created all things. All things are *of* the Father. However, they are *by* the Lord Jesus Christ. It is



through Christ therefore that the Father has created all things.

This fact indicates that Jesus Christ is truly God. For creation is a work of God. It is not the creature who creates. God creates. That Jesus Christ is the One by Whom all things were created and therefore is divine is the testimony of John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." And Who is this divine Word by Whom all things were created? According to verse 14 of this same chapter He is Christ. For "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." To establish the divinity of Jesus Christ therefore it should have been necessary for the early church simply to confess her faith in "one Lord Jesus Christ...by Whom all things were made."

However, because the deity of Jesus Christ was being so adamantly denied by various elements within the church, the early church was compelled to spell this truth out more specifically. Hence, she added that Jesus Christ is "the only-begotten Son of God." This is a biblical term which, more than any other expression perhaps, teaches that Jesus is truly God. But those who denied the deity of Jesus Christ also used this term, robbing it however of all its meaning. Hence, the early church felt compelled also to explain this term further. And so she added that Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God is "begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father."

Jesus is the only-begotten Son of God. This we read in five different passages of Scripture. Perhaps the most well known is John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

It is rather striking, in light of this expression, that the Bible also speaks of other sons of God. Thus, for example, the nation of Israel in the Old Testament is more than once called God's son. This is true in Exodus 4:22: "And thou (Moses) shall say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn." In turn, the holy angels of God in heaven are called the sons of God. This we read in Psalm 89:6: "For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?" Besides this the saints of God are frequently called in Scripture either the sons of God or the children of God. Consider for example Romans 8:16: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the

children of God." Also, John 1:12, "But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." As we have already seen in connection with the first article of this creed, we are the children of God in Jesus Christ. In Christ, we are not only adopted by God to be His sons and heirs, but we are also in Jesus Christ born again. Thus we also bear God's image even as a child bears the image of his parents.

In spite of the fact that the Scriptures acknowledge many sons of God, Jesus Christ is called the *only-begotten* Son of God. How can this be? How can Jesus be the only-begotten Son of God since we also are the sons of God—sons not only of adoption but also who are born or begotten of God? Jesus is the only-begotten Son in that He is begotten of God in a way that we are not. We may be begotten of God. But Christ is begotten in a way that is altogether different and unique. Jesus is begotten of God in a way that no one else is or can be. In this sense He is the only-begotten Son of God.

If we understand this expression in the light of the rest of Scripture then we see that the sonship of Christ is unique in that His sonship is divine. He is the divine Son of God. We are merely human sons.

This divine character of Jesus' sonship becomes evident if we consider the fact that the Scriptures often speak of Jesus as being equal with God. This was Jesus' own testimony of Himself and was clearly understood by the people. In response to the persecution of the Jews for healing a lame man on the Sabbath day, "Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5:17, 18). In John 10:30 we read the claim of Jesus, "I and My Father are one." In response, the Jews took up stones to kill Him "for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God" (verse 33). The apostle Paul also teaches the same truth in Philippians 2:6: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

Besides this, the Scriptures ascribe to Jesus Christ divine names. Thus for example in I John 5:20 we are told that God's Son, Jesus Christ, is "the true God, and life eternal." In Romans 9:5 we read of Christ, "Who is over all, God blessed for ever." Divine attributes also are ascribed to Jesus. According to the confession of Peter, Jesus is all-knowing. This is found in John 21:17: "He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, *Thou knowest all things*; Thou



knowest that I love Thee." Appearing to John on the island of Patmos, Jesus informs John, "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8). Furthermore, divine works are ascribed to Jesus. We have already seen from John 1:3 that Jesus created all things. According to Hebrews 1:3 He also upholds all things. "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Jesus healed the paralytic let down through the roof exactly to prove to the people that He has the power on earth to forgive sins (Luke 5:20-24). Jesus also raises from the dead. In John 5:21 we read, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." Finally, divine honors are also ascribed to Jesus Christ. Are we not to believe in Him? Thus we read in John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Did not Stephen worship Jesus, asking Jesus upon his death, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"? (Acts 7:59). And Thomas, upon seeing the spear thrust in Jesus'

side, confessed, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

In light of this witness of Holy Writ there can be no doubt that Jesus is the only-begotten Son of God in that He is the divine Son of God. Many sons are begotten of God. The angels are begotten of God. The saints are begotten of God. But their sonship is different from the sonship of Jesus Christ. He is the divine Son of God. And He is the only such Son of God.

Certainly Jesus is personally distinct from the Father. He is not to be confused with the Father or identified with the Father. For He is begotten of the Father. Yet He is equal with the Father, one with the Father, and eternal with the Father. He is co-eternal, co-equal and co-essential with the Father. This is all implied in the confession that Jesus Christ is God's only-begotten Son.

However, there were many in the early church that would not confess these truths. They either denied the personal distinction between the Father and the Son or they denied that the Son was truly God with the Father. In our next article we shall see who these heretics were and how the early church confessed the truth of Christ's deity over against them.

## Book Review

**PREACHING WITH PURPOSE** (A Comprehensive Textbook on Biblical Preaching), Jay E. Adams; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, N.J. 162 pp., \$5.95 (paper); reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

**TRUTH APPARENT** (Essays On Biblical Preaching), Jay E. Adams; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, N.J.; 100 pp., \$4.95 (paper); reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

As its sub-title indicates, the first of these books is intended to be a seminary textbook in Homiletics (the science of the art of preaching). The author, who for many years taught courses on preaching at Westminster Seminary (Philadelphia), prepared this textbook with a view to his new teaching task at the western branch of Westminster Seminary at Escondido, California. His avowed purpose with this book was "to develop a textbook on preaching for pastors, seminary students, and other Christian speakers that, I hope, will make an impact in our day significant enough to change preaching substantially."

There is a large amount of advice in this book,

some of it good, some of it not so good.

This reviewer is himself an instructor in Homiletics and practice preaching, and he can lay claim to more than a few years of experience in this field of study. He tended, therefore, to read and review this textbook with the question in mind: could this book serve adequately as a textbook in our seminary or in any Reformed seminary?

The conclusion, regretfully, must be negative. It is difficult for this reviewer to conceive of a Homiletics textbook which fails completely to define: preaching, the preacher, the sermon, the congregation to which the sermon is preached. Besides, a distinctively Reformed note is missing in this book. Conclusion: tried, and found wanting.

The second book covered in this review is a book of essays. The content and calibre of the essays is about the same as that of the first book. In fact, large chunks of these essays are incorporated in the textbook. It seems rather useless to multiply books of this kind which have substantially the same content. If you are interested in this field, my advice is to buy one or the other of these volumes, not both.



## *The Standard Bearer makes an excellent gift for the sick and shut-in.*

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 22, 1983, our beloved parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, MR. AND MRS. MEINDERT GAASTRA, celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to our covenant God for the many years of love, covenant instruction and God-fearing example which they have given us.

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

Redlands, California

Anne Lindeman

Edwin and Clarice Gritters

Ray and Carol Gaastra

Otto and Mary Gail Gaastra

17 grandchildren

15 great grandchildren

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mens' Society of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its Christian sympathy to one of its members, Mr. Bart Zandstra, in the death of his father-in-law, MR. PETER BOER at the age of 80 years.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (II Cor. 5:1).

Louie Regnertus, Pres.  
Ernie Medema, Sec'y.

### TEACHER NEEDED!!!

Covenant Christian School of Lynden, WA is in need of a teacher with a background of Language Arts and Social Studies, with assignments in Junior-Senior High School Grades for the '83-'84 School Year.

Contact H.W. Kuiper, Administrator, at his home — Phone (206) 354-2592, or the School — Phone (206) 354-5436, or write to: Covenant Christian School, 9088 Northwoods Road, Lynden, WA 98264.

John Meyer, Sec'y.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

We the children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, thank our heavenly Father for our parents, REV. AND MRS. M. SCHIPPER, who, the Lord willing, celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on June 8, 1983. Because of their loving care and covenantal instruction, our families have been blessed and flourish spiritually. We are thankful also for Rev. Schipper's faithful preaching in our churches of which we are so much a part. Our prayer is that they may continue to be a blessing to us and our church in the future.

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

Jim and Char Schipper

Paul and Carolyn Schipper

Ken and Marilyn Schipper

Ed and Lois Langerak

15 Grandchildren

4 Great Grandsons

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 11, 1983, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. PETER KOOLE, will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary. We, their children and grandchildren, are thankful to our Heavenly Father for the years they have had together and the years we have had with them.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children" (Psalm 103:17).

Lawrence and Patricia Koole

Rev. Kenneth and Patricia Koole

James and Kathleen Vander Lolk

Ronald and Sherry Koole

Timothy Koole

and 15 grandchildren

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Faith, Hope and Love Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, IL, expresses its Christian sympathy to Mrs. Bartel Zandstra, Mrs. John C. Haak, Mr. Peter Boer, Jr., Mr. Arthur Boer and Mrs. Thomas Staggs in the loss of their father, MR. PETER BOER.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 23:6).

Rev. David Engelsma, Pres.  
Mrs. Janet De Jong, Sec'y.

### NOTICE!!!

Loveland will be celebrating its 25th anniversary as a Protestant Reformed Church, the Lord willing, on June 22 and 23, 1983. All are cordially invited to come and celebrate God's faithfulness with us. We have invited our former ministers to participate in the celebration. Rev. David Engelsma will speak for us the first evening, and the second evening there will be a supper and a slide program. Commemorative booklets at the cost of \$2.00 each. If you would like a copy, please contact Mr. Ray Ezinga, 1518 East 57th St., Loveland, CO 80573. Phone (303) 667-5720.

## News From Our Churches

May 13, 1983

Rev. den Hartog and I have a similar problem. The letter he sent to First Church started out with the date March 26, 1983. Half-way through the letter he writes, "Well believe it or not it is April 4 and this letter is still lying on my desk." Here are a few excerpts from this letter found in *Across the Aisle*, May, 1983. "... The session... decided last week not to ask for another missionary for Singapore from our churches in the U.S.A. at this time.... The session feels that the situation here is not ready to expand any further at this time. There is still need of establishing our present church more firmly in the

faith and also the Toa Payoh Mission is not anywhere near to becoming a new established church yet. Then too both the Pastors and officebearers are overloaded with work in the church and therefore they feel they should not at this time launch into new areas of work.... The only difficulty is that we are all so loaded with work that we cannot spare the time to look into other fields of labor whereas perhaps if there were another man here already now we would be able to do this...."

If you want to know how much a wealthy Hindu



Indian wedding costs, then write to the den Hartogs. However, I'll give you a little hint, "What they spend on just the wedding we normal people would spend on a house!" The den Hartogs close their letter with these words, "Thank-you to those who sent us letters in the past month. We always look eagerly in our mail box for letters from U.S.A. May the Lord bless and keep you all."

Many people found the Child Development Conference held at Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church to be a great success. Recordings of this important event are available. There are five tapes to the whole series that come in a handy attractive tape holder. The five tapes are titled: (1) The Principles and Goals of Spiritual Development, (2) The Home and Early Development, (3) The School and the Mid-years, (4) The Church and Emerging Maturity, (5) The Principle of Christian Maturity. Separate tapes cost \$3.00 each, whereas the complete set of five tapes cost only \$15.00. You may order these tapes from: Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church, Activities Committee, 427 North Fletcher, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007. If you

know of others who would like these tapes, please send their names too.

Loveland Protestant Reformed Church has almost reached their goal of \$1,322.68 for the celebration of their Twenty-Fifth Anniversary. When is the special event going to take place?

The Consistory of First Protestant Reformed Church has decided once again to request Synod 1983 that First Church be instructed to call a missionary to labor in the Jamaica field.

During the meeting of Synod in the first week of June, seminarians Ken Hanko and Barry Gritters will be examined. This past year they have been preparing for their examinations. May the Lord bless them.

I leave you with this quote from *Wonder of Grace* by H. Hoeksema: "When God speaks, we are silent; we just listen. When He commands, we obey without murmuring, without objection, and without reservation. This means that we never assume the authority to determine for ourselves what shall be called good."

DH

## Report of Classis East

May 11, 1983

Classis East met in regular session on May 11, 1983 at Hudsonville. Each church was represented by two delegates. Rev. Joostens led the classis in opening devotions; Rev. Miersma chaired this session of classis.

Two items of business, other than routine matters occupied the time of the meeting. First, there was a request from a group of people for the organization of a new congregation in the Byron Center-Cutlerville area. Classis decided to postpone approval of this request because of concern raised by First Church relative the impact this organization would have on their congregation. Of the eighteen signators, nine were members of First Church. Classis advised these petitioners to conduct another study to determine if the new congregation could be located west of Byron Center Avenue, thus meeting the stated objective of this request, name-

ly, to alleviate the over-crowded conditions in some of the churches in the southwest metropolitan area.

Secondly, Faith Church protested a decision taken by the January 12, 1983 classis regarding the advice given them as to procedure in a particular case. Classis sustained its decision of the January 12, 1983 classis.

Classis also received information from Hope Church relative a request to change the date of the 1983 synod. Since this material was sent as information, classis filed it as such.

The expenses of this meeting amounted to \$706.62. Classis will meet next on September 14, 1983 at Southeast.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jon Huisken, Stated Clerk