

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

. . . phariseeism is not first how you view others. That is included, but phariseeism does not start there. That is just a symptom. Phariseeism starts with how you view yourself, namely, not as a damn-worthy sinner. If you really see yourself as a publican you cannot despise others, or draw yourself up in haughty superiority.

See "Phariseeism: Still Prevalent"

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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## MEDITATION

## The Preaching of the Gospel: A Means of Grace

Rev. C. Hanko

*Ques. 65. Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all His benefits through faith only, whence does this faith proceed?*

*Ans. From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in the hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments. Lord's Day 25. Heidelberg Catechism.*

An important question.

We find that the questions of our Catechism are often as important as the answers. This is indeed the case here. "Since we are made partakers of

Christ and all His benefits through faith only, whence doth this faith proceed?"

We are made partakers of Christ. We do not become partakers of Christ by our free choice or by



some act of our own. We are made partakers. By His own work of grace in our hearts God gives us Christ as our Mediator, Savior, and Lord. We are engrafted into Him, even as a branch is engrafted into the vine (Lord's Day 7). We live, yet no more we, Christ lives in us (Gal. 2:20). The righteousness which Christ merited by His atoning death on the cross is our righteousness (Lord's Day 23). Therefore we are one with Christ, sons and daughters of God, members of God's family and heirs of eternal life.

Also we are made partakers of all Christ's benefits. Christ's incarnation, atoning death, resurrection, ascension, and sitting at the right hand of God are all spiritual benefits that serve toward our salvation. Christ comes into our hearts by His Spirit to dwell in us, never to leave us. He regenerates us, calls us out of death into life and out of darkness into light, converts us, justifies us, sanctifies us, and leads us to glory. Christ grants us the gift and desire of prayer, joy, peace, covenant fellowship with God and with His saints, and the hope of eternal life. A hope that is never put to shame, because the love of God is spread abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5:5).

These gifts of salvation come to us through faith, and through faith only. Faith is the living bond that unites us with Christ. It is like a power line that carries the powerful life of Christ into our hearts and returns to Him in a sincere knowledge of Him as our Savior and a hearty confidence that all our salvation is in Him. We confess that we are saved by grace, and that in no sense of us, but it is God's work in us, lest there should be any boasting in us (Eph. 2:8, 9).

We are lavishly graced with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus, so that we confess,

Come, hear, all ye who fear the Lord,  
While I with grateful heart record  
What God has done for me.

Whence doth this faith proceed? We find ourselves confronted with two questions. The first, Who works that faith in us? The second, How does He work that faith in us?

In answer to the first question, we readily confess that the Holy Spirit both works and confirms faith in us. Salvation is of the Lord. His blessing is upon His people. The triune God, Who is our Father, has chosen us unto Himself in Christ Jesus, has redeemed us unto life and glory by the death of His dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and now bestows on us the Spirit of our exalted Lord, Who makes us partakers of Christ and of all His benefits.

In answer to the second question, as to how the Holy Spirit bestows these blessings of salvation

upon us, we have the answer of God Himself, that He does this by the preaching of the Gospel. This preaching of the Gospel, along with the sacraments, is often referred to as "means of grace." They are the means whereby the Holy Spirit bestows the blessings of God's grace upon His people.

#### Means of Grace.

God uses means to bring us to a conscious faith. That does not mean that God could not possibly save us apart from those means, or that God is bound or limited by those means. Nothing is impossible with God that is in harmony with His will. But God does bind Himself to certain definite means and refuses to work His grace in us apart from those means, that is, *apart from the preaching of the Gospel*.

This should not seem strange to us, if we but consider that God also binds Himself to means in sustaining our earthly existence. We cannot live without the air we breathe. We need food, not once a month, but two or three times a day, besides all the other necessities of life. With a false piety we might contend that God can keep us alive without these means; yet in doing so we would be tempting God and would soon become starved, sick and die. The same applies to our spiritual existence. God works faith through the preaching of the Word. Only through the preaching do we obtain Christ, Who is the Bread of Life, the Water of Life, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

That raises the question, does not God use other means to save us, means which often seem to be much more effective than the Word? Does He not sometimes use mystical means like an inner voice, or miracles, or speaking in tongues? Does He not bring conviction of sin and guilt and the need of salvation through some traumatic experience, a serious accident or a severe illness, a tragic death or the loss of a dear one? Does He not arouse faith in us through some inspiring novel, some soul-stirring music, a movie, or a dramatization of some sort? The answer is an emphatic No! This does not mean that God does not use circumstances in our lives to bring us under the power of His Word. God brought Saul on the way to Damascus intending to persecute the church, in order that there he might meet the Lord Jesus Christ, be stopped on his rebellious way, and brought under the preaching of Ananias. God caused the Ethiopian eunuch to be riding in his chariot and reading Isaiah 53 about the suffering Servant of God at the moment when God brought Philip to him to expound for him the Scriptures. God used the imprisonment of Paul and Silas, the earthquake and threat of losing two important prisoners, to awaken in the jailer the con-



sciousness of the preaching that he had heard before, so that he begged of Paul and Silas, "What must I do to be saved?" Yet all the incidents and experiences that we may undergo in our lives do not work faith in our hearts. Our fathers are so very right when they say that nothing, absolutely nothing can work faith in our hearts except the preaching of the Word.

We do well to bear this in mind, especially in a time when the devil is doing his utmost to minimize the value of the preaching of the Word. Many seem to think that preaching has failed to attain its desired purpose. People have grown weary of sitting in the church for some length of time, are not interested in what they consider cold doctrine, dry sermonizing. They crave something more exciting, more appealing, more entertaining. Catering to these wishes the churches have introduced revival meetings, given place to dialogue, sought to entertain young and old with outside speakers, choirs, solos, dramatizations, movies, and even coffee and lunches after the service. We are reminded of the warning of our Lord Himself, in connection with the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

#### The Preaching of the Word.

You and I need the preaching of the Word. This means that we must maintain with might and main that Scripture is the infallibly inspired, inerrant, authoritative Word of God. All these new translations and paraphrasings of the Bible that are now on the market only arouse doubts concerning the accuracy of the inspired Word and minimize its authority, apart from the fact that many translations are corruptions of the truth of the holy Scriptures. We must insist that there are not two authors of Scripture, a human author as well as a divine Author, but that God inspired holy men to write His Word as it was breathed into them by the Holy Spirit. Moreover, we cannot allow any time of day to those who would insist that the Word of God is *in* the Bible, but that this Word of God is wrapped up in myths, sagas, old wives' tales, traditions, and whatever man might have introduced into the Scriptures. Scripture is the revelation of the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ, whereby Christ through His Spirit gathers and preserves His church unto heavenly perfection. He who adds anything to the Scriptures or in any way detracts from it will suffer the severe judgment of God, both in this life and in eternity (Revelation 22:18, 19).

We also need the *preaching* of the Word. We do not come to church to hear the preacher, or to hear what he has to say. He is but a man. And there is

not a single man who does not have certain faults and weaknesses, which soon become evident in his preaching. Usually when a minister begins preaching in a congregation he is liked, admired, and often praised as the best yet. But before long we become weary of hearing the same man from week to week. We see his faults. We readily criticize. All the while we are forgetting that we do not come to church to hear the preacher, but to hear the Word. Actually, the minister is nothing more or less than an ambassador of Jesus Christ. He is sent in Christ's name to herald the Gospel of the Living God. He does not and may not bring his own word, his own ideas about the Scriptures, or his own theories, but he must declare, "Thus saith the Lord." His preaching must be expository, bringing the Word of God to us, so that we hear the glad tidings of salvation. We must hear Christ speaking to us from the Word, applied to us personally by the Holy Spirit in our hearts confirming the Word. We readily expose ourselves to the danger that we criticize the Word of God when we say that we are criticizing the sermon.

From this follows that we may not neglect the fellowship and assembly of the saints. God has instituted His church with its threefold office of minister, elder, and deacon. No one can ignore that institution or calling of God. Today there are too many running around who call themselves preachers, yet were never called and ordained by the church, and thus by Christ. We recall how Paul waited for some time after he was appointed to be the apostle to the Gentiles, even until the church at Antioch called and ordained him. How shall we hear, unless we hear the voice of Jesus speaking to us through the Word? And how shall anyone preach unless he is called and sent by Christ? (Romans 10:14, 15).

We need our weekly Sabbaths, which God has wisely set apart for us. We need the communion of saints under the ministry of the Word as a foretaste of the Heavenly Rest and eternal covenant fellowship with God and with His saints before the throne. Only through that God-given means can we grow in grace to the glory of our God, Whose is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, world without end!

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



## EDITORIALS

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

# Seminary Graduation — 1983

The greater part of the first three days of our 1983 Synod was spent in a thorough-going examination of our two seminary graduates, Barrett Lee Gritters and Kenneth Wayne Hanko. We may be thankful that our churches still insist upon such a thorough examination before anyone is declared candidate for the ministry among us.

On Wednesday afternoon each student delivered a sermon on a previously assigned text. In addition, the sermon outlines had to be submitted to an examining committee appointed by Synod. Besides, each student was required to submit written exegesis of an Old Testament passage (working, of course, from the Hebrew original); and each student was required to submit written exegesis of a New Testament passage (working from the Greek). The latter work is also submitted to a synodical examining committee.

Almost all of Thursday was taken up with a thorough oral examination in Dogmatics. And on Friday there were examinations in Church History, Church Polity, Old Testament History, and New Testament History. All of these examinations are conducted by the professors. An examination in "Practica" (conducted by the Rev. George Lanting this year) ended the examination process about mid-afternoon on Friday. At this time, after voting



**I to r: Candidates Barrett Lee Gritters and Kenneth Wayne Hanko**

in closed session, Synod declared the two young men candidates for the ministry in our Protestant Reformed Churches.

The real climax of this examination and of their years in our school came on Tuesday evening, June 7. A goodly audience gathered for this joyful occasion. It was my privilege this time to deliver the commencement address, a transcript of which appears elsewhere in this issue. A snapshot of our candidates accompanies this report.

May God bless our candidates!

## Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, 1983

This is a brief and unofficial report. It must needs be brief, because my space in this issue is already more than used. The official report, which will also be complete, will appear in the *Acts*, which will make its appearance in a month or two.

At the pre-synodical service, under the auspices of the Hope (Walker) Consistory, the Rev. J. Kortering led us, preaching an appropriate sermon the admonition found in I Corinthians 15:58.

On Wednesday morning, June 1, Synod met for the first time; and, as usual, the morning was spent in election of officers and in making committee assignments. The Rev. G. Van Baren was elected president, and he served capably, keeping synod's "nose to the grindstone," but allowing for the necessary discussion and deliberation. Other officers were: Rev. J. Kortering, vice-president; Rev. M. Joostens, first clerk; Rev. W. Bekkering, second clerk.



Not much of synod's business was conducted during the first three days, as I already remarked, due to the examinations conducted. This does not mean, however, that no work is done. Every available hour in which synod is not in session is used by the four advisory committees, so that their reports may be ready when the examinations are finished and so that synod may begin its work of deliberating and deciding upon the matters of the Agenda. This year synod was able to do some of its work already during the first week. In the first place, on Thursday the examination was interrupted briefly in order to allow the Rev. Bruce Backensto to address synod. Mr. Backensto was the representative of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (Covenanters). At the invitation of our Contact Committee, he came to bring the greetings of his denomination and to help get us acquainted with the Covenanters and their stance. In the second place, Advisory Committee II was ready with its report; and therefore, in the remaining hours of Friday afternoon, after the completion of the examinations, synod made considerable progress in treating the items of that report.

In connection with the latter, we mention the following:

- 1) Synod declared an appeal from an elder of Lynden not legally before synod, on the ground that the appellant's disagreement was not actually with a decision of Classis West, but with the fact that his consistory adopted the advice of Classis. He should, therefore, have protested to his consistory rather than attempt an appeal from classis to synod.
- 2) Another attempted appeal was rejected because it did not meet the Agenda deadline, though it very well could have done so.
- 3) Synod rejected an overture from Hull to change the constituency of the Mission Committee to all eastern members.
- 4) Synod adopted an overture of South Holland to include in our *Psalter* the ecumenical creeds (Apostles', Nicene, Athanasian), decided to add the Chalcedonian Creed, and gave the matter of execution in the hands of a committee.
- 5) After considerable discussion and after recommending to the Advisory Committee, Synod rejected an overture of Southwest concerning Student Aid on the ground of Article 46 of the Church Order.
- 6) Several routine decisions were taken concerning our Foreign Mission work. Perhaps the two most important were: a) Authorization to call a second missionary for Singapore "should this prove necessary and acceptable to the Session of the Evangelical Reformed Church." b) Authorization to take collections in the churches toward the financial

support of another student from Singapore, Mr. Jaikishin Mahtani, who will be arriving D.V., this summer.

Synod next took up the report of Advisory Committee I. It was the task of this committee to advise synod on the many and difficult items related to Domestic Missions. It is impossible to include here a report on the lengthy discussions on these matters. Suffice it to say that synod wrestled long and hard with certain items; and it is to be hoped that some solutions were reached. Time will tell. We report the following:

- 1) Synod approved the continuation of labors in the Birmingham, Alabama field, but also authorized the use of Rev. Van Overloop for the discovery of new fields of labor.
- 2) After lengthy discussion, Synod approved the calling of a missionary for Jamaica by First Church. It also adopted a "Policy for Missions in Jamaica." It also stipulated that the missionary was to have an assistant for at least 6 to 9 months of the year, and that this assistant was to be either a retired minister or a minister on loan from one of our congregations.
- 3) Synod also discussed at length the matter of making provision for our field in Ripon, California. In connection with this, there was the problem of differences concerning jurisdiction among Redlands, Hope-Walker, and the Mission Committee. Synod made decisions designed to resolve these differences; and again, time will tell as to their success. As far as positive action is concerned, the major decision was to appoint Hope-Redlands the calling church to call a missionary for Ripon.

If my memory and my notes serve me correctly, to Committee III goes the honor that all its advice was adopted as presented and without being sent back for reformulation. The following items of interest may be mentioned:

- 1) The Committee to Index Synodical Decisions was admonished to complete its task.
- 2) The Report of the Study Committee re Synodical Assessments was adopted: to continue our present method of assessments.
- 3) Various items of the Contact Committee's Report were dealt with. We may mention the fact that synod authorized the committee to send two members to confer with the committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America and to be observers at their Synod in the latter part of June. Synod also authorized the committee to explore the matter of sister-church relationships with the E.R.C. of Singapore.
- 4) Theological School matters were also the assignment of this committee. Here we may mention: a)



Synod's decision to express to the churches the need for students. b) Synod's approval of a proposal from the TSC re special gifts and bequests. In this connection, synod also approved expenditure of up to \$10,000 for the purchase of word processing equipment from this special fund. c) Synod approved a proposal to strengthen the academic requirements of the seminary department of our school. The purpose of this change was to provide the faculty with more objective standards in guiding and advising our students. There was considerable discussion of this matter at synod. And in the course of this discussion it was brought out that the faculty does not simply apply standards and requirements in "hard-nose" fashion, but deals with students on a personal basis—as one professor put it, almost in "grandfatherly" fashion.

Advisory Committee IV has the unenviable task of dealing with all financial matters. It wrestled with problems related to Subsidy Requests, in connection with which it was brought out again that it

is very important for each classis to do its homework before it passes subsidy requests on to synod. Most important of this committee's work was the proposed budget for fiscal 1984. Understand, this committee does not *make* the budget; it merely tabulates all the budgetary decisions of synod throughout its sessions. And then the committee must make recommendations as to how to meet the budget. The outcome? The committee reported that if the full amount of the 1984 budget were to be reached, the assessments would be \$425.50 per family per year. Taking into account the estimated surplus for 1983 and various other factors, however, the committee advised setting assessments at \$350.00 per family per year—substantially the same as last year.

For a complete report, see the 1983 Acts.

May the Lord bless the decisions taken unto the welfare of our churches and of the cause of His church in the world!

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## COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

# At the Point of the Wedge

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

(Transcript of the commencement address delivered at the Graduation Program of our Seminary, June 7, 1983 at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Walker, Mich.)

Graduates Gritters and Hanko, Brethren of the Synod and Theological School Committee, Faculty Colleagues, and Beloved Brethren and Sisters:

Our gathering tonight is in honor of our two candidates; they are our guests of honor. And this occasion of graduation calls for congratulations to our candidates. For me—and I am sure also for my colleagues—there is always an element of nostalgia in graduation, because it means the end of the way. As far as the faculty-student relationship is concerned, we say farewell to you as students. Nevertheless, this graduation is an occasion for joy, also for us. We rejoice with you that after many years you have attained to your goal; and our hope and prayer is certainly that the Lord may soon provide places for you in the ministry of our churches.

You, as candidates, belong to a unique group. I say that not so much from the point of view of the fact that the diplomas which you shall receive tonight are relatively rare and mark you as belonging

to a rather small group of men who have graduated from a small and little known institution, but especially from the point of view of the fact that those diplomas are unique in *character*. They mark you as candidates for the ministry in our Protestant Reformed Churches, that is, as candidates for the ministry in the true church, that is, as candidates for the ministry in the purest manifestation of the body of Christ on earth.

It is my purpose in this graduation address to call your attention to that unique position, and I do that under the theme:

### AT THE POINT OF THE WEDGE

- I. The Wedge and Its Point
- II. The Point of the Point
- III. Our Calling To Stand At That Point

### The Wedge and Its Point

You will have detected immediately that there is a figure of speech in my subject: the figure of the wedge. If you consult any good dictionary, you will find that a wedge is one of the six basic mechanical devices, along with, for example, the wheel, the inclined plane, and others. Such a wedge may be de-



fined as a piece of metal, thick at one end, tapering to a point, or thin edge, at the other, which is used in such processes as the splitting of wood and of rocks. From this basic idea it has obtained a secondary usage in the area of military science and military tactics. It is used to refer to a body of troops or soldiers that is drawn up in the form of a wedge. It belonged, for example, to the group of formations which was possible under the phalanx arrangement for which Alexander the Great was noted in ancient times. It is to that latter idea of the wedge in the military sense that the poet John Milton refers somewhere in the lines:

In warlike muster they appear,  
In rhombs, and wedges, and half-moons, and wings.

That figure of the wedge has been and may appropriately be applied to the position of the true church in the midst of the world. That true church is not to be conceived, as some theologians have suggested, in terms of a wheel with its hub and spokes, so that all the various churches here in the midst of the world, with their differences, are like those spokes: each approaching the center, the hub, the true church, but from various positions and various directions. That is not the idea of the true church of Jesus Christ in the midst of the world. Much more appropriate is the idea of the wedge. That true church is like a wedge, a military wedge, like a body of troops drawn up in the form of a wedge, moving through history, moving through this present world. At the point of the wedge stands the true church in its purest manifestation; and trailing back from that point are various other churches, still to some degree representing the true church, but in increasingly lesser degrees of purity and truth. That is the basic idea of the figure of the wedge in my address tonight.

That true church here in the world, remember, is known and clearly discernible by the well-known three marks, distinguishing marks, which our Belgic Confession of Faith mentions in Article 29. It is known—and we must always remember that—not by its membership. There have been those, you know, who have accused us at times of understanding the idea of the true church in that latter sense. And then they have flung in our faces sometimes the taunt, "You Protestant Reformed people think that you are the only ones who are going to heaven, that everyone else is going to hell; you think that you are the only elect, and that all the elect are found in the Protestant Reformed Churches." That is nonsense, of course! The true church is not marked by its membership, nor by the holiness of its membership, nor by the elect character of its membership, or any such thing. The true church is characterized by the marks, namely: the pure

preaching of the Word, the proper administration of the holy sacraments, and the proper exercise of Christian discipline. Those marks, therefore, may be said to represent the point of the wedge. True, it is the *church* which is known by those marks which is at the point. But it is those marks, after all, which represent the real nature, the essential character, of the point. If you ask the question, "Where is the point of the wedge?" the answer is: the point of the wedge is where those marks are.

Now among those marks which I just mentioned, the pure preaching of the Word, or the confession of the truth, may be singled out as the chief, the principal mark. I will not spend much time on arguing that point. On that pure preaching of the Word the other marks depend. From that pure preaching of the Word the other marks grow. That is also the position, for example, of the Public Declaration of Agreement to which our synodical delegates assented at the beginning of our Synod. You read in that Public Declaration: "Of all the marks by which the true church distinguishes itself from all human societies, the Confession of the Truth must be mentioned in the first place." The Formula of Subscription similarly lays exclusive stress on that confession of the truth and on the necessity of preaching and teaching that truth of the Word of God faithfully.

From that point of view, the point of the wedge is, in a word, our Reformed faith according to the Three Forms of Unity. Not, you understand, next to or instead of the Word of God! Of course not! But it constitutes the point of the wedge because those confessions, as the Formula of Subscription and the Public Declaration of Agreement both state, do fully agree with the Word of God. To that confession of the truth, that pure preaching of the gospel, we are committed. We are committed diligently to teach it and faithfully to defend it. We are committed never to contradict it by public preaching or writing. That is the vow of every officebearer; and that will be the vow of our candidates when, the Lord willing, they will be ordained in the future. Moreover, that commitment is an antithetical one. We are committed not only to reject all errors that militate against that truth, and particularly the errors of Arminianism, which are condemned in the Canons of Dordrecht. But we are committed to refute and to contradict those errors, and to exert ourselves to keep the church free from them.

Such, briefly, is the character of the point of the wedge.

### **The Point of the Point**

But we may be, and we must be, even more specific.

Negatively, you understand, we as Protestant Re-



formed Churches are not simply Reformed in the confessional sense of the word if that means that we *merely* stand where Reformed churches stood 350 years ago at Dordt. We must remember that. We are not, and we may not represent ourselves to be merely "conservatively Reformed," as many others in our day still attempt to represent themselves. We are not that, and we may not represent ourselves as such, either at home or on the mission field!

Positively, I want to stress that we occupy a distinctive position, and we have a distinctive heritage, and we proclaim a distinctive message. And I mean distinctive, not merely as over against the ecclesiastical world at large, or even the "evangelical" ecclesiastical world at large, but in distinction from the world of Reformed churches. It is to this that I allude when I speak of the point of the point.

Why is that? Why is it that we have a distinctive position and a distinctive heritage and a distinctive message?

That is not, you understand, because we have something *essentially* and *principally* more or new or additional in relation to our confessions. O no! We stand foursquare on the basis of our Reformed Confessions. Period! But that we have a distinctive heritage is due to the fact that the wedge of the true church moves through history. We do not stand at Dordt any longer; we live in the latter part of the twentieth century. And when that wedge moves through history, in the process of that movement the point of the wedge is sharpened. Better put, the Lord our God Himself sharpens the point, causing the true church here in the world to develop, to grow, to be enriched in the truth, and to be enriched in the pure preaching of the gospel. Always, remember, this development and enrichment is in the line of the confessions; and usually, if not always, it takes place through the process of crisis and conflict. That is what happened to us as Protestant Reformed Churches. Hence, today we have and we maintain our Reformed Confessions; but we do so, in the first place, over against the errors of 1924. And, by the way, do not imagine that somehow over the years those errors have vanished into thin air somewhere. They have not! They are everywhere in the ecclesiastical world today! Very really! You don't have to search far to find them anywhere in the church. We have that heritage over against the error that there is grace for the reprobate; over against the error that the gospel is a general offer of grace and salvation to all men; over against the error that sin is restrained through common grace, so that depravity is not total; and over against the error that the unregenerate man can do much good. That is our heritage! The point has been sharpened!

That point was sharpened once more in the years around 1953. We have our Reformed heritage as maintained and developed over against the errors of that time, particularly the errors of Heynsianism and of the Liberated theology, errors concerning the covenant and concerning baptism and concerning a general, conditional promise. And again, let me remind you that those errors have not evaporated into thin air. They have not! Turn where you will in the ecclesiastical world today—and I speak from experience—you will find these errors everywhere.

And so beloved, it is quite appropriate to speak tonight of *the point of the point*! We have a distinctive heritage. And that distinctive heritage is not only negative: it is not only that we stand *against* certain things. No church can exist by mere negatives. That heritage is positive as well. We have a heritage!

That heritage can be summarized in various ways, but permit me briefly to spell it out tonight as follows.

In general, that heritage consists in the truth of the organic conception of the development of the covenant of God, in connection with the organic development of all things, according to the sovereign counsel of God, and along the lines of sovereign election and reprobation. Let me just spell that out very briefly.

First of all, that means that God in the beginning created the world not simply a mass of creatures, but a cosmos, an organic whole. He created it in an ascending scale, from the non-living, or anorganic matter, to plants, to the animals as living souls, to man, who was created in the image of God, in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. The center of that cosmos lay in the heart of man as he came from the hand of his Creator. And through that heart of man the entire world, the entire cosmos, was united in the covenant fellowship of friendship with the heart of God. That was the original state of things. And there you have, already in the beginning, the fundamental idea of God's covenant.

Secondly, in that original harmonious relationship a breach was struck. That breach was struck, however, not in the *essential* relation of things. The world did not become a chaos. And man did not become an animal, or insane, or a devil. No, the original organic relationship of the universe was maintained by God by His providence. But the breach was struck in the heart of man. It was a spiritual, ethical breach. The image of God in him was perverted into its diametrical opposite. Man became totally depraved. He became an enemy of God. He became, subsequently, the proper object of the wrath of God. The result of that was death:



death for Adam, death for all his posterity by nature. And the result was, too, that the whole creation, which stood related to man, came under the curse of God. Everything came to exist in the cycle of vanity.

A third stage was brought about, however, by grace in Christ Jesus. We must remember that the fall and its result certainly came about through the wilful disobedience on man's part, and that man in that connection is responsible. There can be no question about that! We must also remember, however, that this fall and disobedience came about not outside of, but *according to* the sovereign counsel of the Most High. Because of that, also through the fall God attained His purpose. The Lord God, beloved, is sovereign, absolutely sovereign! That purpose of God, from before the foundation of the world, was to establish and realize His everlasting covenant of friendship in Christ Jesus! It was His purpose to establish and realize that covenant in Christ, Who is, according to Colossians 1, the Firstborn of every creature, and that, too, as the first begotten from the dead! The purpose of God was not to repair and restore what Adam and the devil and sin have spoiled, perhaps; but it was to raise up His creation through the deep way of sin and death and the grave and resurrection to heavenly glory—to raise it up to the glory of His heavenly house and His heavenly tabernacle in the new creation, as it shall presently be revealed in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. That purpose of God He accomplishes and reaches, remember, along the lines of sovereign election and sovereign reprobation. Grace is not common; grace is not general. But it is always particular, for the elect alone. And by that grace the kernel, the elect kernel, is saved, while the shell is rejected and perishes. Because of that, there is created here in the midst of the world the antithesis. What does that word mean, that word which is more and more forgotten in our day? It means this, that on the one hand, from a *natural* point of view, men here in the midst of the world have all things in common. God, you see, still maintains providentially the organism of the race. But that antithesis means, on the other hand, that from a *spiritual* point of view there is contrast, absolute contrast, and the conflict of sin and grace.

Such, briefly, is the point of the point.

### Our Calling To Stand At That Point

It is our calling to stand there.

That is the calling of all our churches, our people, the calling of all of us. But it is especially the calling of our ministers. And tonight I want to emphasize that it is the calling of you two young ministers-to-be. That is your calling, especially your calling, by virtue of your very position as ministers.

What is involved in that?

Briefly, it means that you must instruct and instruct and instruct—in pulpit and in catechism class, at home or on the mission field. Always, of course, that instruction must be according to the capacity of those whom you are instructing. It means that the minister of the Word of God must indoctrinate and indoctrinate and indoctrinate! There is nothing that is more important in all your work than that. And it means that you must warn and warn and warn against all heresies repugnant thereto! I do not mean this, you understand, in the sense that you are always going to be speaking in the pulpit in the most direct sense of the things which I have just outlined tonight. A minister must not ride a hobby horse. But I mean it in the sense that these truths must *permeate* all your preaching and teaching, and that with respect to them you must be specifically specific! That is your calling.

That is necessary. Do not ever begin to think that it is not necessary. It is absolutely necessary. If you don't do that, you will soon find yourselves and your churches no longer at the point of the wedge, but somewhere back farther from that point. A rather popularly stated rule applies here: "Use it, or lose it!" But the deepest reason, of course, why that is your calling is the fact that it is the calling from God Himself. For this heritage is from Him!

That calling is difficult—very difficult. To stand at the point of the wedge, at the point of the point, beloved, can be a very, very lonely position—sometimes lonely even in the midst of your own church. I know that. I know it by experience. Most of you, my colleagues in the ministry, do not know that by experience. I do. I literally experienced that among my fellow ministers in 1953, out west; I had to stand strictly alone. That is a lonely position. Don't forget that! It may very well happen again some day. Sometimes I am afraid that I see telltale signs that such times are going to come again some day for us! Further, it is difficult also because none of us—not you, not I—wants to stand in that position as we are by nature. We want to run away from it!

Therefore, my concluding word is: may God give you candidates and give us all His grace, that we may be willing and ready to stand at the point of the point of the wedge!

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



## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

# Phariseeism — Still Prevalent

Rev. K. Koole

*"And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, this Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."*  
*Luke 15:2*

Phariseeism! What an odious word. Its connotations today rank right up there with "prejudice" and "discrimination." In dealing with "Phariseeism," what it is and what it is not, we raise a warning against a very common evil in Protestantism today, one which, because of belittling of the clear and pointed application of God's precepts in the preaching, can only continue to strangle Protestantism in its icy grip.

That we should maintain that Protestantism is being characterized to an increasing measure by Phariseeism might surprise one. When one first looks at the church world it is not readily apparent that the Christian church is infected with self-righteous pharisees. Today the churches are filled with people who claim to despise a phariseeistic, holier-than-thou attitude. This is the one thing that is preached from the pulpit. If it is one thing they will not do it is to condemn others of being publicans and sinners. They will accuse others of no sin. How then they can be phariseeistic? The Pharisees condemned everybody but themselves. Everybody else was worse. They were perfect. Where do you find that in the modern Christian church?

Today, if anything, people go to the opposite extreme. In fact, it is to escape the charge of phariseeism that many refuse to perform the task of Christian discipline or censure. To do so you would have to make judgments. You would have to rebuke publicans, those who become rich through dishonest means, warning them of exclusion from the Kingdom; or you would be forced to excommunicate adulterers, those living with another's spouse. And that they will not do, lest they condemn another. In fact, if *you* practice discipline they will accuse *you* of phariseeism. Today those living as greedy publicans, harlots, or in other sins have the implicit approval of the church. They will not charge any of their members with breaking God's commandments. They want nothing to do with any possible charge of phariseeism.

So, all this makes the modern Christian church

increasingly free from phariseeism. Right? Wrong! And one could not be more so. One must not imagine that by refusing to rebuke any for sin he, therefore, has freed himself from the sin of phariseeism. Nor must one imagine that a text such as Luke 15:2 is to be interpreted in such a manner. To do so is to reveal a sad misunderstanding of what phariseeism is. The fact remains that the Christian church encourages the sin of phariseeism whether she will admit it or not.

The decisive question is not, do you ever rebuke a man for living as a cheater, or a woman as a harlot? If the wife commits adultery or the husband cheats on his income tax, the spouse is to offer no rebuke? That is not the question. Nor is it a matter first of all whether you see *others* as publicans and sinners. But the decisive question is, are you ready to confess that *you* are a publican and a sinner, and so are worthy of condemnation? That is *the* question.

The fact of the matter was that what the Pharisees accused those with whom Christ was associating was true. They were guilty of cheating and of harlotry. The sin of phariseeism is not that you reprimand cheaters, harlots, and drunkards, warning them that those defiled with such sins can not inherit the kingdom. We may be sure that Christ rebuked them. The epistles are full of His rebukes. Have you never read James 4:4? The question is, do you number yourself among, will you allow the world to identify you with, those publicans and sinners? That is where the Pharisees erred first of all. They would not admit guilt to such sins. They were scandalized at the thought. Rather, they thanked God that they were not as others, whom they could name, were.

It is here with respect to phariseeism that contemporary Protestantism errs so grievously. She is content to leave her members in their phariseeism. How many declare from the pulpits that as a congregation we are publicans and sinners, cheaters and adulterers, worthy of condemnation? And again, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" How many will stand with David, who had murdered Uriah and committed adultery with



Bathsheba, and hear Nathan the prophet say, "Thou art the man!"? How many will then say, "I have sinned against the Lord"? Not many. In such an environment phariseeism grows unabated.

The chief fault of the scribes and Pharisees was not that they said that the publicans and sinners did not deserve salvation and were not even worth admonishing (though they did say that, revealing their evil spirit); but their chief fault was that they refused to identify themselves with the undeserving. This is a serious matter. Those who refuse to identify themselves with damn-worthy publicans and sinners are numbered amongst the "just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). And seeing not one's need of repentance, they needed not Jesus as Christ.

The publicans and sinners knew that they were not just. What they knew was that, because of their sin, they were damn-worthy. Therefore they sought Him out Who alone could save them from the curse of the law. It was because the Pharisees would not confess that they were damn-worthy, which one must do before he will seek out the Christ of the Scriptures, that they would not humbly draw nigh to Him as Savior. The question must be asked, "How many are led to see that they are damn-worthy before the law?"

A consequence of phariseeism is that men seek a different Christ than that of the Scriptures. The Pharisees did. They wanted a Messiah who patted them on the back, who said, "You are pretty good people. I am impressed with your zeal and dedication. You have some faults, but they are minor compared to your virtues. I would be honored to have you select me as your Messiah. Will you please, please follow me? I would be forever in your debt." That's the kind of Christ which appealed to them, the same kind that appeals to the Christian church today. Modern Evangelists have given them *that* kind of a Messiah; one who tells people they are pretty good, and who is indebted to them for choosing him. Their phariseeism is left intact.

To recapitulate, phariseeism is not first how you view others. That is included, but phariseeism does not start there. That is just a symptom. Phariseeism starts with how you view yourself, namely, not as a damn-worthy sinner. If you really see yourself as a publican you cannot despise others, or draw yourself up in haughty superiority. But if you despise others it can only be because you have too high an opinion of yourself.

The natural tendency of man is to have a high opinion of himself. That is his phariseeism. Who cannot find that in himself? The word must declare, "Repent of that first of all. Repent of that before you repent even of being a publican and a sinner."

First we must repent of our self-righteousness, our phariseeism, then we can go on to enumerate the rest. Until self-righteousness is confessed, it is vain to confess the rest.

Let me add, of this the ministers of the gospel who bring that convicting word must be ever so mindful. It is so easy to say, "I will take this sharply pointed text, and hurl it at the people. They need to be pierced." But the Spirit says, "Have you hurled it at yourself first of all? If not, do not address it to the congregation, lest behind it be the wrong spirit; yours, not Christ's." Only after one has humbled himself and applied the convicting word to oneself can one preach, not as a Pharisee to publicans, but as a sinner to publicans in Christ's name.

In light of the above the question arises anew, whether it can be said that the modern Christian church is in the grips of phariseeism. People protest that they do not have a high view of self. People will say, "Look, I do not think I am better than the publicans. Do not accuse me of phariseeism. I can identify with publicans. I will eat with them. (I will even drink with them.)"

How correct then is our contention?

There is a rather simple question that gets to the heart of phariseeism in self and in man today. The question that needs to be asked is, "How many of the church today are ready to confess, 'I, by nature, am totally, completely depraved? How many are willing to say that in me, (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing?' " (Romans 7:18).

The answer is, not many. Apart from grace, nobody. This is that one doctrine concerning which today, there is a deafening silence.

It is not enough simply to say, as man is wont, "I'll admit that I am not perfect. I have my faults too. I am no better than my friends (though no worse either)." Such a "confession" is not sufficient enough to dissociate oneself from the Scribes and Pharisees of Christ's day. One must come to the point where one confesses that one's best works are as filthy rags. To that the doctrine of Total Depravity drives one. Who will be driven that far?

When the sadly neglected doctrine of Total Depravity is properly preached, it does not take long for the phariseeism in man's heart to begin to surface. Who wants to confess that in himself there is to be found *no good thing* to commend oneself to God?

As long as the doctrine of man's Total Depravity and the absence even of a natural *inclination* towards good is not preached, phariseeism will flourish, however much the church disputes it.

Today religious men clothe themselves with the cloak of publicans but their deeply rooted pharisee-



ism remains firmly in place. And today the great majority of preaching scarcely makes even the most feeble attempt to uproot it from the heart of the listener.

All this is a serious matter. It was in the day when the word the church preached ceased direct-

ing all as unrighteous to flee to God for Righteousness, and phariseeism of the heart had the church's approval, that the axe was laid to the root of the tree, judgment fell on the house of Israel. So again the day draws close at hand. Let this word then be uttered again, "Flee the wrath to come."

## IN HIS FEAR

# The Distinctive Traits of the Godly Christian Home

*Pastor Arie Den Hartog*

Recently I was asked to speak for one of the Adult Fellowship meetings of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore on the subject "Setting Up A Godly Christian Home." This subject is of particular relevance for the young people of the church here. Most of them were raised in pagan homes. They were therefore not taught from childhood on what a Christian home is. They do not have the example of a parental home after which to pattern their own homes. When they establish their own homes they must needs be radically different from the homes they grew up in. How thankful unto the Lord we in our Protestant Reformed Churches should be for our Christian homes. How thankful we as young people should be that we have the model of our parental homes to follow in establishing our own homes. Perhaps we do not appreciate the great significance of this because we take it all so much for granted. For some of us this blessing of the Lord is greater than for others. Sad to say, there are homes in our midst that bear little distinctive Christian character. The families of such homes are in danger of being cut off from the covenant of God in their generations. There are other homes in the midst of our churches however which are shining examples of truly Christian homes. We thank the Lord especially for these. These are a testimony for the whole church.

It is good for all of us to ask the question, what really makes a Christian home Christian? What distinguishes such a home from the ungodly homes of the world? More distinctively, we ought to ask the question, what ought to characterize our homes as truly Reformed Christians, even distinguishing our homes from others that call themselves Christian?

It is of course according to spiritual characteris-

tics that our homes must be different. From a natural point of view our homes are much the same as those of the world. Some of us may live in beautiful palaces, others in simple lowly and plain homes. Some of us may have very beautiful furnishings in our homes; others may have nothing more than the barest necessities. It does not really matter. Let us not be overly concerned about this. Let us not spend all our time and energy making our homes only physically beautiful. Let us be especially concerned that our homes are spiritually beautiful. From a spiritual point of view our homes must be radically different from those of the world. I want to present to you a list of twelve spiritual characteristics that ought to characterize the godly, Christian home. To do that we will need the space of two *Standard Bearer* articles.

The home of the Christian is first of all a place where the fear of God is. God is known and worshiped and served as the only true living God of heaven and earth. God is known in that home as the absolutely sovereign Lord and God of heaven and earth. It is profoundly known in that home that God is a God of perfect righteousness and holiness, a God therefore Who hates sin and evil with divine and perfect wrath, a wrath which is terrible to those who live in sin and wickedness. He is a God Who judges all men in perfect righteousness. He curses the house of the wicked and blesses the habitation of the just. Though this God is a God of just wrath to the ungodly, in His holiness He is a God of faithfulness and mercy and lovingkindness to those who fear Him and who according to His grace and Spirit live by His commandments. In the truly Christian home all of this is known about God. Therefore husband and wife in this home live



in fear and trembling before Him. They reverence and worship this God in humility and godly submission. Children in the Christian home are taught of the infinite greatness of God and of His perfect holiness so that they too learn to fear before Him. The principle of the fear of the Lord determines all that goes on in the home of the godly. It determines what things are done and what things are avoided. It determines the very motive and spirit with which all the activities in the home are conducted.

In the second place, the home of the godly is where the love of God reigns. That is of course immediately related to the fear of God. God is feared out of the motive of love and not out of the motive of dread and terror. In the home of the godly the Lord God is loved for all that He is and all that He has done and is doing through His blessed Son the Lord Jesus Christ. In the home of the Christian there is a great delight in God, there is constant seeking of His blessed presence and fellowship. It is the greatest desire of the godly family to do only those things which are pleasing in the sight of the Lord God and those things which bring glory to His name.

The love of God in Jesus Christ is evident also in the godly home in the relationships of the members of that home. The godly husband loves his wife, and the godly wife loves her husband. This they do according to the operation of the Spirit and grace of God in their hearts. This goes much further than a mere natural affection or shallow romantic attraction. The love that there is between the husband and wife in the godly home is the holy love of God in Christ Jesus. In this love the husband and wife give thanks unto the Lord for each other. In that love they delight to live with each other in communion of life, having been made one flesh. In that love the husband gives himself, as Christ gave Himself for His church, to nourish and support and sanctify his wife. In that love the wife submits herself unto her husband, to serve him as his loving helpmeet. This is her life and joy. Radically different from the world in this respect is the home of the godly. Because of this love the husband and wife live in life-long faithfulness and devotion to each other. The husband does not, when his wife gets older and loses some of her physical beauty, look for a younger and prettier woman. He does not lust after the women of the world but rejoices in the wife of his youth and is satisfied with her love. The wife of the godly home does not go flirting after the men of this world, dressing and tempting them to lust after her. She is discreet and chaste because of her love for her God-given husband.

The children of the home of the godly are also taught that love of God. They are taught that God must be loved with all the heart and soul and

strength and mind. They are taught how God, as their creator and redeemer in Christ Jesus, as their faithful provider and protector, as the God of all mercy and lovingkindness is worthy of that love. The children of the home of the godly are taught also that they must reveal the love of God in their relationships one toward another. They are taught that it is a grievous sin for them to live in strife and bitterness against each other.

The love of God is reflected in the home of the godly also in the attitude that is there towards outsiders. The home of the godly is a place of genuine Christian hospitality. Especially fellow members of the church of Jesus Christ are often found in that home. There they find comfort and counsel, there they find fellowship and love in the Lord. In the home of the godly there is hearty concern for the poor and the needy. The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, though she is very busy with her own family, does not fail to stretch out her hand to the poor. There is a general attitude of respect and righteousness toward the neighbor, in the home of the godly, because of this love. The home of the godly surely is not a place of gossip and slander and evil speaking about the neighbor. It is not the place where the neighbor is dealt with deceitfully and craftily. All the dealings with the neighbor are done in such a love and justice that always the good of the neighbor is sought, even when this means financial sacrifice and loss. How important this is. How sad it is when Christian homes have the reputation of being corrupt and deceitful. What a reproach this brings to the name of the Lord, what dishonoring of His name and glory.

In the home of the godly there is a covenant consciousness. It is known in that home that God is the wonderful covenant God Who has established His covenant with believers and their children. The knowledge of this covenant is the source of great joy and blessedness in this home. In the consciousness of this covenant, children are brought forth in this home. Children are not brought forth merely for the pleasure and joy of the parents because they are so cute and nice and because they can bring much glory to their parents. Children are brought forth in the Christian home according to the command and obligation of God's covenant. They are brought forth in the hope of God's covenant promise for succeeding generations. It is known in this home that the woman is saved through child-bearing. This determines the attitude toward birth control and the number of children that are found in the home of the godly. Though the whole world today is strongly emphasizing birth control (in Singapore even the government is forcing families to limit their children to two), it remains true that one commonly finds many children in the home of



the godly. This is not because of rebellion against human governments but rather because of a godly desire to bring forth the children of the covenant. Because of this covenant consciousness, children are brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord. The primary concern of the parents of that home is not merely to give their children a good education by the standards of the world or to prepare them for a financially stable and prosperous future. It is a far greater concern of the parents in this home to raise the children in such a way that they grow up to acknowledge and fear God and to serve Him through all of their life in the future. Parents in that home are willing to make all kinds of sacrifices so that the children of the home may get a good Christian education. These parents themselves spend much time in their home to teach their children out of the Word of God. They seek to be a godly example to their children in all that they do. Indeed, this must be one of the striking characteristics of the home of the godly that makes it so very different from the world. This spiritual characteristic is perhaps of all most sadly lacking in many so-called Christian homes.

The home of the godly is where one finds a deep love for the cause of God's church and kingdom. This can be seen first of all in that the Lord's day is

devoutly observed in this home. The family of this home goes faithfully to the house of God to worship God together. The Lord's day in that home is as much as possible sanctified for the Lord's use. The love for the church and kingdom in that home is reflected also in that not only the worship services but the other activities of the church are well attended. Children from that home go faithfully to catechism classes. When they go, they go well prepared because they have been faithfully instructed by their parents. Young people attend young people's society eagerly and zealously. Father and mother in that home do not make themselves so busy with the things of this world that they are not able to attend church activities. Furthermore, one finds in this home a hearty and zealous support of the church. The church and her ministry in this world are constantly prayed for. When it comes to the financial support of the church and Christian school the home of the godly is known by how liberally and cheerfully it gives of all of the abundance that the Lord has given. The home of the godly is where real and great sacrifices are made for the sake of the kingdom. There is there a willingness to forego some of the riches of this world in order that the church and kingdom of Christ may be seen to prosper.

## News From New Zealand



Lower Hutt (Wellington) Protestant Reformed Fellowship from Wellington and Palmerston North together.

Dear Brethren and Sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ:

Here are two more photos for you. The first one was made at the Lord's Day 17/4/1983 after the service, in the church. You see Rev. *John A. Heys* and *Mrs. Heys* together with the Brethren and Sisters, and some of their children, from Wellington and Palmerston North.

The second one was made at the Palmerston North Railway Station, when the *Silverfern-Express* from Wellington to Auckland (a total of twelve hours travelling) stopped there at 10:30 A.M.



Palmerston North Railway station

which gave some of the Palmerston North people the opportunity to say farewell to Rev. *John A. Heys* and *Mrs. Heys*. The following day they would go to Singapore, and some days later to Tokyo, and finally to the U.S.A., going to see their married children and—back home—the Holland Congregation.

Quite a few tears were shed.

Yours in the love of Christ,

*J. P. deKlerk*



# The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland

*Professor Adam Loughridge*

## [A Word of Introduction:

Within the last two or three years the Committee of Contact of our Protestant Reformed Churches has had some contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. While the contact to this point has been limited to a few exchanges of letters, various ways of increasing this contact have been explored. One of these ways which was agreed upon was an exchange of articles to be published in our respective church papers which would serve the purpose of acquainting the members of our separate churches with each other. The following is an article which was prepared by one of their professors which tells something of the history of their denomination.

To our people who are relatively unacquainted with the history of presbyterianism, especially in the British Isles, some of the references in this article may be unfamiliar. While it is impossible to clarify all the obscure points, a few comments may be helpful. The references to "Covenanters" and "Covenants" is a crucial part of the history of this branch of Presbyterianism. In the days of the second reformation in both Scotland and Ireland, efforts were made on the part of the rulers to foist a hierarchical form of church government on the churches so as to bring them under the control of the king. These efforts were resisted in various ways, one of which was the signing of national covenants by the clergy and people which bound the people to resist state encroachments on the church which was under the rule of Christ alone. These covenants also bound the people to seek reformation in religion, doctrine, liturgy, and life among the people of the realm. For these covenants the people suffered untold persecution.

There is also a reference in the article to a "Regium Donum." After bitter persecution on the part of Charles II against the Covenanters, the king made various concessions to the Covenanters which gave them some freedom again, but which nevertheless, in a subtle way, brought the church effectively under the control of the state. This caused a split among the Covenanters, for some of them resisted also these overtures of peace brought by the magistrate as another attempt to gain control of the church.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (Covenanters) is the denomination in this

country and Canada which has its roots in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland and Scotland. With this latter denomination our Committee of Contact has also had some correspondence and meetings.

We hope that this article (and other promised articles) will acquaint our people with those with whom we have had closer contact in recent years.

Prof. H. Hanko]

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland has its roots in the second Scottish Reformation of 1638 to 1649. Under the leadership of John Knox, Scotland enjoyed the blessings of Reformation a century earlier and Presbyterianism was formally established in 1560. The principles that he held so dear began to be eroded soon after his death and more particularly from 1618 by the opposition from the Royal House of Stuart. A second Reformation was necessary and this was thoroughly accomplished in Scotland by the signing of the National Covenant in 1638 and the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643. These Covenants pledged to recover the purity and liberty of the gospel, to preserve the reformed religion in Scotland and to work for the reformation of religion in the three kingdoms according to the Word of God. The charter for this programme was prepared at Westminster by able and godly men in the form of a Confession of Faith, Catechisms, a form of Church Government and a Directory for Public Worship.

The northern province of Ulster in Ireland had been progressively settled from 1607 by Scots Presbyterians and English Puritans. A succession of ministers like Robert Blair, Josias Welch and John Livingstone were greatly used in propagating this faith, and the chaplains of the Scottish Army who came to Ulster to quell the rebellion by Roman Catholics in 1641 organized the Church on a regular Presbyterian footing in June 1642. In 1644 the Solemn League and Covenant was comprehensively signed in Ulster. A season of revival followed and by 1662 there were 68 ministers committed to a testimony that was Presbyterian, Reformed and Covenanted. Sixty-one of these ministers were deposed from office for non-conformity in 1662. Ten years later the majority of those who remained of this faithful band accepted a Regium Donum from Charles II and from that time a diminishing minority of Presbyterians adhered to the Covenants. They



were encouraged by regular visits from Alexander Peden between 1682 and 1685 and formed themselves into Societies on the Scottish pattern. They survived the days of persecution, stood apart from the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church and formed the root from which the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland grew.

The position of the Covenanters in Ireland after 1690 was a difficult one. They had no ministers and no meeting houses. They were scattered in comparatively small groups where the Scottish influence was strongest. Their seemingly hopeless position was revived in 1692 when David Houston, an ardent Covenanter who had been well commended by James Renwick, threw in his lot with them and served them faithfully for four years until his death in 1696. Thereafter they kept in touch with their brethren in Scotland by means of correspondence and exchange of delegates. They were visited at intervals by John MacMillan, the only Reformed Presbyterian minister in Scotland at that time. Many of them crossed the North Channel to Scotland for fellowship, marriage and the baptism of their children.

### **Organization**

As the Scottish Church grew stronger following the formation of their first Presbytery in 1743, it began to show an increasing concern for the brethren in Ireland. Ministers were appointed to visit the province of Ulster regularly and their work was crowned with blessing when in 1757, William Martin was ordained. Six years later when Matthew Lynn was ordained, the first Irish Reformed Presbytery was set up. The progress of the Church was encouraging and within ten years some ten congregations were organized and four ministers ordained. One of these, William Staveley, exercised an outstanding ministry and under his leadership a further ten congregations were established.

The young Church faced difficulties due to emigration and especially through the republican movement that provoked the rebellion of 1798. But progress was made and in the new century there was a marked increase in the membership. This was mainly due to the incidence of Arianism in the Synod of Ulster and to a change of policy on the part of the Secession Synod that led to acceptance of the Regium Donum. Ten new congregations in seven years strengthened the Church to such a degree that the Presbytery was divided into four in 1810 and the first Synod met in 1811.

### **The Missionary Vision**

For some years after its constitution the Synod left most of its administrative work in the hands of the Presbyteries. In due course the burden of work

moved from the Presbyteries to Boards and Committees appointed annually by the Synod. The growth of the Church at home was first cared for as the Home Mission Board gave help and encouragement to smaller congregations. The needs of Covenanters who had emigrated to Canada and to Australia were next considered and, following the terrible famine in 1845 to 1847, a mission to Roman Catholics was organised. This important work has been carried on since then and is effectively maintained in the South and West of Ireland today. A Foreign Mission programme was begun in Syria in 1871. This continued until after the second World War when the centre of witness moved to Lebanon. Work ceased there when a new Mission was sent to Ethiopia in 1963. This promised to be a fruitful field, but the Revolution in 1975 compelled the Church to withdraw her workers. Just now a new field is being carefully and prayerfully investigated in France. The Canadian congregations of our Colonial Mission were integrated into the R.P. Church of North America in 1879, and the Australian Mission became an independent Reformed Presbyterian Church in 1965.

### **The Training of Ministers**

The Church has always set a high standard for the training of young men for the ministry. This training was formerly entrusted to the Scottish Church, but in 1854 a Theological Hall was established in Belfast. This has always been staffed by professors who were also pastors, so there has been a strong emphasis on preaching and pastoral work. The course consists of three sessions. Normally students are university graduates, though in recent years special arrangements are made for the admission of mature men of suitable gifts into the courses. An external Board of Examiners conducts a final examination for a Diploma in Theology.

In addition to the training of students for the ministry, the Church has shown concern for the training of children and Sabbath Schools have been operating successfully since 1860. An association formed in 1890 to provide young men and women with a programme for Bible Study and fellowship has been superseded in 1923 by The Covenanter Young People's Union.

### **Distinctive Doctrines and Practices**

Many of the great principles for which the Covenanters suffered in the 17th century were heartily accepted by the nation in 1690 and placed on the statute book. Others, no less tenaciously maintained, were ignored and it was for these that the Reformed Presbyterian Church specially witnessed.

In common with others, particularly the Free Church of Scotland, Reformed Presbyterians unquestioningly accept the Bible as the Word of God



and the final authority and infallible guide in all matters of faith and conduct. As a concise summary of its teaching they adhere to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. They are thus Calvinists and Protestants.

In worship, they use the Psalms only, and render their praise without instrumental accompaniment. A choir leads the praise service in about one quarter of the congregations; in the others a precentor is the praise leader.

Their testimony has much in common with other Protestant and Evangelical Churches in the area of national righteousness. Their commitment to the Scottish Covenants of 1638 and 1643 lays on them special obligations. They feel debarred from active participation in the political life of the nation under present conditions. They do not join the membership of societies which demand an oath of secrecy at initiation, and whose practices and religious ritual are in many respects unchristian. They oppose the evils of betting and gambling in every form, witness to the sanctity of the Lord's Day and condemn all participation in the traffic of intoxicating liquors, even to the extent of debarring publicans from Church Membership.

#### **Relations with Other Churches**

When the World Council of Churches was formed in 1948, the R.P. Church of Ireland promptly rejected any idea of association with such an unbiblical group and has witnessed since then against the liberal and humanistic emphasis in the Council. For several years the possibility of linking with the International Council of Christian Churches was investigated, but this too was set aside because of its inadequate reformed commitment. When the opportunity came to join the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, the invitation was readily accepted in the

hope that a small denomination, with an interest in true scriptural unity, might find encouragement and friendship in a truly reformed atmosphere. For a time this seemed the answer, but within the past eight years, disquieting trends began to appear, and certain member Churches, particularly from Holland, began to condone error in doctrine and practice.

There were demands in the Synod that the Church should withdraw from membership following the unsatisfactory nature of the 1976 R.E. Synod, but it was agreed to proceed with the appointment of a delegate to the Synod at Nimes in 1980, on the understanding that if matters relating to dual members of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in the R.E.S. and the World Council of Churches and certain defects in the discipline exercised in relation to liberal attitudes to Scripture, were not resolved to our satisfaction, steps would be taken to terminate membership. A Commission of the Synod was appointed to receive the report of our delegate to Nimes and it was unanimously agreed to withdraw from membership in August 1980.

The main strength of the Church has always been in rural areas and today the strongest congregations are in farming communities. There are 42 congregations with a communicant membership of just over 3,000, and a total church population, including adherents, of perhaps 7,000. All but six of these congregations are in the area known as Northern Ireland and are to be found where the influence of the Scots settlers of the early 17th century is strongest. The Church has full fellowship and enjoys mutual eligibility arrangements with the R.P. Churches of Scotland, Australia and North America.

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## **FROM HOLY WRIT**

# **Believing All the Prophetic Scriptures**

*Rev. G. Lubbers*

### **Chapter VII**

The "Seven Dispensations" of Scofield's Bible  
(continued)

That the Scofield "notes" do not rightly divide the Word of truth we have begun to show thus far in former chapters. However, we must now proceed with this task with unabated dedication to the

Scriptures. For the interpreting of the prophetic Scriptures is a weighty task, a sacred trust from God to His faithful servants in His church. And ever the pattern must be such that we see in Christ Jesus the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. We must be able to demonstrate that our interpretation is such that, whatso-



ever promises there are, these are Yea in Christ and in Him Amen, to the glory of God the Father.

It is the basic failure of the dispensational "exegesis" of the prophecies to cling to Christ the Head of the church. Their exegesis is such that it is weighed in the balances and is found wanting. We have attempted to show this in our criticism of Scofield's dispensation of "Innocency" and of "Conscience."

We now have arrived at what Scofield denominates the dispensation of "Human Government." This is the time from the Flood till the giving of the promise to Abraham, the father of all believers, Jew and Greek. It is not at all clear that in the teaching of Scofield this dispensation of "Human Government" ceased at the time of the giving of the promise to Abraham. In a "footnote" under Genesis 8:20 we notice that he captions the entire section from Genesis 8:20 through Genesis 11:51, as follows: "The Third Dispensation—The Third or Noahic Covenant to Genesis 9:27."

At the foot of the page 16, we find the following informative paragraph.

... under *Conscience*, as in *Innocency*, man utterly failed, and the judgment of the Flood marks the end of the second dispensation and the beginning of the third. The declaration of the Noahic Covenant subjects humanity to a new test. Its distinctive feature is the institution, for the first time, of human government—the government of man by man. The highest function is the judicial taking of life. Man is responsible to govern the world for God (sic, G.L.). That responsibility rested upon the whole race, Jew and Gentile, until the failure of Israel under the Palestinian Covenant (Deut. 28-30:1-10) brought the judgment of the Captives, when the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24; Rev. 16:14) began, and the government of the world passed exclusively into Gentile hands. (Dan 2: 36-45; Luke 21:24; Acts 15:14-17) That both Israel and the Gentiles have governed for self, not God, is sadly apparent. The judgment of the confusion of tongues ended the *racial* testing; that of the Captivity of the Jews, while the Gentile testing will end in the smiting of the image (Dan. 2) and the judgment of the nations. (Matthew 25:31-46)

The above quotation from the "notes" is meant to be a directive for the reader of the Scofield Bible. It is meant as chartering the course for the proper dividing of the word of truth. And all these Scofieldian distinctions are purported to be the unfolding of the implications of the "Noahic Covenant." This Noahic Covenant, then, subjects "humanity" to the iron-clad test whether they will rule the world "for God" or "for self." The test is: will it work to place "man over another man" for world-government?

It is important to present properly and honestly the view of Scofield, lest in our criticism we make

ourselves guilty of violating the Ninth Commandment in the Decalogue, and we, in effect, are only criticizing our own misrepresentation of Scofield, a mere caricature, instead of the actual false teaching of dispensationalist-premillennialism. Hence, we have quoted Scofield's "note" *in toto*.

Perhaps the basic error of Scofield is that he fails to interpret properly the Covenant of God with Noah, that he completely separates this Covenant from the Covenant of grace, as taught in the Genesis record. In a word: he has no room for the Christ, the heir of all things, in his representation of the "Noahic Covenant" which allegedly subjects humanity to the test whether they will rule for God. There is not one iota of Gospel, of glad-tidings in the Dispensational view of the "Noahic Covenant." This covenant is nothing but a "testing attempt" on the part of God, and it is not a manifestation of God's Covenant faithfulness!

This should put us on our guard, on our *qui vive*!

Let us not overlook the grand truth that all that Noah is, he is in sovereignly free grace; that is the only reason why Noah did not perish with the evil men of his day. Do we not read "but Noah found *grace* in the eyes of the LORD"? This was the sovereign grace of election by which Noah and his family were saved "by the water in the ark" (I Peter 3:20, 21). Noah was saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8). A careful study of such Scripture passages as Genesis 19:9; Exodus 33:12; Luke 1:30; Acts 7:46 will prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the grace, which Noah found in the eyes of the Lord, was the saving grace of elective love! It was not of works at all! Ultimately it was not that Noah was a righteous man. He was a righteous man because he "found grace" in the eyes of Jehovah, the Covenant God! It was not of works, lest any man should boast. Least of all should Noah boast from the heart of the ark, as he is saved by the water. This Flood was a picture of baptism itself, which is a matter of having a good conscience, washed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ.

This is further exemplified in the grand truth in God's gracious dealings with Noah and his generations, as they proceeded from the church of the "eight souls." It was in that church, in the ark, that we find the "holy line" from which Christ sprang, as is so clear from the geneological data in Luke 3:23-28. Christ was really in that ark in the loins of Noah, Shem, Abraham, David. That is what really kept that little bark of an ark afloat. The church is the only thing which keeps the world having meaning; she is the only meaning in world-history. The history of the world is the history of the church. Church history is world history. It was in that ark that God "remembered" Noah!



What is the biblical import of the verb to *remember*?

It is really the quintessence of God's *covenant* faithfulness. He remembers His own words and keeps them faithfully, so that not one jot or tittle remains unfulfilled by Him. Therefore, let it not be forgotten, we read that God remembers Abraham's prayer, and His promise when He liberates Lot from the destruction, and fire and brimstone which turned Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes (Gen. 19:29). And when Israel groans in the bondage of Egypt, Jehovah "remembers" His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 2:24, 25). Tremble with holy awe when you read these exalted words in Exodus 2:25, "And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them." He has Israel in His book of remembrance; they are engraved in the palms of His hands!

In this "Noahic Covenant" God does not test the nations and "humanity," but He shows His loving-kindness unto the church as she shall be in the Old Testament Dispensation in the confines of Shem, and as in the birth of Christ God will enlarge Japheth and cause him to  *dwell*  in the tents of Shem! That will be Japheth's perpetual dwelling-place! (Gen. 9:27). Here we see in prophetic language, with the bold strokes of the heavenly Artist, the distant perspectives of the Dispensation of the fulness of times. Into this framework, this "pattern" of prophecy, we see that the Holy Spirit fits the promise to Abraham, "and in thee and in thy seed shall all nations be blessed." Paul says of this lofty promise to Abraham as it pertains to the "nations" the following in Galatians 3:8: "and the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

Such is the grand perspective of the "Noahic Covenant!"

Here the horizons lift; and dimly in the distance we see the day of Christ (John 8:56; II Peter 1:19; Heb. 11:8-10).

And this all, by Scofield's Bible, is reduced to a mere "testing of humanity," a certain governmental-dispensation, which must certainly be doomed to failure in a fallen and corrupt humanity, apart from the Cross of Christ! Words can not utter my sadness over so much folly which has been wrought by so much ignorance that prates as knowledge of the Prophetic Scriptures. Here we echo the words of Paul in I Timothy 1:7, "desiring to be teachers .... understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm!"

For let it not be overlooked by us that God's covenant faithfulness is betokened to Noah, and ever since his day to the whole world, as a testi-

mony, by placing His bow upon the cloud! And this "rainbow" speaks of the all-embracing magnitude of God's covenant mercies over His church, embracing heaven and earth. It is the rainbow which is symbolical of God's throne of mercy in Revelation 4:3 over His church! From this throne, in the most holy place, God issues His commands, and maintains His covenant mercies. Grace breaks through wrath! Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. Jeremiah points out this faithfulness of God in the starry heavens, when he says in exalted words from the LORD, "If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ... (Jer. 33:25, 26).

Let him that reads understand!

Noahic Covenant of "testing of humanity?" Not at all. It is the great promise of God who smelled a "sweet savour" of the clean beasts which Noah offered upon being permitted to come forth from the ark. It was the thank offering (burnt offering) which sanctified the good creature; it was the first-fruits of God's new creation (James 1:18). It was the reason for the existence of the world till Jesus comes: while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, and summer and winter shall not cease (Gen. 8:22).

And in this world God would have His people live a "quiet and peaceful life." And the "sword-power" was given to kings, kings who had been in the world of men in the form of "government" from the days of Adam! But now there is the "vengeance of God" upon those who try to kill and do kill those "made in the image of God." This pertains *par excellence* to God's sons and daughters, conformed to the image of God's Son, that He might be the Firstborn of all things, and the Firstborn among many brethren! (Col. 1:18; Rom. 8:29).

Dispensation of "Human Government?" Not at all!

It was the dispensation of grace upon Noah and in the church of the ages!

*Know the standard and  
follow it. Read  
The Standard Bearer!*



## FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

### Nicene Creed

*Rev. James Slopsema*

#### Article 2 (cont'd)

In our previous article we saw that the early church confessed in Article 2 of the Nicene Creed that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. This biblical expression alone should have established the fact that Jesus is truly God, co-eternal, co-essential and co-equal with the Father. However, there were many in the church that would not confess this truth. They either denied the personal distinction between the Father and the Son, or they denied that the Son is truly God with the Father. Hence, the church felt compelled in this second article of her creed to add that Jesus Christ 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."

One group that denied the true divinity of Jesus Christ in the early church was the monarchians. This term is the same as our word "monarchy," which means a rule by one. This term was applied by the church father Tertullian to a group in the church who maintained that God is one in person as well as in being, thus denying the Trinity. Wrote Tertullian, "They are constantly throwing out the accusation that we preach two gods and three gods.... 'We hold,' they say, 'the monarchy.' " Hence the term monarchian was applied.

The monarchians were of two different classes. There was first the dynamic monarchians. They taught that the Father is God alone. The Word, or Logos, of which we read in the Scriptures (cf. John 1:1), as well as the term "Son of God," refers not to a person but to a power of God the Father. The same is true of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is not a distinct person but simply an impersonal power. Hence, God is one person, the Father. They taught further that the divine power of the Logos had filled Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament so that they were inspired to prophesy God's Word. This divine Logos also filled Jesus. Although Jesus was born of the virgin, he was nevertheless from birth only a man. At His baptism however He was endowed with the divine Logos. This Logos Jesus possessed in a higher degree than did the prophets of the Old Testament. The result was that Jesus attained a certain divinity. He was not made equal

with the Father. His divinity was a delegated divinity and therefore an inferior one. He was not made one in substance with the Father. But He was made morally one with the Father. This view was championed especially by Paul of Samosata, the bishop of Antioch from A.D. 260 to 272.

Perhaps more popular was the view of the modalistic monarchians. In the main they taught that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three distinct persons but three different modes or forms of revelation of the one God. Already around A.D. 180 Noetus of Smyrna in Asia Minor taught that "Christ was the Father Himself, and that the Father Himself was born and suffered and died." This view was also brought to Rome by Praxeas, a follower of Noetus. Over against the teaching of Praxeas, the church father Tertullian wrote, "He put to flight the Holy Spirit and crucified the Father." These views of Noetus and Praxeas were further developed by Sabellius, who taught in Rome about A.D. 215. According to Sabellius, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are simply different manifestations of the one God. The Father is God as He originally revealed Himself (in history) as Creator. The Son is the same person Who later revealed Himself as Redeemer. And the Holy Spirit is again the same as the Father and the Son, only now after Pentecost revealed to us as our Sanctifier.

It was evidently to combat the errors of both the dynamic monarchians and the modalistic monarchians that the early church confessed in the second article of the Nicene Creed that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is "begotten of the Father before all worlds."

It is characteristic of all heretics that they use the terminology of the Scriptures but alter the true meaning of those terms to fit their erroneous views. This they are forced to do if they will gain a hearing in the church. Certainly no one in the church will pay them any heed if they do not use the language of the Bible. And so every heretic that has arisen in the church has come quoting the Bible. But this presents no problem to those who would mislead God's people. They simply make of the Bible what they want. They take the beautiful terminology of the Bible and pour into these terms anything they



want.

This is what the monarchians did too. With the church, they too acknowledged that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. They had to. The Bible taught it in no uncertain terms. However, contrary to the Scriptures, they interpreted this term to fit their own unique heresy. The dynamic monarchians claimed that the term "son of God" simply referred to a divine power which was granted to the prophets and to Jesus Christ. That Jesus is called the one begotten Son of God simply emphasizes that this divine power was especially strong in him so that he attained a sort of delegated, inferior divinity. And the modalistic monarchians also spoke of the fact that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. To them this term simply expresses the idea that Jesus was a unique and distinct manifestation of the one true God.

In light of all this it became necessary for the early church in her creed further to define her confession that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. She had to rule out the interpretation given to this term by the monarchians. Over against their view she had to set forth the true meaning of the term "only begotten Son of God." This she did by adding to her creed the statement that Jesus Christ is "begotten of the Father before all worlds."

First, there is the confession that Jesus is "begotten of the Father." At first glance, this expression appears to add very little to the church's confession. How can this possibly be a further definition of Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God? How can this possibly refute the errors of monarchianism? The key is the word "Father." If Jesus is begotten of the Father, then He is personally distinct from the Father. The Son can not be begotten or brought forth of the Father if the Son and the Father are one and the same person, as the modalistic monarchians claimed. That the Son is begotten of the Father means that the Father is one person and the Son is another person distinct from the Father. That certainly is the way we find it among mankind. Father and son are two distinct persons. So also is it with God, Who created the father-son relationship among us to mirror the Father-Son relationship as it is eternally in Him. That Jesus Christ is begotten of the Father, therefore, was inserted into the Nicene Creed to contradict the error of the modalistic monarchians.

And that Jesus Christ is begotten of the Father is certainly the testimony of Scripture. We have seen before that several times in the Scripture Jesus is called the only begotten Son of God. In John 1:14, however, He is called the only begotten of the Father. "And 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 contradict the error of the dynamic monarchians the early church added to this that Jesus Christ is begotten of the Father "before all worlds." As already indicated, the dynamic monarchians taught that Jesus is not the Son of God eternally. The term "Son of God" simply refers to a divine power of God given to Jesus at His baptism. Hence, there was a time when Jesus Christ was not the Son of God. In fact, there was a time when Jesus was not. For until He was born of the virgin Mary He did not exist at all except in the counsel of God. Jesus therefore has a beginning as any other creature. And that beginning is found in history. To contradict this error the early church at this juncture in the Nicene Creed proclaimed that Jesus Christ is begotten of the Father "before all worlds (literally, ages)." In this way she confessed that Jesus is eternally the Son of God. Even before the worlds or ages were brought forth, God the Father had brought forth His Son. The church of Christ confesses an eternal Son of God.

Although the expression "before all worlds" is not found as such in the Bible, the idea or truth conveyed in this expression certainly is. There are especially two passages in John 17 which definitely convey this truth. The first is verse 5, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Notice that Jesus not only addresses God as His Father but also speaks of the fact that He was with God His Father before the world was. We find the same idea expressed in verse 24 of this same chapter, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

In our next article we shall consider the other group in the early church that denied the true deity of Jesus Christ. These were the Arians. Against them the rest of the expression found in Article 2 of this creed was written.

## Book Review

**JEHOVAH SHEPHERDING HIS SHEEP,** Sermons on the Twenty-third Psalm by J. R. Beeke; Netherlands Reformed Book and Publishing Committee, 1982; 451 pp. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

This book contains a series of some 21 sermons which the author preached from Psalm 23 in his congregation, along with the ordination sermon



which was preached at the time of the author's ordination into the ministry, his inaugural sermon, the speech given at the dedication of the Netherlands Christian Reformed Church in Rock Valley, the sermon delivered at the dedication of the organ, and the farewell sermon of the pastor when he left his charge in Sioux Center.

The sermons are given in this book for a double purpose: they are intended to be used by the public for devotional reading and they are intended to be used for reading services in the church. To accomplish this double purpose, certain sections in each chapter are marked with brackets.

If anyone would like to know what preaching is like in the Netherlands Reformed congregations, then this book will be an excellent sample, for it is, I think, a fair representation of the approach to preaching which is taken in that denomination. And by this particular approach to preaching, the minister gives clear evidence of his covenant views and of how the congregation is viewed by the minister in the preaching.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On July 28, 1983, our parents, MR. AND MRS. HERMAN SCHIPPER, will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

We thank God for His faithfulness through the years and ask His blessing upon them in their lives together in the days ahead.

"...Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." (Psalm 2:12).

Their children and grandchildren

Bill and Linda Lafferty  
Laurie, Mike, Kathy

Jerry and Pat Schipper  
Becky, Jason, Jeremy, Emily

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Aid Society of the First Protestant Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., expresses their Christian sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. John Pastoor, in the death of her husband, MR. JOHN PASTOOR, whom the Lord took unto Himself on June 4, 1983.

"Cast thy burdens upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. (Psalm 55:22)

Mrs. Nell Phillips, Pres.  
Mrs. H. Baar, Sec'y.

### NOTICE YOUNG MEN!

Synod of 1983 took note of the fact that there is a shortage of young men entering the seminary to prepare themselves for the high calling to proclaim the Gospel. It is the prayer of our churches that the Lord may bind the call to the ministry upon the heart of some of our young men.

For the Synod,  
Rev. M. Joostens, S.C.

### NOTICE OF BEQUESTS

The synod of our churches publicly and gratefully acknowledges the receipts of sizable gifts from the estates of Mr. J. Schut and Miss Gertrude Kooistra.

For the Synod,  
Rev. M. Joostens, S.C.

## Read and Study The Standard Bearer!

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On July 21, 1983, the Lord willing, our beloved parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. C. M. DOEZEMA, will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren are thankful to our heavenly Father for them and pray the Lord continues to bless them in the years ahead.

"Therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, obey His voice, cleave unto Him: for He is thy life and the length of thy days" (Deut. 30:20).

Steve and Neva Feenstra  
Joshua and Travis

Robert and Deborah Doezema  
Kathy, Brenda, Kimberly

Roger and Anne Veldman  
Ruth and Geoffrey

Dorothy Doezema  
Beth Doezema  
Chuck Doezema  
Joan Doezema

### 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.

### NOTICE!!!

There is available a series of four tapes on the history of the Protestant Reformed Church as told by Rev. C. Hanko, Prof. Hoeksema, Prof. Hanko, and Prof. Decker. This informative collection can be purchased by sending fifteen dollars to:

Kalamazoo Young Peoples Society  
427 N. Fletcher  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

### NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Edgerton, Minnesota on September 7, 1983, at 8:30 AM, the Lord willing. Material for the Agenda is to be in the hands of the Stated Clerk 30 days before Classis convenes. Delegates in need of lodging are to inform the Clerk of the Edgerton Consistory.

Rev. David Ehgelsma  
Stated Clerk

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 11, 1983, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. PETER KOOLE, celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary. We, their children and grandchildren, are thankful to our Heavenly Father for the years they have had together and for 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 103:7).

Lawrence and Patricia Koole  
Rev. Kenneth and Patsy Lou Koole  
James and Kathleen VanderKolk  
and 15 grandchildren

James and Gladys Koole  
Ronald and Sherry Koole  
Timothy Koole



## News From Our Churches

First of all, hearty congratulations are to be given to candidates Barry Gritters and Ken Hanko on their completion of seminary instruction and also their successful examination by Synod. May our faithful covenant God provide these candidates a place to labor in His vineyard. I look forward to informing you about the calling of both candidates.

Synod was also busy making the following decisions that I found in First Protestant Reformed Church's bulletin: "Synod gave approval to First Church to call a missionary to Jamaica. Rev. den Hartog will continue laboring in Singapore and at such a time as the church there desires and demonstrates the need for more help, Doon may call another missionary. Also, Redlands was designated the calling church for a new field in Ripon, California. Rev. Van Overloop will continue his labors in Birmingham, Alabama. Synod decided to continue to help the few families in Wellington, New Zealand, by laboring as Rev. Heys did last year."

On Wednesday, June 22 and Thursday, June 23, Loveland Protestant Reformed Church celebrated their Twenty-Fifth anniversary. A congregational picture was to have been taken and is available for ten dollars. If you are interested in this picture contact Twyla Griess, 1-303-669-4835.

Doon Protestant Reformed Church had this announcement about church growth in its May 15, bulletin: "The Consistory at the May 2 meeting appointed a Committee to consider the expansion needs of the Church. We are keenly aware that our present seating capacity is rapidly being filled. Therefore, should we continue to enjoy God's gracious provision and blessing, our present seating capacity will be insufficient in the not too distant future. The members of this long range committee are James Hoogendoorn, Dennis Burgers, and John Van Den Top."

First Protestant Reformed Church, Holland, Michigan has a need. "The Consistory informs the congregation that we are in need of additional organists *immediately*....Parents are also encouraged to provide for the training of their children to play the organ in order that there will be organists in the future."

In regards to music in our churches, Doon Protestant Reformed Church included, (in its May 8 bulletin,) this excerpt from an article by Rev. Engelsma in the *Beacon Lights*, March, 1983 issue: "Our exclusion of choirs and soloists ('special music') from the worship services is based on the revealed will of God that in His worship the congregation—all the members as one body—is to sing His praise... Inevitably, choirs and special numbers in the services not only infringe on the preaching, but also weaken congregational singing. The musical power and beauty of the church is not a large and excellent church choir, but good congregational singing."

The Activities Committee of Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church "has been giving some thought to building a library of Christian books which would be worth our reading. If there are any who have books they might like to donate...contact the committee."

A reminder to those of you who have difficulty reading the print in the *Standard Bearer*: each recent issue of the *Standard Bearer* is available on cassette tape. If you know of some person who would appreciate a cassette copy of each issue, contact Gary VanDer Schaaf, 826 Edna S.E., Grand Rapids, MI, 49507. Telephone number 1-616-241-4164.

One of our ministers desires to buy a redbook copy of *History of Protestant Reformed Churches*. This book has been out of print for many years. If you would like to sell a copy of this book, call 1-616-399-4841.

Hope Protestant Reformed Church had this announcement about handicapped children: "The members of the Society for Protestant Reformed Special Education are thankful to announce that efforts are now being made to begin a Christ centered course of instruction for Protestant Reformed special children. If you are the parent, relative, or friend of one of our children with special needs, or if you have an interest in Protestant Reformed Special education...please contact Peter VanDer Schaaf (669-0703) or John Buiter (453-8402)."