

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

. . . what is the beauty of Psalm 23? This: the perfect safety of the child of God in the midst of all kinds of trouble and enemies, and this only because of the unchangeable and wholly unconditional faithfulness of our covenant God! The Lord is my Shepherd... This psalm lifts the child of God above all troubles and afflictions, and enables him to set his face, in all confidence, upon the House of his God.

See "Our Assurance of Dwelling in

God's House" — page 266

## CONTENTS

Meditation —	
Our Assurance of Dwelling in God's House . . . .	266
Editor's Notes . . . . .	269
Editorial —	
The Breaking of the Unbreakable Bond (2) . . . .	269
Correspondence and Reply —	
About Organizing Small Churches . . . . .	271
Various Questions and Comment . . . . .	273
Report From Singapore . . . . .	274
Bible Study Guide —	
I Peter — Christian Hope in the Midst of Suffering . . . . .	276
All Around Us —	
Banner Blasts Official Church Position . . . . .	278
Do-It-Yourself Abortion Drug? . . . . .	280
Strength of Youth —	
Martin Luther Addresses Youth . . . . .	280
Guided Into All Truth —	
Allegory and Philosophy . . . . .	283
Taking Heed to the Doctrine —	
Preservation and Perseverance (2) . . . . .	285
News From Our Churches . . . . .	288

## THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August.

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.  
Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

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

Department Editors: Rev. Ronald Cammenga, Rev. Arie den Hartog, Prof. Robert D. Decker, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman C. Hanko, Rev. Ronald Hanko, Mr. David Harbach, Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. J. Korterling, Rev. George C. Lubbers, Rev. Thomas C. Miersma, Rev. Marinus Schipper, Rev. James Slope-  
ma, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Herman Veldman.

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

Church News Editor: Mr. David Harbach  
4930 Ivanrest Ave., Apt. B  
Grandville, Michigan 49418

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

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

Business Office: The Standard Bearer  
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr. PH: (616) 243-2953  
P.O. Box 6064  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

New Zealand Business Office: The Standard Bearer  
c/o Protestant Reformed Fellowship  
B. Van Herk, 66 Fraser St.  
Wainuiomata, New Zealand

Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$10.50 per year. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order, and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

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

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

## MEDITATION

# Our Assurance of Dwelling in God's House

Rev. H. Veldman

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

It cannot be determined definitely when David, Israel's shepherd king, musician, and poet, composed this twenty-third psalm. Did he, as some believe, compose it late in his life, when he was

fleeing from before the face of his rebellious son, Absalom? We simply do not know. And this means that we need not know this. But this we do know: we cannot separate verse 6 of this psalm from what



precedes it. And we must bear in mind that this psalm speaks of many and great dangers. This is always true of the position of the child and church of God in the midst of the world. We read here of a valley of the shadow of death and of evil which we will not fear. This psalm speaks of enemies in whose midst a table has been prepared for me. Is this not the language throughout the Word of God? A servant is not greater than his master. Jesus says, they have hated Me; they will also hate you. The antithesis must characterize us in the midst of the world! If this apply not to us, we can never say what we read here in verse 6.

And, what is the beauty of Psalm 23? This: the perfect safety of the child of God in the midst of all kinds of trouble and enemies, and this only because of the unchangeable and wholly unconditional faithfulness of our covenant God! The Lord is my Shepherd; He *is* that, always — nothing can possibly change that. Therefore I shall not want — I shall never be in want, never lack anything. *He* restoreth my soul, *He* leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake; *He* is with me; *His* rod and staff comfort me; *Thou* preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; *His* goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. This psalm lifts the child of God above all troubles and afflictions, and enables him to set his face, in all confidence, upon the House of his God.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Dwelling in God's House.

Indeed, also as far as David is concerned, even as in the old dispensation, this house of God must have referred to God's heavenly fellowship. The people of the Lord surely knew that that building upon Mount Moriah was a symbol of God's people as they dwell with the Lord as underneath one roof, through Jesus Christ, God's Son, our Lord. Do we not read that God's goodness and mercy shall follow me *all the days of my life*, and does this not surely refer to where we will dwell after or at the end of our earthly sojourn? Besides, we also read of dwelling in the house of the Lord *forever*, or, literally, "length of days," which surely refers to an unending length of days; and this, of course, must refer to the life, the everlasting life of the hereafter.

In this expression, "the House of the Lord," Scripture calls our attention to the essence, the heart of heaven. Heaven is not a resort (as the Moslems describe it, a beautiful place, with beautiful women, etc.), where we shall eat and drink of the best and never be plagued by the fear of sickness and death, or where marriages, finalized here, will continue in the hereafter, as the Mormons teach — the heart of heaven must not be

viewed from the aspect of man and as an indefinite lengthening of this earthly life but then as delivered from all its unpleasantries. Heaven, we understand, is not the hope of the natural man, is not the object of his earthly longing; man, however he may dread hell, would surely find heaven to be more intolerable and unbearable still. Heaven, what is it? It is the House of the Lord! And the House of the Lord is the expression of His perfected covenant fellowship and communion. Heaven centers in Jehovah, the covenant God of our salvation. There we shall dwell with Him.

Dwelling in God's House — how blessed, how wonderful this is! Can anyone conceive of anything more wonderful than this?

This is true only by grace, the grace of God. This house will never be attractive to the natural man. Never will he be able to say what we read in Psalm 27:4: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple," or what we read in Psalm 84:1-2: "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." Indeed, there is nothing in that House that appeals to you and me as we are by nature and of ourselves; it is the very opposite of all my carnal desires. That House appeals to me only when I have learned by the grace of God to know and hate myself; only when I have become weary of sin, and when the love of God and of His service has become uppermost in my heart and mind; only when I have become a pilgrim and a stranger in the midst of the world, in the midst of a dry and thirsty land; only when the life of sin and darkness has become a burden to me so that the longing for this House of God will prompt me to set my eyes upon the City of God that has foundations.

How wonderful, then, is this House of the Lord!

It is wonderful, first of all, because it is God's House. Indeed, the Lord is everywhere, as we also read it in Psalm 139. But in God's House He reveals Himself in all the glory and perfection of His being, and everything is adapted to His life and perfection. There the Lord will reveal Himself to us in the face of Jesus Christ, and it will be revealed eternally that all fellowship and communion with God is only through and because of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Secondly, this House is wonderful because there our service and worship to Him will be perfect and complete, even forever. There we shall be perfect, completely delivered from all sin and evil and death, even as we read in Revelation 21:4. There we shall be perfectly adapted to the heavenly



service of the Lord. There we shall serve Him together with all the saints of God throughout all the ages, and that in heavenly immortality. There the longing of our souls shall be satisfied, never again to be interrupted, into endless length of days. Indeed, one thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life and then forevermore.

\* \* \* \* \*

How impossible this glory appears!

First, we are in a valley of the shadow of death. This, we must bear in mind, does not merely refer to death itself. This valley, however, refers to our entire life which is a valley of the shadow of death, inasmuch as immediately at birth death casts its shadow upon us, and this shadow becomes even deeper as we proceed to death and the grave. Secondly, in this valley of the shadow of death are enemies, deadly enemies, enemies that hate this House of God and anybody who is enroute to that House, enemies more powerful than we, with whom we cannot possibly cope. These enemies are all around us, and they are much more numerous and stronger than we. This enemy is well equipped, directed by the prince of the powers of the air, having access to all the resources of this world. And, this enemy also lurks within us, our own evil nature. We are the people of the Lord only in principle. We have only a seed of life eternal; all the rest of us is carnal and evil. A vivid picture of the child of God as he laments who and what he is is held before us in Romans 7. And we are all familiar with the apostle's description of the Christian soldier in the midst of his enemies in the sixth chapter of the same apostle's epistle to the Ephesians and where he speaks of putting on the whole armour of God.

Goodness and mercy.

Goodness is that operation of God's love whereby He bestows upon me that which is good, beneficial for me. I have been created, in Adam, as God's image bearer, have been created as adapted to the service of the Lord; the only thing that can satisfy me is His fellowship and communion. Nothing else can possibly satisfy. All the gold and all the silver of this world, without the grace of God, can only serve to leave my soul empty and destitute. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, how empty and destitute was that rich man although he had access to all that which the world could offer him. And how rich was Lazarus, although he was a miserable beggar whose consolation appeared to be that dogs licked his sores! Indeed, the grace of God does not consist in the things of this world. What determines our blessedness is not how much we may have and enjoy of the goods of this present time. What determines our blessedness is whether we are rich and

blessed in the Lord. His grace and favour are so much more than life to me. Indeed, blessed is that man who is rich in God. And the psalmist also speaks of mercy. Mercy presupposes misery. Mercy is an aspect of God's goodness. The goodness of the Lord here signifies that which is good for me. And mercy is that aspect of His goodness whereby the Lord is desirous to save the objects of His love as they are in misery, the misery of sin and affliction, and as they struggle in the midst of the world.

God's goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. How wonderful this is! The psalmist surely wishes to emphasize that this goodness and mercy of the Lord will be in constant attendance upon me, will always be following me so that no evil can possibly befall me. Negatively, this means that God's goodness and mercy never follow the wicked in all the days of his life. The grace and love of God never attend his way. Nothing works together for his good. In all the ages of eternity he will never be able to point to a single moment of his life and say that then and there the Lord loved me, sought my good and blessed me. Indeed, the curse of Jehovah followed him in all his ways. He may have had and enjoyed, as did that rich man in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, all the things of this world in abundance, but one thing he lacked: the mercy and favour of the Lord. However, God's goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. O, it is true that we often depart from the path of God's precepts. And when we depart from the path of God's precepts we cannot and do not experience the love and mercy of our God. This blessedness will be ours, this blessed assurance we will experience only when we, by the grace of God, repent of our sin and return unto the Lord, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. However, nothing can alter the fact that God's goodness and mercy will never depart from us or forsake us. It is only because of this goodness and mercy that the elect sinner turns from his evil way and unto the Lord. Constantly the living God will perfect His work, watch over him. He has once begun His work, causes all things to work together for our good. Nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord. And of this we can be sure because the *Lord* is our Shepherd. And the Lord here is Jehovah, the I AM THAT I AM, the Rock, the unchangeable God of His covenant. Jehovah is my life and my salvation. Whom, therefore, shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life. Of nothing need I be afraid. I am surely more than conqueror.

*Read the Standard Bearer*



## Editor's Notes

### Publication News

Word has been received that the RFPA's new Bible story book, *Come, Ye Children*, will become available sometime in April. There will be further details about this later, both in the *Standard Bearer* and in a flyer which the committee will be distributing. But I can inform you now that there is going to be a very attractive pre-publication sale of this book which you will not want to miss. And the pre-publication price will be even more attractive for RFPA Book Club members. There will be ample time for you to participate in this sale, because the

cut off date will be June 1. Watch for all the details in our next issue!

\* \* \* \* \*

### About This Issue

You will notice that some of the regular departments do not appear in this issue. This is due to the fact that we had some correspondence on hand which needed answering. Besides, we wanted to place the news and pictures from Singapore. Some of this material has been waiting for a month already, due to the fact that our March 1 issue was a special issue.

## EDITORIAL

# The Breaking of the Unbreakable Bond (2)

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

We began our discussion of this subject in our March 1 special issue on the subject of the *Covenant*. At that time, after calling attention to various passages of Scripture which make mention of the breaking of the covenant in one way or another, as well as to passages which speak of God's covenant as unbreakable, we began to discuss the subject particularly from the viewpoint of the text in Isaiah 24:5. In our discussion last time we called attention, first of all, to the fact that the text speaks of God's everlasting — and therefore, unbreakable — covenant. Secondly, we called attention to the meaning of the breaking of that covenant by men. The reader who wishes to refresh his memory as to that discussion may consult our March 1 issue.

Now in connection with this breaking of God's covenant the text in Isaiah speaks of two related items: "because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." The text is not speaking of three separate items, but the three are related. And they

are related in such a way that the breaking of the everlasting covenant takes place through the transgression of the laws and the changing of the ordinance. We might paraphrase the statement of the text as follows: because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, and *thus* broken the everlasting covenant.

When the text speaks of the law and of the ordinance (or statute) it refers to essentially the same thing by both terms. They both refer to the will of God in relation to the life of man. But there is a distinction in the viewpoint of the terms. The term *law* is the more general term, while the term *statute* is the more particular. The former has reference to the fact that the Lord has made known His will for man; the latter, statute refers to the fact that God's law draws the lines and sets the limits for man in his entire life, for his thinking and willing, his desiring and inclination, his seeing and hearing, his touching and tasting, his enjoying and acting — his entire life.



Also the terms *transgress* and *change* point to essentially the same thing. They both indicate that man is a sinner: in the whole of his life he misses his purpose. Precisely because he breaks, puts to naught, tramples God's covenant, he also never strikes the mark, the target, of the law; he never remains within its boundaries, its limits; he always goes astray. The word "transgress" really indicates that he tramples God's law. He pays no attention to it; he does not really inquire concerning it; he bans it from his thoughts. In all his life he simply tramples that law under foot. The changing of the ordinance, or statute, looks more at the fact that man goes beyond the limits set for him by God. He does not walk according to the lines of God's will. He goes aside. He simply chooses his own way and determines for himself what is right and what is wrong.

Such is the sinner who breaks God's covenant. Thus he lives in his entire existence.

Now the question arises: how can the whole world be intended here? How can it be said of the entire world that it breaks God's covenant? How can there be a breaking of the covenant where there is not even any knowledge of that covenant?

The answer to this problem is twofold.

In the first place, we must remember that in the organic sense of the word our entire race literally breaks God's covenant. True, not all men personally come equally in contact with this covenant of God. But, understood organically, it is not difficult to see that our entire race breaks God's covenant. All men are covenant creatures in Adam, their first father. And in Adam, their head and their first father, they are all covenant breakers, even as the first sin was that of covenant-breaking. In that sense all the wicked are apostates from God's covenant. However, this is not only a matter of original sin. This sin of covenant-breaking is accomplished by men in their actual lives and in their actual sins. They transgress the laws and change the statute, and thus in their actual lives break the everlasting covenant by all their actual sins. They demonstrate that they agree with and that they own Adam's sin. Moreover, this is true of the heathen as well as of those who come personally in contact with God's covenant. And that brings us to the second aspect of the answer to the problem mentioned above. Scripture teaches us that all men have the work of God's law written in their hearts, Romans 2:14, 15. Mind you, they do not have the law written in their hearts: then they would be regenerated children of God. But they have the *work* of the law, that is, what the law does, written in their hearts. And what is that work of the law? What does the law do? The answer is that the law distinguishes between

what is right and what is wrong, what a man may and must do and what a man may not and must not do. Because of this, even the heathen are not excusable but are guilty of transgressing the laws and changing the ordinance and breaking the everlasting covenant.

All of this becomes plain in the course of history.

First of all, as we have already suggested above, this is realized historically in Adam as first father and head of the race. In him the entire race stood originally in God's covenant. And in him they have broken the covenant. Not only did they break that original, earthly manifestation of God's covenant of friendship as they are comprehended in Adam. But they daily demonstrate that they agree with and have a delight in Adam's sin.

But there is more.

God maintains His covenant in Christ. And immediately after the fall He makes His covenant known in the well-known mother-promise of Genesis 3:15. Moreover, He continues to make that covenant known throughout the ages of history, and that, too, in ever clearer light. Along with that goes the fact that at various moments of history our entire race is again included in that covenant in the historical sense of the word.

Thus it is already soon after the fall. God makes known His covenant in Christ to Adam and Eve after the fall, Genesis 3:15. At that moment in the organic sense the entire human race was historically in God's covenant. Cain and Abel — and later Seth — were children of the covenant. Cain, mind you, as well as Abel! The effect of this was that Cain and his generations revealed themselves over against that covenant as revealed in Christ (*the Seed of the woman*) as covenant-breakers. That is, they were covenant-breakers not only in relation to the covenant as originally established with Adam, but also in relation to the revelation of the covenant in Christ.

The same was true at the time of Noah. The first world perishes in the Flood because they transgress the covenant. After the Flood only the church remains, and God establishes His covenant with Noah and his seed. But the striking fact at that time is that the church and the human race are co-extensive. At that moment again the entire race is in God's covenant in the organic sense. That includes, mind you, the generation which presently builds the tower of Babel. That is a generation which came out of the church and which broke God's covenant.

In the narrower sense of the word the same is true with respect to Abraham and his seed, with respect to Israel and with respect to Jerusalem.



True, in this instance there is no longer a revelation of God's covenant in Christ to the entire race, to all men. For a time that revelation of God's covenant is restricted to one nation, the nation of Israel. But the principle is the same. For also then all is not Israel that is of Israel. And carnal, wicked Jerusalem again and again reveals itself as *one* with the entire wicked world in this, that it breaks God's covenant as that covenant came to revelation in their midst in ever clearer light.

Finally, this is also true in the new dispensation. The revelation of God's covenant in Christ is now complete. The light of that covenant is full. Through the preaching of the gospel Christ enters among the nations. And when He does so, God's covenant is always established in the line of the generations of His people. And always in those generations there is a twofold seed. Always the carnal, covenant-breaking element comes to, manifestation. Over against the full light of God's cove-

nant the wicked must and do come to manifestation as breakers of God's covenant. This ends in and comes to full fruition in the final manifestation of Antichrist. This is one reason why the Antichrist must arise out of nominal Christendom, why he must arise out of the false church. He must be revealed as the covenant-breaker *par excellence*. This is also one reason — be it a negative one — why the gospel must be preached to all nations: not to every individual, but to all nations, throughout the entire world. That world must become manifest organically as being principally a covenant-breaking world, and that, too, over against God's covenant as it has been revealed in the Son of His love, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The result shall be that in the day of judgment all the world shall stand condemned as covenant-breakers. And the vengeance of Him that sitteth upon the throne and of the Lamb shall be in the very real sense of the word covenant vengeance.

## CORRESPONDENCE AND REPLY

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

# About Organizing Small Churches

### Correspondence

From a South Holland, Illinois reader I received the following letter:

Dear Editor:

I read your article of the December issue on the establishment of another Protestant Reformed Church in the Grand Rapids area. Also in the church news of the December 15 issue the transfer of membership papers to the new congregation. I don't understand how this is possible. Are our churches in the Grand Rapids area so overcrowded, for example, First Church, Southeast, Southwest, and Faith? Or are these people not happy where they are? If the latter is the case, how is it possible that the involved consistories do not check into this? It seems to me that we are setting up all kinds of little churches all over the USA to be supported by the denomination (forever it seems): Edgerton, Edmonton, Isabel, Pella, Trinity, Kalamazoo, and Covenant are examples. Isn't this kind of putting a burden on the rest of us?

The last time I was in Grand Rapids, we went to First Church and it seemed to me there was plenty of room for twenty some families. It is impossible for me to understand the wisdom of Classis East to approve such a movement. I hope and pray that maybe through the printed matter you can shed some light on this.

Thank-you,  
(w.s.) Joe Postma

### Reply

I will try to shed some light. My correspondent must bear in mind, however, that I cannot and do not speak for Classis East. In fact, I was not even present at the sessions of Classis East at which Byron Center's petition for organization was considered; neither was I present when the request of our youngest congregation, Grandville, was considered. At the same time, let it be said, I fully agree with the classical decisions, and I am heartily in favor of the organization of both of these new con-



gregations. Permit me to call your attention to the following considerations:

1) The churches of Classis East are mostly churches in the greater Grand Rapids area, churches, therefore, which were vitally concerned in the organization of new churches in the very area where they are. Yet in the judgment of Classis East (by overwhelming, if not unanimous vote) the organization of both new congregations was approved.

2) One cannot simply lump the entire metropolitan area of Grand Rapids into one. There are various areas and communities in the Grand Rapids area which have to be taken into consideration in this connection, so that we have always in the past established congregations in the various areas in which our people live. It may very well be that a certain congregation has extra room in their auditorium, but that does not mean that we tell people, "You must all travel to First Church and fill that up before we will consider starting a new congregation." On that basis, we could have said to some of the churches in this area after the split that they should go and fill up the (then) 1250 seats of First Church before we would reorganize them. Then, of course, there would have been no Southeast or Southwest Church today.

3) Size, however, is not the only — and in my opinion, not the chief — consideration. Another consideration is that of establishing a Protestant Reformed witness in a given community, and especially in a community in which there is not already such a witness. This is the case with both Grandville and Byron Center. It was also the case with Faith Church, Jenison, several years ago. I am very much in favor of establishing such a Protestant Reformed witness wherever it is possible to do so, that is, wherever it is possible to institute a viable congregation, even though small at first, and wherever there appears to be potential for growth.

4) Size was, however, a consideration in the case of both Grandville and Byron Center. In the former instance, our Hope Church, from which most of the Grandville membership came, was indeed much overcrowded, so that they had extra chairs in every available spot. In the latter instance, Hudsonville was seeing its auditorium filling up; and it took into consideration the fact, too, that there has for years been a Byron Center contingent in the congregation which had to travel from Byron to Hudsonville not only for Sunday services but also for catechism classes and for society meetings during the week. Hence, even from this point of view I can see the wisdom — and, I trust, Classis East could — of branching out.

5) My correspondent cites some examples of

small churches. About these I would point out: a) That one must be careful with these examples. Three of them (Edgerton, Pella, and Kalamazoo) are churches which were reorganized after the split of 1953, churches which were at one time larger and self-supporting but which became numerically smaller through the split. Certainly, my correspondent would agree that we could not very well have said to these churches, "Well, now you can no longer be a PR congregation because you have become too small." b) If size were the determining factor, there would not be many congregations today. Take a look at our yearbook once, and take note of the size of many of our congregations at the time of their organization. South Holland, for example, was only 7 families at the time of organization, and that, too, at a time when we did not even have a minister to go there. c) It is not so easy to say No to a group of families who wish to be a Protestant Reformed congregation, especially not when that group of families is far away from any PR center. I have been at synodical meetings when such questions had to be decided, and I have seen synods wrestle long and hard with such questions. Perhaps mistakes have been made sometimes; perhaps not. A synod (or a classis) must use its sanctified judgment in cases like this.

6) Finally, a word or two about the financial aspect. My correspondent mentions churches who receive help from the synodical needy churches fund. He neglects to mention the many churches which at one time received aid and have become self-supporting and now have the privilege of helping other needy churches. He also neglects to mention the example of Faith Church in Jenison (another greater Grand Rapids area church) which was organized with only 20 families in 1973 and which grew and became self-supporting very soon and is now 83 families (according to our 1983 Yearbook). Besides, let us remember that it is a privilege to bear one another's burdens. Moreover, the Lord has abundantly blessed us also in this respect. We have never lacked as churches, but always have had more than enough. When I think back to the time of our synodical meetings in 1954 when our synodical fund amounted to a big fat ZERO because our enemies had run off with our synodical funds, and when I consider how the Lord has prospered us and provided for us abundantly, then I can't think in terms of burdens, only of blessings.

*The Standard Bearer  
makes a thoughtful gift  
for the sick and shut-in.*



# Various Questions and Comment

## Correspondence

From a New Jersey reader I received the following letter:

Sir:

I see in the current issue of *New Horizons* an appeal to OPC women for contributions to the paper. From time to time I see women published in *The Outlook*. In my brief acquaintance with *The Standard Bearer* I do not recall any articles written by women, by design or accident.

My question is this: what is the editorial policy of *The Standard Bearer* as concerns women and the scriptural basis therefore?

I have a second question about women, especially Huldah, in II Chronicles 34:22ff. I cannot recall ever having either read or heard preaching about her role as prophetess to Israel other than my own biblical study. We read and hear much about Deborah and Phoebe, but nothing about Huldah.

My second question is this: Will you discuss the spiritual and practical implications of Huldah's ministry for the Old Testament Church as well as for the New Testament Church? (In a later postcard the writer asks that this question be expanded "to include Anna as well as Gal. 3:28.")

Lastly, I have a comment about the series of articles which John A. Heys is writing about the book of Esther. I am afraid that he has missed the point (one which we Calvinists should never overlook) of God's sovereign grace being played out in behavioral patterns in people which we might never expect, in ways which we might never suspect, to bring to pass purposes which we might never expect. He has missed the forest for the trees, a standard below *The Standard Bearer*.

Most cordial regards,  
(w.s.) J. Warren Jacobson

## Reply

Only one of the items in this letter is in my domain as editor. That is the first question, concerning our editorial policy as concerns women. About this, the following:

1) To my knowledge the Editorial Staff has no stated, formally adopted policy on this matter.

2) From time to time women have contributed to

our columns, either by way of correspondence and comment or by way of articles which were voluntarily offered or requested. Two recent examples of the latter are the article for covenant children in the March 1 issue and an anonymous article some months ago concerning childless couples. Without citing volume and page, I can also state that from time to time in years past women have contributed their comments on various subjects.

3) A little known and often forgotten fact is that *The Standard Bearer* is not a church paper, i.e., a paper controlled and published by the church as institute; and it does not speak officially for the Protestant Reformed Churches. It is a *free* paper, and as such arises out of the organic life of the church. No one controls the character and content of our magazine except the Editorial Staff; and the latter is subject to and responsible to no other organization. This is the significance of the "F" in the name of our publishing organization, the R.F.P.A., the Reformed Free Publishing Association. Historically, this character of our magazine had its occasion in the fact that circa-1924 the official church papers of the Christian Reformed Church were closed to the Rev. Danhof and Hoeksema.

4) Probably a significant reason why our magazine does not more frequently feature women's contributions lies in the fact that it is preeminently a theological paper, devoted primarily to theological and Biblical exposition. For this reason we look to those who are qualified in those fields to do our writing.

The second question in this letter I will leave to our Question Box Editor, the Rev. C. Hanko. At present he is in Florida; but this question will reach him, and he will furnish an answer in due time.

The third item in this letter, the comment about the Rev. Heys' writings about the book of Esther is also not my domain. If the Rev. Heys, who is at present in New Zealand, wishes to reply, he may do so. Every department editor is responsible for his own material. Nevertheless, I cannot refrain from a suggestion, namely, that the basic question here is: who were the objects of God's sovereign grace in this history? Were they the carnal Mordecai and Esther, who never in all this history gave a single indication of being anything but carnal and unbelieving? Or were they the remnant, the seed, who



would have been destroyed if Haman's plot had succeeded, but whom God in His sovereign grace preserved through the instrumentality of the carnal Mordecai and Esther and their influence in the

court of the godless Ahasuerus? No, I do not think the Rev. Heys is missing the forest for the trees. But he may speak for himself.

## Report From Singapore

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ Who gathers, defends, and preserves His church even unto the ends of the earth. Once again there are many exciting things to tell you about the Lord's work in His church here in Singapore. He continues to cause His church to grow and prosper in His grace. On January 22 we celebrated the second anniversary of the institution of the church. This was a special Lord's Day for us beginning with a special worship service where Pastor Lau preached the Word and concluding with an afternoon program of praise and thanks unto the Lord.

On January 29 we once again had the great joy and privilege of administering the sacrament of adult baptism in the church. This was the climax of many months of catechism instruction. Six young new Christians were baptized and another four were added to the church by public confession of their faith. There is a continuing need for holding catechism classes to prepare new people in our midst for baptism and membership in the church. Pastor Lau will be conducting the next session of classes which will begin in another week.

The last two months of 1983 were very busy for us. In the month of November we had the opportunity to be involved in a church camp in Malaysia which was sponsored by the church in Trengganu that we have been having contact with. We gave a

series of messages on the theme "By His Word." We were also asked to lead a workshop on the Christian family. We are waiting upon the Lord for further direction in our involvement with the saints of God in this church. Last week two brethren from Trengganu visited us.

In December the ERCS had a students camp. This has become an annual affair for the church. Pastor Lau spoke at this camp on the theme, "The Lord Our Shepherd." Pastor Lau was also invited to speak for a group of young Christians in Singapore who are not affiliated with the ERCS. This group of young Christians had quite a similar origin as the ERCS had.



Probable new meeting place.



Probably the most exciting development in our church so far this year is the purchase of a church property. Though the deal has not yet been finalized it is quite certain that it will be closed at the end of March. This place is actually an old pre-war two story terrace house. We hope to be able to convert the bottom story of this house so that it can be used for holding church meetings. The place however is not large enough to hold our present congregation. Normally the worship services are attended by about 180 people. The seating capacity of the new place would not be more than 100. For this and other reasons the church has decided to work towards starting a second congregation. The church is of the opinion that our present congregation is getting so large that fellowship and closeness of the members is declining. Most of all the church desires to expand the work of the preaching of the Reformed Faith in Singapore. It is hoped that by the grace of God this can be significantly expanded by having two congregations. There would be a number of other advantages of having two congregations. The second congregation would be formed, the Lord willing, through splitting our present congregation. This would also relieve the overcrowded conditions at our present meeting place. The second congregation would meet in the newly purchased building. The first congregation could also use this building in the event that it would suddenly have to vacate the present premise (something which is a real possibility since this place is slated for demolition at any time). In the future it is hoped that the church can purchase another old house in a different location in Singapore to house the present congregation. Then we would have two smaller congregations rather than one large one. After many months of searching we have found it impossible to purchase a large building that would be a proper church building which could hold a large congregation. This is especially because of the astronomical cost of real estate in Singapore. At present it seems more feasible to purchase old houses and convert them for use for smaller congregations. We rejoice and give thanks unto the Lord that He has caused the members of the church to give sacrificially and liberally with the result that we now have sufficient funds to purchase the property. There is still however great need for more money to enable the church to do extensive renovation of this place so that it can be used for church meetings. According to plans, our family will be living in the top story of this place. I will be pastoring the newly formed congregation in the beginning, the Lord willing. This arrangement will also help to raise the necessary finances for the place.

We are looking forward to another year of marriages in our midst. Already now we are giving mar-

riage counseling classes to three couples who intend to get married later in the year. As usual we give such pre-marriage counseling for seven weeks to those planning to be married. The families in our church continue to grow as the Lord gives children. In the next couple of months three new babies will be born, D.V. In connection with all of this there is great need to address subjects relating to the Christian family. Plans are to have a three-day seminar on the Christian family some time in May.

The Lord continues to bless and prosper the work at Toa Payoh Mission. We intend to continue this work even after the second congregation has been started. At that time probably both congregations will be supporting this work and both pastors would continue sharing the preaching work there. Beginning next week we shall be having a series of three special gospel messages at the Toa Payoh Mission on the general theme of "Three Great Truths of the Christian Faith." Later in the month of March Pastor Lau will be preaching a series of special messages relating to the suffering and death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. All of these messages will be specially adapted for newcomers to the mission who have never before heard the preaching of the gospel. The members of the church are working very hard to publicize these special services in the Toa Payoh area of Singapore.

Beginning this Friday evening we are going to have classes on Reformed Doctrine at our apartment. These classes were requested by a group of the newer members in our midst who desire to be better grounded in Reformed Doctrine. Some of those attending this class have a special interest in forming the second congregation and see the need of being firmly grounded in Reformed Doctrine for the welfare also of this endeavor. We are especially heartened by the fact that the desire for such a class arose spontaneously in the midst of the church.

The church now has six weekly Bible studies at various homes of our members in Singapore. These Bible study groups serve a very good purpose in the church and are well attended. It is possible for our members to attend such a Bible study in the area in which they live and they need not make long journeys in the evenings.

The Lord continues to bless and keep our family. We now have four children in three different Singapore schools. This is all pretty complicated. They also go at all different times of the day. They start leaving the house before 7:00 a.m. and do not all return until about 6:30 p.m. The Singapore government has become very strict on the second language requirements in the schools and is no longer allowing exemption for expatriate children. So we now have one taking Chinese Mandarin and



one taking Malay. This requires that we have private tuition for them at our home. We have employed two tutors that each come two times per week for an hour and a half each time. This greatly adds to the busyness of our home. So in a few years we will be a multi-language family. Perhaps the Lord has some special purpose of this also.

The elders and deacons in the church continue to labor very faithfully. It is truly amazing how much time they put in every week and how devoted they are to their work. As the church grows and develops there are many issues to face and matters to deal with. The bi-weekly session meetings often

last into the early hours of the morning. Though the office bearers of the church are very young compared to those of our churches in the U.S. yet we are thankful that the Lord has qualified them in an unusual way to lead and care for the church. There are always many very difficult pastoral problems to deal with that must be handled with a great deal of wisdom. As we labor together in the church of Jesus Christ there are sorrows and burdens as well as great joys. We urge you to continue to pray for His church here in Singapore. Thanks be unto the Lord that He continues to add to His church here those who are saved.

---

## BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

---

# I Peter — Christian Hope in the Midst of Suffering

*Rev. J. Kortering*

God wrote His Word with a view to the many needs which His people have while they sojourn here below. This letter focuses upon the special needs of the pilgrim, especially the pilgrim who must face suffering for righteousness' sake. The Holy Spirit assures him that there is good reason to have hope in the midst of fiery trial. We need this word today.

### THE AUTHOR

He identified himself in the opening verse as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1:1). In chapter 5:1 he places himself among the elders and mentions that he was witness of the suffering of Christ (5:1). There is almost universal acceptance of Simon Peter as being author of this letter.

If we review a little what the gospels and Acts of the Apostles tell us about Peter, it will help us to appreciate the message he writes in this epistle. Going back to his early years, we find that he was a fisherman of Galilee, in the fishing business with James and John (Luke 5:10), evidently wealthy business men. His brother Andrew (a disciple of John the Baptist) called him to come to see Jesus, the Messiah; and when he came Jesus changed his name from Simon to Peter, meaning a rock (John

1:40-42). He joined Jesus and the disciples as they toured Galilee (Mark 1:16-20). He had a wife (Matt. 8:14). Perhaps this accounts for his having a house in Bethsaida (John 1:44), and later in Capernaum (Mark 1:29). Later, when he was an apostle, his wife traveled with him (I Cor. 9:5).

From the gospel accounts we know Peter was in the inner circle with James and John, e.g., in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:33). He was a leader, a fact that marks men who have impulsive natures. On the Mount of Transfiguration, he suggested that they build three tabernacles (Matt. 17:14). Similarly, when Christ asked, whom do men say that I am, the disciples offered suggestions, and when Christ asked, whom do ye say that I am, Peter spoke for them, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). He was the one who swung the sword and cut off the ear of Malchus (John 18:10). This also led to Peter's darkest moment. After boasting of his strength to endure (Matt. 26:33), Peter denied his Lord three times (Matt. 26:69-75). He stayed with the disciples and joined them in search of the empty tomb (John 20:2-6). Good news came to him when the angels told the women to go tell the disciples *and Peter* that Jesus had risen from the dead (Mark 16:7). He was



restored to his apostleship at the Sea of Galilee when the risen Lord asked him three times, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" His instruction was, "feed My sheep" (John 21:15-17). At this time Jesus was prophesied that Peter would become a martyr (John 21:18, 19).

Passing on to the book of Acts, we find Peter preaching the sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2:14ff). Throughout the early chapters of Acts we are told that he preached and performed miracles around Jerusalem and throughout Judea. He also went to Samaria (Acts 8:14) and later to Caesarea when he brought the gospel to Cornelius (Acts 10:1-33). He rejoiced that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well as the Jews (Acts 10:34ff). He was imprisoned first by the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:1ff), and later by Herod (Acts 12:1ff), but the Lord delivered him. He was a powerful spokesman for the Jerusalem church, e.g., at the council to decide whether the Gentile converts should be circumcised (Acts 15:7). He evidently traveled much, and tradition tells us he was finally crucified, head down, at Rome under the persecution of Nero around A.D. 68.

E. Harrison in his *Introduction to the New Testament* draws from this background the following interesting conclusions regarding the epistle.

Certain autobiographical touches in the epistle can be readily linked with items of information contained in the Gospels. Peter's own severe testing of faith (Luke 22:31, 32) accords with his reference to the proving of his readers' faith (1:17), and the Lord's prediction that he will thereafter be able to strengthen his brethren meshes with the thrust of the epistle as a whole, including the language in which promise is given of divine assistance (5:10). Jesus' conversation with Peter in Galilee after the resurrection (John 21) seems to be reflected in the writer's description of believers as sheep (2:25; 5:2, 3). Christian leaders are shepherds under the control of Christ as the Chief Shepherd, to Whom they are responsible (5:2-4). Peter's resurgence following his descent into the abyss of sorrow and humiliation because of his denial of the Lord is reflected in the language of 1:3 — begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection. The injunction to be clothed with humility (5:5) may involve the recalling of the Upper Room scene where Jesus girded himself with a towel and washed the disciples' feet. Peter's description of Christians as living stones (2:5) may stem from Jesus' prediction uttered over him at their first meeting that he would be called "stone," (John 1:42).

## HISTORICAL SETTING

The epistle itself makes frequent reference to suffering: "ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (1:6), they were "suffering wrongfully" (2:19), which is called, "suffering for righteousness' sake" and "suffering for well doing" (3:14,

17). He encourages them not to think it strange if "fiery trials" come upon them (4:12ff). This will be the mark of Christians throughout the world (5:9ff).

This reference to suffering indicates to us that Peter wrote this letter at a time when such persecution was a serious concern. A confrontation had developed between the Roman government and Christians throughout the empire. Prior to this, the prevailing occasion for persecution was at the hands of the local Jewish authorities, especially in Jerusalem. The Sanhedrin was frustrated by Christ's claim to Kingship and the disciples' willingness to serve Christ no matter what the rulers of the Jews thought. During this time, the Roman government had no reason to fear the Christians. Christ had said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Matt. 22:21). He also had said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). Even Paul, when accused by the Jews, appealed for his protection to Caesar and publicly testified that he was not guilty of inciting to riot (Acts 24:12). Gradually, Rome began to change in its attitude toward Christians. The Christian church was distinguished more and more from Judaism. The gospel of Christ's Lordship and the teaching of His return in victory over all nations was interpreted to mean a threat to Rome. Nero showed his contempt for Christians by subjecting them to a bloodbath in Rome. This quickly swept throughout the empire.

This is the background for this epistle. The Christian church was fearful of her life. Would they be wiped from the face of the earth? Could they resist? How could they possibly endure? To satisfy this deep spiritual need, God by the Holy Spirit moved Peter to write this letter.

He wrote it to "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (1:1, 2). These districts were located in Asia Minor. Representatives of Cappadocia in Pontus were in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost (Acts 2:9). In all likelihood, they returned home with the good news of the gospel. This would indicate that the nucleus of the churches was Jewish. Paul visited this same region during his missionary journeys (Acts 16:6), including Galatia. At the time, the Spirit forbade them to go into Asia and Bithynia (Acts 16:6, 7). Perhaps they touched the northern parts of this region. It would seem that even though no specific mention is made of Peter's visiting this area, there is no reason to say that he could not have done so. In any event, the Spirit led him to write to these people whether he knew them personally or not. From the epistle itself, we can conclude that the "elect strangers" were not limited to Jewish Christians, but included con-



verted Gentiles. Peter applies the passage of Hosea 1:9 to them: "Which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God" (2:10). Furthermore, he refers to their former lusts in ignorance, including idolatry (1:14). Now they should "have their conversation honest among the Gentiles (2:12). Even though they formerly walked in such things as lusts, revelings, etc., they are now to abstain from them and expect the Gentiles to think this strange (4:3, 4).

#### ORIGIN AND DATE

One more thing that we have to consider is that Peter wrote this letter from Babylon (5:13). Quite naturally we ask, where was that city? Three suggestions are offered: 1. Babylon by the Euphrates in Mesopotamia. 2. Babylon in northern Egypt, a Roman military complex. 3. A reference to Rome, much like John used it in Revelation 17:5, a type of the Antichrist in her spiritual harlotry. In trying to determine which one is correct, it seems rather easy to eliminate the one in Egypt, as there is no reference to it in the Bible. The Babylon in the east seems so remote. Yet it would be in keeping with Peter's direct form of address that he used it to refer literally to this Babylon. We know there was a Jewish church there. Some favor Babylon-Rome. We know that Mark was there with Peter (5:13), and that he was in Rome about the time of Paul's

imprisonment (Col. 4:10). Silas would bring this letter (5:12) from Rome to these regions. But, why didn't he simply say Rome instead of Babylon? Two reasons are offered: 1. The persecution was centered in Rome. This was Peter's way of using a code-name to protect the Christians in event of discovery. 2. It had spiritual symbolism for the spiritual pilgrims. Babylon was the symbol of evil, hostility, and captivity. The problem with this is that there is no proof that Babylon was used mystically twenty years before John did so in Revelation. It's pretty difficult to draw a conclusion one way or the other. The Roman Catholic Church makes much of Peter's presence in Rome, claiming he was the first Pope and founder of the church. There is no historical proof for any of this. Definite substantiation of Peter's presence in Rome is limited.

The date can only be approximated from this evidence. If Mark was with Peter and the persecution of Nero was either imminent or already begun, the date most likely would be about A.D. 64, 65. Nero persecuted the church from A.D. 64-67. Paul was executed in A.D. 66. So that date would be pretty close.

Next time we will examine what the Holy Spirit had to say to the persecuted ones, namely, that they have hope in the Lord Jesus.

---

## ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

# Banner Blasts Official Church Position

The *Banner* is the official publication of the Christian Reformed Church. Most of our readers are familiar with that periodical. One would have reason to expect that an official publication of a denomination would set forth the official position of the church it represents. One would expect that it would maintain the church's position over against those who oppose it. One would expect that those who disagree with the official position of the church would not be given a forum in the official paper of the denomination. One might expect all of this — but anyone reading the *Banner* the past year or so, would find that it is not true there. It seems

that the *Banner* and its editor take a certain pride in presenting both sides of an issue — and at times weighted against the official position of the church which it represents.

The Christian Reformed Church has also its Church Order — revised in 1965 from one which was virtually identical to our own. The revised version states in Article 30 (similar to our Art. 31), ". . . The decisions of the assemblies shall be considered settled and binding, unless it is proved that they conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order." One would think that an article of this



nature would make it inappropriate (to say the least) for the official church paper to present a position contrary to the established and binding decisions of the church. But that is being commonly done.

All of the above is meant to lead up to the fact that a recent issue of the *Banner* (Jan. 23, 1984) was devoted to the question of women in office in the church. In a rather heavy-handed way the official paper of the C.R.C. blasted the position of the C.R.C. on women in office. The barrage began with the editor who wrote:

Some day the Christian Reformed Church must answer the question whether or not women will be forever barred from holding office in the church. . . .

. . . Christian Reformed people, myself included, who read on page 10-12 of this issue of the *Banner* that women have left our church because they wanted to obey God rather than our Church Order will feel hurt. . . .

. . . Today more than twenty women are enrolled in Calvin Seminary. Such a situation was unthinkable when I was in seminary . . . .

. . . We have drawn a magic circle around our consistory rooms. Women may be seen and heard anywhere, but in this hallowed chamber they may not help to build the church.

Not all of those who want to keep women out of the consistory are led by ancient male prejudice. Many of us are genuinely convinced that here the Bible draws the line. And when God says *no*, let no one say *yes*.

The church would be well served if we who say that the Bible allows women to hold office in the church frankly admit that we have made a hermeneutical decision: we have decided how to interpret certain Bible texts. One should not try to make these texts say the opposite of what they seem to be saying to the ordinary reader.

There is no doubt in my mind that Paul was prescribing a restricted role to women in the service of worship when he wrote I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:12.

However, the reasons for the restrictions were local, cultural, and therefore temporal. Paul could appeal to what was in his day a common moral judgment: a woman speaking in church looked "bad," "shameful" (I Cor. 14:35). But when such an appeal can no longer be made, the special apostolic prescription is also removed.

. . . At one time the forwardness of a Christian woman would discredit the Word of God (Titus 2:5). Today our efforts to hold back female members might discredit the church.

Just as the gospel liberated the slaves, who were constantly taught submission in Paul's historical situation, so the equality of men and women was taught

in the gospel but had to await its own cultural revelation . . . .

An article is included in this issue about C.R.C. women who have left this denomination on the question of women's ordination into the ministry — and of some who are presently ordained ministers in other denominations.

A story is presented by James C. Schaap meant to show the silliness of old people who still childishly hold on to the idea that women ought not to serve in office.

An article is presented showing that certain biblical texts don't really mean what they seem to say about women serving within the church.

There is a "Soapbox" article complaining that though the Synod has allowed women to vote in the congregational meetings, the Synod thus far has refused to mandate this "right" to all women of the congregation.

And, inevitably, there is presented the results of a survey in the C.R.C. on the question of women in office. The poll shows that, generally speaking, the younger and more educated are more in favor of women serving in the offices than those who are older and less educated.

*If?* As time passes, younger members will replace older ones. Also, more and more members of the CRC will achieve higher educational levels. Recalling from our data that it is the younger, more educated members who are more accepting of women in office, it seems clear that increasing proportions of the CRC's membership will come to accept the idea of women in office.

And although the surveyers insist that "we do not believe nor do we mean to imply that the leadership of our denomination ought to decide the issue of women and ordination on the basis of survey findings," still the survey is there and its results are obvious. The total shows the following: 36% would favor ordination of women as deacons; 26% would favor women ordained as elders; 23% would allow for women as ministers. Although the survey shows that the vast majority oppose women serving in any office, still this attitude will gradually change when people are forced to "rethink" their former beliefs.

It is interesting also to note that before changing their stand on movies and on dancing, similar surveys were also conducted and presented to Synod as evidence that a change was required. One is almost forced to conclude that there is an element in the C.R.C. convinced that when the percentage of people, though this be a minority, is large enough, it is time to move forward and force the rest to "rethink" their beliefs in light of the changed official position of the church.



But again one faces the question: when a decision is "settled and binding," is this the way to overthrow it? Does the official church magazine blast away until its Synod sees the light? And what of their Church Order which still states in Article 3, "Confessing *male* members of the church who meet the Biblical requirements for office-bearers are eligible for office . . . ."

And when the church struggles, howbeit somewhat belatedly, to catch up with the position of the world on the issue of women's lib, some within the world seem to be realizing the foolishness of their own position. There are some beginning to understand, though not on biblical grounds, that there are sad consequences when "women's lib" is pushed in the way it has been. In commenting on a recently-written book, *Time*, January 30, 1984, states,

Brownmiller's thesis, somewhat reluctantly

broached, is that femininity ("a nostalgic tradition of imposed limitations") is making a comeback because of the fierce competition among women for men and jobs. "Men are in shorter supply than ever," she says. "The rise of the gay male population has been extraordinary, and it has left a reservoir of desperate women." New York City, for example, has about 500,000 more females than males, as well as a male homosexual population estimated at 300,000 to 400,000. "This is something we never envisioned in the feminist movement," says Brownmiller. "We thought we would collect our grievances and present them to men. Fifteen years later the men aren't there, and there is no one to listen to the complaints."

If one can not accept the plain, literal teaching of Scripture, if (after some 2,000 years) the church now must introduce a different hermeneutical principle, then perhaps he ought to examine the consequences of "women's lib" in the world and ask himself what consequences will also soon be seen within the church.

## Do-It-Yourself Abortion Drug?

*Christianity Today*, October 7, 1983, presents a news item concerning what seems to be a development of a drug by Upjohn Company of Kalamazoo which would safely bring about an abortion. Though the company denies that it is producing the drug for "home use," the fact is that the drug is available for use in hospitals — and at least one salesman resigned his position because he was convinced that the drug is destined ultimately for home use.

It was his suspicion that Upjohn was sponsoring further research on prostaglandins for home use that caused pharmacist George Schimming, one of the

company's most productive salesmen, to resign in April. He left after he discovered that Upjohn was providing drugs and financial support for projects whose clearly stated goals included the refinement of an abortion-inducing drug for home use.

Such a drug, if introduced on the market, would add a frightening dimension to the murder of abortion. How many more lives would be snatched away before birth by those who did not want to go through the trouble of a pregnancy? Already millions of lives have been snuffed out. Additional millions might well be added to an already large number of abortions presently done.

---

## STRENGTH OF YOUTH

### Martin Luther Addresses Youth

Rev. Ron Cammenga

Martin Luther knew people. Like the Lord Whom he served, he could be "touched with the feeling of the infirmities" of God's people. He

could weep with the sorrowing. He could laugh with the joyful. He could pity the distressed and downcast. He could sympathize with the believer



who struggled with the guilt of his sin. Luther knew people because he knew himself. He never stood aloof from God's people in his office as minister of the gospel, because Luther knew himself to be but a man among men. He identified with the people of God in their struggles, burdens, temptations, and sins.

Identifying with God's people, Luther identified with the youth. He understood youth. He understood youth because he himself had been a youth. He had himself experienced the enthusiasm and vigor of young manhood. He had himself gone through the struggles that mold the boy into the mature man of God. He had faced the temptations that confront young men, and, like every young man, had more than once fallen into those temptations.

Besides, Luther knew youth as a parent. Luther, along with his beloved wife, Katie, raised a family of children and teenagers. He knew the challenges and the frustrations, the joys and the sorrows of bringing up young men and women.

And Luther knew youth as a pastor. He was, of course, the outstanding leader of the Protestant Reformation. He was a man whose time was constantly demanded by all the work that belonged to reforming and rebuilding the church. He was, besides, a theological professor, engaged in the training of prospective ministers of the gospel. But in addition to all this, Luther was also a simple pastor — and then a pastor who had a care not only for the sheep, but for the lambs of the flock.

In this article, we want to witness Luther's pastoral concern for the youth in the church, and hear what Luther has to say to the youth.

Luther's first concern was with parents and with the responsibility of parents to bring forth and train their children. The strength of youth depended on godly parents carrying out their calling in the church. In "A Sermon On Keeping Children In School" Luther exhorted the congregation:

He has not given you your children and the means to support them simply so that you may do with them as you please, or train them to get ahead in the world. You have been earnestly commanded to raise them for God's service . . . .

It must exactly be a motive with God-fearing parents, Luther insisted, that out of love and concern for the welfare of their children they support the cause of the reform of the church. In the same sermon as quoted above, he asked the rhetorical question, "But how will you raise them (your children) for God's service if the office of preaching and the spiritual estate have fallen into oblivion?"

In the rearing of their children, Luther warned that parents must not destroy and stifle, but direct the natural enthusiasm of youth. Luther reacted to the suffocating tendencies of monasticism and the medieval schools. In one place, commenting on Ecclesiastes 11:9, he said:

Solomon is, therefore, the best of teachers of youth. He does not forbid joys and pleasures, as those foolish teachers, the monks, did. For this is nothing else than making young people into stumps and, as even Anselm, the most monkish of monks, said, trying to plant a tree in a narrow pot. So the monks confined their pupils as though in a cage and forbade them to see or talk with people, with the result that they learned and experienced nothing, even though there is nothing more dangerous to youth than solitude. The mind needs to be trained with good sense and ideas, so that people are not corrupted by association and contact with evil men, since according to the body they have to live in the very midst of such things. Therefore one must see and hear the world, so long as there is a good teacher present.

This, of course, must not be understood to mean that young people must be given a free rein, be allowed to do as they please.

Therefore one must be indulgent with youth, and must let them be happy and do everything with a happy spirit. Yet one must see to it that they are not corrupted by the desires of the flesh. For carousals, drinking-bouts, and love affairs are not the happiness of the heart, but rather make the spirit sad.

Over against the disrespect and disobedience to parents that characterized already the young people of Luther's day, Luther insisted on the calling of the young people of the church to honor and obey their parents. There is probably no calling which the young people so need to be reminded of today. Commenting on the account in Genesis 23 of Abraham's prostrating himself before the children of Heth at the time he made his request of them for the Cave of Machpelah for a burying-place, Luther said:

These are commendable customs of humility, respect, and courtesy; they should be especially praised and presented to our youth, so that it may accustom itself to them and rid itself of its habitual boorishness.

In another place he wrote:

Therefore I urge and earnestly beseech all



young men (young women, too) to shun and detest this sin and to accustom their hearts to respect their parents and to that end to implore God's help with unceasing prayers.

In many places Luther called the children and young people to receive the instruction of their parents and the church. The parents and the church must not only give this instruction, but this instruction must be willingly and eagerly received by the youth.

Doctrine . . . must be constantly repeated on account of the adolescents and the tender youth, who are the seed-bed of the church, that they may learn that they must stand firmly and remain where God speaks, and that they may accustom themselves to those obligations which are commanded by God . . . .

More than once Luther stated his conviction that the permanence of the Reformation depended on the coming generation. If the youth were not instructed and called to stand for the truth of the Word of God represented by the Reformation, the Reformation would vanish like the morning dew.

Especially did Luther call the young people of the church to a serious life of holiness. Time and again he exhorted them to keep the commandments of God and to flee "fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." Luther is honored for his insistence on the truth of justification, justification by faith alone apart from our own works. But Luther's teaching of justification by faith alone did not overthrow the life of good works to which the child of God is called. Justification has its great goal in sanctification, a life lived in obedience to all the commandments of God's law.

In a stirring passage, Luther calls the young people to holiness, and at the same time points out to them that there is nothing that so grieves godly parents as the unholiness of their children.

For there are very great and intense emotions that God has created in the whole nature of things and has implanted in parents toward their offspring. And if at any time their hearts are wounded by grief or sorrow on account of a misfortune suffered by their children, this is a very real plague and a poison for their lives. Therefore, parents are easily killed, if not by the sword, then by sorrow and grief. I myself have seen that many very honorable parents were slain by godless children because of sadness of heart. Young people neither consider nor understand this. But children should be taught and warned, lest they become mur-

derers of mothers and murderers of fathers; for an exceedingly horrible judgment and punishment of God awaits them . . . . Children often fall smugly into various misdeeds without having any regard for respect towards parents. Daughters sully their chastity and disgrace their pious and honorable parents. But with these shameful acts they kill father and mother; for father and mother are endowed with that very tender affection and love toward their offspring which is not so intense and ardent in children. Indeed, they do not even very often understand it.

One of the outstanding means by which the youth of the church are led away from the church and a holy life is the influence of wicked friends. By associating with the young people of the world, the young people of the church are certainly going to come under the power of that bad example, which appeals, of course, to their own sinful flesh, and be led astray. In the following passage, Luther warns the young people against keeping company with the young people of the world, and warns the parents against allowing this to happen.

Now just when a father or a mother has devoted much toil and money to their child before it is trained a little and has been taught fine and mannerly conduct so that it knows how to behave sensibly and chastely over against all people, some pernicious animal comes along, an evil tongue says something into the child's ear, or someone displays a bad example that poisons such a young heart and engenders bad blood of which it can never again rid itself. For instance, even when a young lad has been trained and disciplined well for a long time and to the parent's delight, a wild, evil, frivolous rascal comes along and with a loose and shameless remark or example poisons and spoils with a single stroke the whole object of so much care, diligence, time, and expense. This works murderous harm and ruins whatever is well trained. It is like hail or lightning that ruins the vegetation in the field. And people who take pleasure in poisoning such innocent young people are despicable and devilish.

Especially guilty of deluding and corrupting the young people of Luther's day were the universities. There is no new thing under the sun. Still today, the institutions for higher learning, even those which are nominally Reformed, take the lead in undermining the truth of God's Word and the faith of the young people. Luther expressed, "I greatly fear that



the universities are wide gates of hell, because they do not diligently teach the Holy Scriptures and impress them on the youth." It was exactly out of his concern that not only in the primary grades, but also in the university, the truth of God's Word be taught and upheld that Luther labored unceasingly on behalf of the University of Wittenberg. It was exactly the University of Wittenberg that was responsible, in large measure, for the spread of the Reformation throughout the lands of Europe.

As he pointed all of the people of God, so Luther also pointed the youth to the cross of Jesus Christ as the only hope of salvation. To Christ the young people must look for the forgiveness of sins, and to

Christ they must turn for the strength of the Spirit to live God-glorifying lives.

A youth who believes in Christ has victory over everything because of which Satan has power. Thus he has victory, not in such a way that sin, an evil conscience, and death are not felt, but because they are overcome. For Christ is greater.

This is the strength of youth: Christ. God grant that the youth of the church find their strength, as Luther exhorted them to find their strength and as the faithful church today exhorts them to find their strength, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

---

## GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH

# Allegory and Philosophy

*Rev. Thomas C. Miersma*

We have been considering various aspects of the early church's doctrine of Scripture and the development of its principles of Scriptural interpretation or hermeneutics. The church in these early centuries had to defend the truth of the Word of God against many different attacks upon it, both from within and without. Without a clear doctrine of Scripture the church was very vulnerable to these attacks. Various weaknesses began to creep into the church in her view of Scripture. We have briefly discussed the beginnings of an apostolic tradition standing alongside Scripture which, in the Middle Ages, would supercede Scripture's authority. We have also spoken concerning some of the mystical tendencies which had arisen in the church. One other element which needs to be considered in the early church's approach to Scripture is the rise of allegory and speculative philosophical approaches to the interpretation of Scripture.

The early church lived in the midst of a gentile culture largely shaped by Greek philosophy. Indeed the mystical and speculative Gnostic heresies, with their emphasis on a secret knowledge as the pathway to salvation, were indebted to this philosophical climate.

The Old Testament church itself had not escaped

its influence, so that we find in the days of our Lord not only the legalistic Pharisees, but also those who had adopted Greek culture and philosophy. These men, Jews particularly of the dispersion outside of Palestine, lived in the midst of a gentile world dominated by Greek thought. While the common people among the pagans may have clung to a literal belief in the old pagan myths, the intellectuals among them had turned from them to philosophical speculation. The old myths were allegorized, given mystical and symbolic interpretations apart from their literal meaning. Greek philosophy reinterpreted the myths and used them as poetic symbols of philosophical ideas. The Jews of the dispersion, and particularly those who were attracted to Greek philosophy, were not immune to this speculative philosophical culture and began to apply this allegorical method to Scripture. Those elements in the Word of God which in this age of culture seemed crude or inconsistent with modern views of morality, could be explained away. The sins of the patriarchs could be glossed over in their literal meaning and explained in philosophical terms and as illustrations of great philosophical truths. Such an approach to Scripture served to feed the sinful pride of such interpreters, for they viewed the masses as being confined to the dead



letter of Scripture while they, the truly enlightened, could by the allegorical method penetrate to a much deeper understanding than the mere literal sense. It served their purpose of making Scripture more acceptable, intellectually, to the world, so that it could stand on a par with sophisticated Greek thought.

Perhaps the most notable individual to attempt a combination of Scripture and philosophy among the Jews, was Philo who was born about twenty years before Christ and lived in Alexandria, Egypt. In brief, Philo attempted to show by his writings that the Greek philosophers whom he admired had really derived much of their ideas from the Old Testament or had been anticipated by it. He proceeded to read Greek philosophy into Scripture. The literal sense of the Scriptures he acknowledged, but represented it as primarily an accommodation to weaker minds. To get at the "truth" one had to go beneath the surface, to the eternal ideas which underlay Scripture and were symbolically expressed in its history.

It can be well understood that in such a climate the church of the new dispensation was faced with many temptations. In the first place the gentiles as they were brought into the church came from that culture. Nor was the Jewish element of the church unfamiliar with it. By such a method of symbolically explaining Scripture, virtually every reference to wood in the Old Testament could be turned into a symbol of the cross. By using this method the Gnostic sects which confronted the church and which used this method could be fought on their own ground, with the added weight of apostolic tradition. As the church had no clear understanding of the doctrine of Scripture she was vulnerable to these strange ideas of interpretation.

Spiritually the church stood separated from worldly philosophy, for her principle of interpretation was spiritual as she was led by the Spirit of Truth Who dwelt in the church. Yet the old man of the flesh was there also. The church fathers were not always successful in shaking off their pagan cultural background. Their lack of clarity regarding Scripture made them weak in this area.

One of the problems was that, without a clear conception of Scripture and its principles of interpretation, the church fathers had difficulty distinguishing a spiritual interpretation from an allegorical one. What is meant by this? Allegorizing and spiritualizing a passage are sometimes confused and intermixed even in our own day. So-called fundamentalists of the dispensational type often accuse Reformed people of spiritualizing Scripture while they claim to follow the literal meaning. It is well that we understand these terms,

for what the dispensationalist really accuses us of is allegory. To interpret Scripture spiritually means that one seeks the meaning of a passage by determining the mind of the Holy Spirit Who is *the* author of the Scriptures. This is done by comparing Scripture with Scripture, so that the Holy Spirit interprets His Own Word. Thus, something is a symbol or a type in Scripture, not because one reads a symbolic interpretation *into* the passage, as in allegory, but because the whole of the Scriptures makes it manifestly clear that such is the meaning and intent of the Spirit. The Spirit of Truth explains the meaning of His Own Word. In allegory, however, the meaning of Scripture is hidden behind the plain Word of God and must be uncovered. The historical passages of Scripture are treated as if they were so many parables with hidden meanings of moral or mystical significance, cryptically written philosophy accommodated to weaker minds and understandings.

The early fathers however did not make a clear distinction between the two. Furthermore, they misread certain passages in the New Testament which they did not well understand and which seemed to them to legitimize an allegorical method. For example, the analogy which the Apostle Paul draws in Galatians 4 between Hagar and Sarah, and carnal and spiritual Israel, seemed to some to validate the allegorical approach. One could then read into the Old Testament similar analogies and symbols. In doing this they misunderstood the Apostle's meaning and the historical reality of the promise underlying it.

The tendency toward mysticism illustrated in the Montanist movement and a weak view of the organic nature of inspiration also fostered a fondness for allegory in the early church. This method of interpretation received a strong impetus in Alexandria where the legacy of Philo lingered. The church there had had a difficult struggle with the Gnostic heretics. These heretics catered particularly to those who sought a deeper spiritual knowledge and experience. The church in Alexandria countered these heresies and sects with its own brand of "biblical" Gnosticism, or deeper insight and knowledge. To do this they resorted to extensive use of allegory in their theology. In the process they incorporated many elements from Greek thought. In its essence, it was an attempt to unite faith and reason, to bring about a synthesis of philosophy and Christian theology by Christianizing the former. This movement finds its center in Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-200). He was an officebearer in the church there until A.D. 189 when he became head of the catechetical school for about twelve years until persecution of the church there forced him to flee. Although sincere in his ef-



forts as head of the school to bring the gospel to the people and to instruct the church there, he also taught the divine origin of Greek philosophy, such as Philo had done before him. He propounded the principle that all Scripture must be interpreted allegorically. Scripture, he believed, had hidden depths and meanings which only the spiritually elite could perceive. The plain sense of Scripture he does not reject, but regards it as the milk of the gospel, sufficient only for an elementary faith. The deeper and mystical depths of Scripture were not open to all. Scripture's history was to be conceived of as if it were so many parables. While he did not

deny the history of Scripture, he proceeded to treat it like the parables of Christ, and by his allegorical method to derive from it a "deeper" understanding.

Clement's views were widely received in the church as they appealed to the speculative Greek mind as well as to the mystical tendency present in the church. This allegorical method gained a strong foothold in the church through Clement's pupils, and particularly through Origen, the most brilliant of his pupils, of whom we will have more to say next time, the Lord willing.

## ***TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE***

# **Preservation and Perseverance (2)**

*Rev. H. Veldman*

We concluded our first and preceding article on this subject with the observation that as citizens of the kingdom of heaven we must be pilgrims and strangers in the earth, ever seeking to promote the cause of God and of His Christ. Doing this, however, we will experience the trials and afflictions of this present time. These trials are unavoidable. This means that we must fight, witnessing of Christ and of His Cause, and oppose all the unfruitful works of sin and darkness. And this means that our survival in the midst of the world will become, humanly speaking, impossible. We will be confronted by the powers of sin and evil, within us and all around us, with which we cannot possibly cope and contend. Yet, fight we must, regardless of the odds. But then our preservation and perseverance become a very vital matter. Whether or not we will survive becomes a tremendously vital and pertinent question. How wonderful, then, it is to know that the work which God has once begun shall by His grace be fully done! How wonderful it is that we then may repeat after the apostle Paul what we read in Romans 8:37-38: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other

creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." To this wonderful truth we will now, the Lord willing, call attention in subsequent articles. Indeed, a wonderful truth this is.

The truths of preservation and perseverance are surely scriptural and confessional. The Arminians or Remonstrants also professed to believe in preservation, as is evident from Article 5 of their Five Articles of the Remonstrants. We now quote this article.

That those who are incorporated into Christ by a true faith, and have thereby become partakers of His life-giving Spirit, have thereby full powers to strive against Satan, sin, the world, and their own flesh, and to win the victory; it being well understood that it is ever through the assisting grace of the Holy Ghost; and that Jesus Christ assists them through His Spirit in all temptations, extends to them His hand, and if only they are ready for the conflict, and desire His help, and are not inactive, keeps them from falling, so that they, by no craft or power of Satan, can be misled nor plucked out of Christ's hands, according to the Word of Christ, John 10:28: "Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." But whether they are capable, through negligence, or forsaking again the first beginnings of their life in Christ, of again returning to this present evil world, of turning away from the holy doctrine which was delivered them, of



losing a good conscience, of becoming devoid of grace, that must be more particularly determined out of the Holy Scripture, before we ourselves can teach it with the full persuasion of our minds.

In connection with this article we would call attention to the following. First, we read here that those who are incorporated into Christ by a true faith, and have thereby become partakers of His life-giving Spirit, have thereby full power to strive against Satan, sin, the world, and their own flesh, and to win the victory. This sounds very Reformed, although we must always bear in mind that, according to the Arminian, this is all dependent upon the free will of the sinner. But, it sounds very Reformed. This Reformed speech is characteristic of the heretic. We must bear in mind that the Arminian is speaking here. The heretic will invariably clothe himself in a Reformed garment. We must never forget this. How necessary it is, therefore, that all the preaching and teaching in our churches continue to be distinctive. We must not merely be positive in our preaching and teaching but also distinctive. Always we must expose every heresy in all our activities. Article 55 of our Church Order demands this, and we quote: "To ward off false doctrines and errors that multiply exceedingly through heretical writings, the ministers and elders shall use the means of teaching, of refutation, or warning, and of admonition, as well in the ministry of the Word as in Christian teaching and family-visiting." How the Scriptures warn us to be on our guard against and to oppose the wolves who appear in sheep's clothing! Mind you, they appear in sheep's clothing. They appear as sheep, these false preachers and teachers. But, according to the Saviour, they are ravening, desperately hungry wolves. They are determined to devour the sheep. How important it is that we constantly expose and unmask them! And then this fifth article of the Remonstrance continues: "it being well understood that it is ever through the assisting grace of the Holy Ghost; and that Jesus Christ assists them through His Spirit in all temptations, extends to them His hand, and if only they are ready for the conflict, and desire His help, and are not inactive, keeps them from falling." Here the Arminian begins to reveal himself, here he begins to come out of his shell. Notice, he speaks of the *assisting* grace of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus Christ assists them through His Spirit, extends to them His hand, and also that they must be ready for the conflict, desire His help, and are not inactive. Then, finally, the Remonstrant really reveals himself when he writes that he is not ready to say that the Christian will be preserved and persevere unto the very end. This he declares must be more particularly determined out of the Holy Scriptures before they can teach it with the

full persuasion of their minds. This, of course, we understand, is deliberate camouflage. As if, if you please, it must still be determined whether the child of God will persevere until the very end. The truth is that, as far as the Arminian is concerned, this has been determined, namely that the certain perseverance of the Christian is uncertain, and that it is uncertain exactly because it is dependent upon the sinner's free will. The truth is that he does not believe in the certain perseverance of the saints. The Reformed man has no difficulty with this. He declares emphatically that the child of God shall be preserved and that he will persevere. This is exactly what the Arminian will not say and does not believe.

The truth of preservation is set forth in our Confessions, in the Canons of Dordt, Article III of the fifth Head, and we quote: "By reason of these remains of indwelling sin, and the temptations of sin and of the world, those who are converted could not persevere in a state of grace, if left to their own strength. But God is faithful, Who having conferred grace, mercifully confirms, and powerfully preserves them herein, even to the end."

And then we read in Article VIII of the fifth Head:

Thus, it is not in consequence of their own merits, or strength, but of God's free mercy, that they do not totally fall from faith and grace, nor continue and perish finally in their backslidings; which, with respect to themselves, is not only possible, but would undoubtedly happen; but with respect to God it is utterly impossible, since His counsel cannot be changed, nor His promise fail, neither can the call according to His purpose be revoked, nor the merit, intercession and preservation of Christ be rendered ineffectual, nor the sealing of the Holy Spirit be frustrated or obliterated.

However, the truth of the perseverance of the saints is also confessional. Already in Heads III and IV this truth is set forth.

In Article 12 of Heads III and IV we read:

But as man by the fall did not cease to be a creature, endowed with understanding and will, nor did sin which pervaded the whole race of mankind, deprive him of the human nature, but brought upon him depravity and spiritual death; so also this grace of regeneration does not treat man as senseless stocks and blocks, nor takes away their will and its properties, neither does violence thereto; but spiritually quickens, heals, corrects, and at the same time sweetly and powerfully bends it; that where carnal rebellion and resistance formerly prevailed, a ready and sincere spiritual obedience begins to reign; in which the true and spiritual restoration and freedom of our will consist. Therefore unless the admirable author of every good work wrought in us, man could have no



hope of recovering from his fall by his own free will, by the abuse of which, in a state of innocence, he plunged himself into ruin.

Notice in the above quotation that man could have no hope of recovering from his fall by his own free will, by the abuse of which, in a state of innocence, he plunged himself into ruin. But now, because the admirable author (of course, the Holy Spirit — H.V.) of every good work wrought in us, and is working in us, man does have hope of recovery from his fall and the absolutely sure confidence that he will be saved unto the very end.

And then we have that wondrously beautiful setting forth of the truth by our fathers in Article 12 of Heads III and IV:

And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture, and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid. But this is in no wise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel (how often it is presented today that this occurs through the preaching of the gospel, which is nothing else than a sickening well-meaning, general offer of grace — H.V.), by moral suasion, or such a mode of operation, that after God has performed His part, it will still remain in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted, or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable, not inferior in efficacy to creation, or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in this marvelous manner, are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe. — Whereupon the

will thus renewed, is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, becomes itself active. Wherefore also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent, by virtue of that grace received.

How beautifully our fathers in this article set forth the truth that the work of regeneration is truly and exclusively a mighty, irresistible work of God, even likened to a resurrection, not inferior to such a resurrection from the dead.

We conclude our confessional references in this article by quoting Article 13 of Heads III and IV: "The manner of this operation cannot be fully comprehended by believers in this life. Notwithstanding which, they rest satisfied with knowing and experiencing, that by this grace of God they are enabled to believe with the heart, and love their Saviour."

Indeed, the Reformed truth is believed. Arminianism is characterized by rationalism. And yet, although rationalistic, it is utterly foolish and senseless. Does it make sense that an almighty God is dependent upon the free will of an impotent sinner. The Lord willing, we will continue with this confessional proof, establishing the perseverance of the saints as set forth in the fifth Head of our Canons of Dordt.

## *Read and Study the Standard Bearer*

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church (Walker, Michigan) herewith expresses its sincere Christian sympathy to its members, Mr. Cornelius Kamps, Marinus Kamps and Gilbert Schimmel in the recent death of their mother and mother-in-law, MRS. GEORGE KAMPS, age 79.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 115:15)

D. Englesma, Pres.  
P. Koole, Sec'y.

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of Doon, Iowa, wish to express their sympathy to Rev. and Mrs. Marvin Kamps and family in the passing of his mother, MRS. GEORGE KAMPS.

Our prayer is that God may comfort them in their sorrow and we rejoice with them in remembering that "—precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 116:15)

Mrs. Rod Brunsting, Sec'y.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On March 24, 1984, the Lord willing, MR. AND MRS. JOE VAN KAMPEN, of Holland, Michigan, will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary. We, their children and grandchildren, are thankful for the years of love and covenant instruction they have given us. We thank our Heavenly Father for the years they have had together and pray that He will continue to keep them in His care.

"So we Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture will give Thee thanks forever: we will show forth Thy praise to all generations." (Psalm 79:13)

Dan and Mary Van Kampen  
Michael, Andrew  
Bruce and Cherie Jabaay  
Julie, Richard, Brian, Lisa

Larry and Pat Dutmer  
Jodie, Betsy  
Steve Van Kampen  
Joe Van Kampen  
Mark and Cindy Ophoff

### NOTICE!!! TEACHER NEEDED

Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School is in need of the following teachers for the 1984-1985 school year: half-day junior high; kindergarten, elementary grades (combination grade classroom). Address inquiries to the Education Committee, c/o the school, 1545 Wilson Avenue, S.W., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504.

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Society of Doon Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere Christian sympathy to our President, Rev. Marvin Kamps, and his family in the death of his mother, MRS. GEORGE KAMPS.

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



## News From Our Churches

February 14, 1984

We have another new sister congregation. This time in the Grandville, Michigan area. On February 9th, at Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, the Grandville Protestant Reformed Church was formed. That, by the way, is not their official name. Prof. H. Hanko gave the sermon based on I Timothy 3:15b; "The Church, The Pillar of the Truth." The charter members consisted of 25 families and 5 individuals. May our covenant God establish this new congregation as a foundation and pillar of the truth.

Our new Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church had this note in their February 5th bulletin: "We welcome into our fellowship six new members all from Hudsonville Church.... We pray that the love of Christ may abound in our congregation that we may mutually be blessed from our God as we worship together from Sabbath to Sabbath...." Byron Center Consistory elected the following trio from which the congregation will call an Under-shepherd: Candidate Barry Gritters, Rev. Carl Haak, and Rev. Jason Kortering."

Southeast Protestant Reformed Church is having a birthday! Their January 22, 1984 bulletin reads, "Southeast Protestant Reformed Church celebrates 40 years in existence this spring. Set aside the evening of April 26 to help commemorate God's faithfulness to His Church. Anyone with memorabilia of any type is asked to contact Herm Ophoff at 452-1908. More specifics coming later."

An announcement in the January 15, 1984 bulletin of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church reads, "The Consistory has decided in accord with the request of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore to take the spiritual oversight of Mr. & Mrs. J. Mahtani while they are in this country for his seminary instruction."

I received a colorful postcard from Rev. & Mrs. Heys with two postage stamps totaling 58¢ airmail. They wrote, in part, "...we are laboring with two

groups of saints in New Zealand. Every second Sunday in the month we go to Palmerston North which is a good 100 miles north of Wellington. Both groups love the true Reformed Faith." Remember, Rev. & Mrs. Heys' phone number is 011-64-4-672-200 and their address 44A Norton Park Avenue, Lower Hutt, New Zealand.

The January 29th bulletin of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church had this announcement: "Rev. C. Hanko plans to leave this week to preach in Bradenton for the next several months. May God guide and bless him in his labors." Incidentally, the address of the church in Bradenton is: 3304 W. 43rd St., Bradenton, Florida. Services are held at 10 A.M. and 4 P.M.

The Activities Committee of Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church is planning on a spring conference to be held March 30 in their church at Kalamazoo. Two years ago the conference was on the subject of missions, and last year they considered the subject of Child Development. This year they plan to look into the matter of Christian living.

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church had important information regarding their church building. A January 8 bulletin reads, "At a Building Committee meeting held last Friday evening it was decided to offer...our sanctuary bonds...This is with a view to finishing the driveway and parking lot this coming spring."

South Holland Protestant Reformed Church has another publication. Rev. Engelsma has edited "The Christian School Movement; Why a Failure?" by Herman Hoeksema.

The Evangelism Committee of South Holland Protestant Reformed Church arranged a meeting for the Rev. George G. Hutton, minister of the Bible Presbyterian Church in Northern Ireland. He spoke concerning his church, the struggle for the Reformed faith in Northern Ireland, and the state of the church in Northern Ireland. D.H.