

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

What an unspeakable comfort!

Jesus died for all our sins, entered into our death and our grave.

Now we no longer fear death or the grave.

The curse is removed.

Death and grave must now serve to lead us into heavenly life and glory.

Death's terror is gone; we are more than conquerors.

See "'Jesus' Burial" page — 314

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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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. Kortering, 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

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**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

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## MEDITATION

## Jesus' Burial

Rev. H. Veldman

*"And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid."*  
Luke 23:53

Tremendous is the power of the cross! We read, in connection with Jesus' burial, of Joseph and Nicodemus. They were members of the Sanhedrin and disciples of the Lord. They meet at the cross. It is evident that Joseph is the leader of the two. This

appears, in the first place, from the fact that, although the incident of Jesus' burial is mentioned in all the gospels, Nicodemus is mentioned only in the gospel of John. And, secondly, it is Joseph who goes to Pilate to request the body of Christ. It is ob-



vious that their meeting at the cross is pre-arranged. Why, otherwise, should Joseph buy only the linen? Indeed, tremendous is the power of the cross! Imagine what they do! Joseph had until now been a disciple of the Lord in secret. Now, when all seems hopeless, when all the disciples had fled, Joseph and Nicodemus come boldly forward to bury the body of the Lord! Now, when all seems hopelessly lost, they declare their allegiance to the Christ of Calvary. They do not hesitate to invite the wrath and hatred of the Jews in this hour of utter gloom and despair. Indeed, this is the power of the cross. What they had failed to do while Jesus was still alive, they are now able to do at His death. Now their love of Christ breaks through and conquers their fear and has the complete victory, even as throughout the ages it is the crucified Lord Who draws His people unto Himself.

We now call attention to Jesus' burial. Also this incident is the fulfillment of prophecy, of Isaiah 53. And what a truly amazing burial it is! He Who had been consigned by the Jews to die and be buried with the malefactors was with the rich in His death and was laid in a new tomb wherein no man had ever been laid.

\* \* \* \* \*

Christ's death and burial — how humiliating!

Death is, first of all, from the viewpoint of this life, from the viewpoint of our experience, of what we can see of it, the complete dissolution of our earthly house, the end of our earthly existence. Death is simply an utter and complete loss. In death man's entire earthly tabernacle is completely destroyed. It is through the body that man is a living soul. And when the body dies, his existence in and relation to this world is completely gone. Then everything is taken from him. He suffers a complete loss. Secondly, in the light of what is revealed to us in the Word of God, death is much more. Death is not simply the inevitable end of our earthly existence. It is not simply an accident. Death, humanly speaking, is not inevitable, the coming to an end because we no longer can continue — as, for example, a clock that simply stops running because it has run out. Death is punishment, divine punishment, and it is also God's verdict upon us. When we die, then it is God Who declares that we are not worthy to live, that we deserve to die. Thirdly, death is still more. Death, according to Scripture, is not merely an end. It is also a beginning. It is surely the end of all existence in this world. But it is also the beginning of another, of an endless world. Physical death is only the beginning of, and the entrance into a horrible pit, the pit of endless darkness and desolation where there is nothing but the experience of a terribly just and holy God. There shall be weeping

and gnashing of teeth, and nothing else! It is because of this that man always and really fears death.

And then there is the grave. The grave seals all this. It means that there is absolutely no return.

How humiliating! For us! Man was created as God's image bearer, the highest and most wonderful of all the earthly creatures of the Lord. From the top of the earthly creation he is reduced to the dust from whence he was taken. Whatever he is and has is removed from him.

But, how humiliating death and the grave are for the Christ! That is true on the one hand, because of His holiness. Indeed, if we fear death and the grave, if we fear the heavy hand of the holy and righteous God, we who are carnal and hate God and therefore fear death only because we love ourselves and the things that are below, how terrible and complete this humiliation must have been for the Christ of God, the perfect Servant of Jehovah, Who loved His Father, craved His fellowship more than a hart panteth after the waterbrooks. How terrible it was for Him to taste death and the shame of the grave! Besides, He is the Christ of God, the eternal Son of God, united in the second Person with our flesh and blood, the Anointed of the Father, anointed and destined to be the King of kings and the Lord of lords, to Whom the ends of the earth have been given as an inheritance. What an utter humiliation for Him!

And this was necessary.

Christ must suffer and die and be buried. He must not simply suffer the agonies of death upon the cross and then be revived and glorified in the sight of all His enemies. He must bear the wrath of God even unto the end. The sinner has indeed forfeited every right to his existence in the midst of the world. God takes away his whole earthly house. His very name must perish. His body, too, must collapse, and he must give up the ghost. He must also be buried.

Besides, Christ must humiliate Himself. He did not simply die and was buried; His life was not taken from Him. He gave His life. God's sentence of death was upon Him, to be sure; but we must remember that He Himself was in complete agreement with that sentence. He makes His death an act, also His burial. His life He lays down even as God takes it. His spirit He commends to God and His body He freely gives even into the place of corruption. Freely He offers up His Name and position to the righteousness of God, saying to God, "Take My life, My name, My all." And this Christ could do because He is the Christ of God, the eternal Son of God is our flesh and blood, the perfect Servant of Jehovah.



Very important is Scripture's emphasis upon the distinction in burial between the godly and the ungodly. There is no place in Scripture for the ungodly with the godly in their burial. We refer to Numbers 14:29, Hebrews 3:17, Isaiah 14:19, 20, Jeremiah 7:33 and 34:20. On the other hand, it is a most lamentable and terrible thing when the righteous suffer the same fate as the wicked and are not honorably buried, as we read in Psalm 9:1-2. Lack of space forbids me to quote these passages.

The symbolism of the grave is plain in this respect. In the midst of this life the righteous and the unrighteous live together and have all things in common. In the grave, however, the separation takes place. This lies in the very nature of the case. Death and the grave are the end, the absolute end of this life and the beginning of another, the beginning of every man's eternal destiny. The soul of the righteous passes into eternal glory, and that of the wicked into everlasting desolation. Hence, their souls are surely separated. And, as far as the body is concerned, the body of the righteous awaits the glorious resurrection, but the body of the ungodly awaits the resurrection of damnation.

Christ's burial was surely divinely appointed.

His enemies had assigned His grave with the wicked.

This is surely the meaning of Isaiah 53:9 which may be read: "Although His place was indeed assigned with the wicked, yet He was given an honorable burial." His enemies had assigned Him a place among the wicked throughout His life upon earth. Was He not called a deceiver, a gluttonous man, etc.? Was He not treated as a malefactor throughout His trial before the Sanhedrin, before Pilate? And they had surely wanted Him buried with the wicked. Did they not ask the Roman governor that the legs of all three who had been crucified might be broken in order that they might be taken away and thrown into a hastily dug pit at the foot of the cross? This was their intention. Then, really, the Lord would not have been buried at all. Then the Jews would have expressed that Jesus had passed on into everlasting desolation, accursed of God, forever separated from the righteous, and that also His body did not await the resurrection of the just. Indeed, His enemies had assigned Him an eternal place among the damned.

How different, however, was the will of the Lord. Indeed, the Lord had spoken in Isaiah 53:9. And this word of the Lord must be fulfilled. The Lord worked in the hearts of Joseph and Nicodemus by His grace and Spirit and through the cross of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God and the Man of Sorrows. The Lord removed whatever fear may have been in these members of the Sanhedrin as

Joseph addressed his request to the Roman governor. The request was not unusual in itself; Pilate was only surprised that the Lord was already dead. Isaiah 53:9 is fulfilled.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two things are prominent in this text: Jesus was buried with the rich and He was laid in a new tomb.

He was buried with the rich. He was wrapped in fine, expensive linen and He was laid in a tomb hewn in stone. Secondly, Jesus' grave was a new grave.

What this means is plain.

Jesus was surely rich in His death. Isaiah informs us that He had done no violence and that no deceit was found in His mouth. As the suffering Servant of Jehovah, the Head of Zion's elect children, He was never rebellious, always obedient unto the Father, fulfilling all the righteousness and justice of God, paying for all our sins and meriting eternal life. How rich He was in His death!

And He was laid in a new tomb. Indeed, His grave was also actually new. Apart from Christ all graves are old, passageways into eternal misery and desolation. But Jesus saw no corruption because He was the Holy One; He went through the grave into eternal and heavenly glory and immortality; He made of the grave an entrance into life and glory.

What an unspeakable comfort!

Jesus died for all our sins, entered into our death and our grave.

Now we no longer fear death or the grave.

The curse is removed.

Death and grave must now serve to lead us into heavenly life and glory.

Death's terror is gone; we are more than conquerors.

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

*Remember a friend  
today with a gift of  
The Standard Bearer.*



## EDITORIALS

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

# Editorial Notes

### Correspondents

It would be helpful to your editor, when you write to him, to indicate whether your letter is intended for publication. This is not always clear from the contents of the letters which I receive. And I certainly do not wish to offend a correspondent by publishing what he intended to be private correspondence. On the other hand, I do not want to offend by keeping private what was intended to be public.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Program

In connection with the publication of the RFPA's Bible story book, *Come, Ye Children*, there will be a program in our Hudsonville Church, D.V., on Friday, April 27, at 8:00 P.M. After a brief informational session in the church auditorium, the book will be available at the pre-publication sale price of \$19.95 (\$15.95 for Book Club members). The ori-

ginal art work of artist Jeff Steenholdt (of our Kalamazoo church) will also be displayed and sold. Most of these drawings are half-tones. Seven large color drawings will be sold at the end of the evening. Author Gertrude Hoeksema and Artist Jeff Steenholdt will be on hand to autograph your copy of *Come, Ye Children* and also the drawings you purchase, should you so desire.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Pre-Publication Sale

The pre-publication sale of *Come, Ye Children* ends June 1. It is to the advantage of Book Club members to order now with payment enclosed; this will bring you a double discount. Otherwise Book Club members will receive their copies at the regular discount of 20% *after* June 1. Consult the last page of the April 1 issue for complete information.

## Congratulations to Another New Sister!

We have another new sister in the family of our Protestant Reformed Churches. Our baby sister was born on February 9, 1984. The vital statistics are that the congregation numbered 25 families and 5 individuals; and among these families there are numerous children and infants (my informant did not furnish me an exact number).

Most of the charter families of the new Grandville Protestant Reformed Church came from Hope, Walker. Hope's auditorium has been overcrowded for a long time, and it was clear that something had to be done to relieve the overcrowding; this was a natural move. In fact, Hope's auditorium is now just nicely filled, as I noticed when I was there recently to supply their pulpit.

Congratulations, sister-church! We wish you a long and prosperous ecclesiastical life, and also a healthy growth — not merely numerical growth, but growth and establishment in the truth. And may you be a faithful witness of our Protestant Reformed heritage in your community.

For those who are unacquainted with the geography of this region, Grandville is a far southwestern suburb — though a city in its own right — in the greater Grand Rapids area. Coming from the west or southwest, you will find Grandville located on M21 or Interstate 196. At present the congregation is meeting in the auditorium of the Grandville High School, located on Wilson Avenue, Grandville's main north-south street.





From Elder David Harbach, who is also our Church News Editor, I received an account of the early history of the new congregation (plus some pictures of the new congregation and their temporary meeting place). To this report I may add that the congregation chose as their official name, "Grandville Protestant Reformed Church." They have extended a call to the Rev. J. Kortering, of Loveland, Colorado.

Here is Mr. Harbach's report, accompanied by the pictures:

On August 18, 1983 the Consistory of Hope Protestant Reformed Church called a meeting of interested members in the church with a view to determining the interest in organizing a congregation in the Grandville area. All interested persons, both men and women, were welcome to attend. At that meeting there were 26 heads of households who showed interest in establishing a congregation; of these, nine volunteers to serve on a committee to work toward that end.



Beginning Sunday, October 9, worship services for the proposed Grandville Church were held in Grandville High School's auditorium, 3535 Wilson Ave., at 9:30 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. At that time there were 19 families from Hope Church who were committed to the organization of a church in that area. Due to the illness of Pastor Flikkema, Prof. Hanko conducted the first worship services. Two elders and one deacon from Hope Church attended these services.

While the future congregation of Grandville was meeting prior to their organization, four births and two baptisms took place: Jordan Gise, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Van Baren; Melissa Lee Engelsma, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jon Engelsma; Jonathan Daniel, son of Mr. and Mrs. Dan Key; and Jacob Richard, son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Peterson. During this period a signed petition requesting permission to organize into a congregation was sent to Classis East in January, 1984. Prior to organization, an Adult Bible Class was begun under the leadership of Prof. Hanko. The class meets on alternate Tuesday evenings at the Seminary and is studying the book of Judges.

On January 11, 1984 Classis East considered the request to organize and approved the organization of a new congregation in the Grandville area. The Consistory of Hope Church was appointed as the committee of Classis to implement that decision, with the Rev. Flikkema appointed to serve as moderator for the congregation until such time as a minister would accept a call to be undershepherd at Grandville.



On the February 5 bulletin of Hope Church, the consistory made this announcement: "We rejoice with these fellow saints as their goal to be established as an earthly manifestation of the body of Christ is, D.V., about to be realized. With confidence we commend them to the care and blessing of the King of His Church. II Cor. 13:11, 12, 14: 'Finally, brethren, farewell. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.'"

Therefore, by God's grace, the Grandville Church was organized at a Thursday evening divine worship service, February 9, 1984, at Hope Church. Prof. Hanko preached the sermon, "The Church, The Pillar of the Truth," using I Timothy 3 as the Scripture reading. Professor Hanko preached on the Identity of the Pillar, the Purpose of the Pillar, and the Importance of the Pillar. After the encouraging word of God by Prof. Hanko, Rev. Flikkema presented the membership attests of the charter members — 25 families and 5 individuals. A Declaration of Hope's Consistory was read, after which three elders and two deacons were chosen by free election and duly installed in office.



Rev. M. Joostens preached the first sermon to the newly organized congregation on February 12, on Lord's Day I, Q. and A. 1, "Our Only Comfort." Since organization two more baptisms have taken place.

As of this writing, a trio has been announced: Rev. J. Kortering, Candidate B. Gritters, and Rev. D. Engelsma. At a congregational meeting on March 13, a call will be extended and a name will be chosen from the following list: Grandville, Covenant, Bethel, Good-Will, Charity, and Trinity. (see note above, HCH).

## CORRESPONDENCE AND REPLY

### About "Our Enemies"

*Prof. H.C. Hoeksema*

From two Michigan readers I received letters about an expression which I used in my reply to a letter concerning organizing small churches (March 15 issue, p. 272). The expression occurs in the following sentence: "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 had prospered us and provided for us abundantly, then I can't think in terms of burdens, only of blessings."

The first letter, from Holland, is as follows:

"Prof. Hoeksema,

"I was reading your article, page 272, Mar. 15 issue, under item 6, when I stopped suddenly. Your

word "enemies" leaves me with some questions. Do you call them enemies because you consider them God's enemies? Does this mean that the people who left the PRC in 1954 are hell bound? Please do not feel that I am asking this in a sarcastic tone. I really want to know what prompted your use of this word.

(w.s.) Harv Nyhof"

The second letter, from a Hudsonville address, is as follows:

"Dear Prof. Hoeksema,

"Greetings in the Name of our Lord.

"Before I address the issue which concerns me, please let me take a moment to express my appreci-



ation for the *Standard Bearer* and to you, for your dedicated and faithful role in this publication. Indeed, this magazine is a bright lamp in the darkness of the present ecclesiastical and even 'Reformed' world.

"I as a layman also humbly acknowledge your high office and responsible calling; and by God's grace your qualifications to such. But let me nevertheless bring to your attention a point that somewhat troubles me. I refer to your article of "Correspondence and Reply" in the March 15 issue of the *Standard Bearer*, specifically to the 'enemies' who ran off with the synodical funds. My question is: why must this sin be brought up in this article and why must one go so far as to call them our enemies? Are they allies of Satan? Do they not confess Christ? Do not misunderstand; I do not minimize their sin or their responsibility in their role of the 1954 controversy. But does not this statement feed the fire of bitter hatred and enmity? I cannot see where I am edified by this, or for that matter see any advantage or purpose in making this statement in the context of your article. What constructive purpose can there be in bringing out this particular sin of these people in the public foreground now? Furthermore, what of those brethren who left us in '54 and now are in our midst again? Enemies? Please, let the Lord alone be the judge of the hearts of these men. I believe, sir, we must be strong and stand up, and be counted for who we are and what we believe. But also, we must always be humble. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,  
Your humble brother in Christ,  
(w.s.) Howard C. Pastoor, Jr."

### Reply

First of all, thanks to both of these correspondents for their letters. It is good to know that one is not only read, but read carefully. Frankly, I was a bit surprised to learn that my use of the term "enemies" attracted their attention. While I certainly did not use the word thoughtlessly, but purposely, I used it with a particular purpose in mind. When I think the matter over, perhaps part of the difference between me and my correspondents is due to the fact that I lived through the history under discussion and, in fact, had an active role in it and, along with others, experienced firsthand some of their enmity. Add to that the fact that recently I have been deeply involved in research concerning that period of our history in connection with the book which I am writing; and perhaps this will help our readers to understand a little "where I was coming from."

Secondly, I will stand by the term. My *Webster's*

*Unabridged* gives the following definition: "One hostile to another; one who hates, and desires or attempts the injury of another; a foe; an adversary; as, an *enemy* of or to a person; an *enemy* to truth...." This definition is applicable. The schismatic group who left us post-1953 were enemies of the truth which we as Protestant Reformed Churches maintained and still do maintain. First they sought to import their heresies into our churches, the very heresies which we had denied in 1924. Then, after they were expelled or left, they themselves publicly embraced those heresies, having repudiated the Declaration of Principles, and found their way back into the Christian Reformed Church. Along with this, in numerous instances they sought to deprive our churches of name and goods and property, let alone the fact that they destroyed several congregations or converted them into Christian Reformed congregations. Were they our enemies? Without a doubt!

Thirdly, I make and I made no judgment as to whether they were or are God's enemies; and I certainly make no judgment as to their final destiny. This is not my prerogative, and it is outside my competence. God is Judge! This does not change the fact, however, that they manifested themselves as enemies of our Protestant Reformed Churches — and in some instances still do so — and that this is indeed sin.

Finally, let me call the attention of both of my correspondents to the context in which I made the reference and to my purpose in doing so. I was emphasizing in the paragraph in question the fact that the Lord has abundantly blessed us as Protestant Reformed Churches. It was in this context that I made the reference to enemies. My purpose was to stress this blessing of the Lord. Precisely at the time when our enemies sought our destruction by making it financially difficult, if not impossible, for us to continue as a denomination, the Lord provided for us abundantly; and He has done so ever since. That work of the Lord is enhanced by the fact that it stands in contrast with the purpose of those who sought our destruction. In other words, I did not use the term to be abrasive.

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## ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

### G.R. Baptist Academy Update

Some time ago we reported concerning difficulties encountered by the Grand Rapids Baptist Academy with the Civil Rights Department of Michigan. The Academy was, apparently, being challenged regarding hiring procedures. They were, it was claimed, violating the civil rights laws by asking questions concerning the religious beliefs of the applicants for teaching positions in the school. That challenge has now been dropped. In a

letter dated February 13, 1984, they quote the following statement from the legal office of the Civil Rights Department of Michigan: "This is to 'confirm in writing' that we have no complaint pending against the Academy at this time, nor do we plan to initiate any action."

One must give thanks to God that this attempt failed. Yet one can easily anticipate that similar attempts will be made in the future.

### State Limits to Church Discipline

I have noticed, and my attention has been called repeatedly to this, that a recent jury trial resulted in a conviction of a church because it had disciplined one of its members for the sin of fornication. I have read accounts of the trial and verdict in the *Grand Rapids Press*, *New York Times*, and *Time* magazine. Obviously, the decision has created a stir even in the secular press. From the *N.Y. Times*, March 15, 1984, the report is given:

Three elders of the Collinsville (Okla.) Church of Christ, accused in a \$1.35 million suit of invading a woman's privacy, branded her a fornicator "because the Scripture demanded it," one of them testified here today.

The suit brought by Marian Guinn, 36 years old, accuses the suburban Tulsa church and the elders of causing her emotional harm by denouncing her in front of the congregation for having a love affair and ordering the congregation to shun her.

... The elders said they counseled Mrs. Guinn about her relationship with a former Collinsville mayor, then advised her to stop seeing him.

When she continued, the elders said, they ordered her to repent, or they would reveal her "sin of forni-

cation" to the church, as they said the Scriptures dictated.

When Mrs. Guinn, who is divorced, refused and wrote a letter resigning from the church, the elders denounced her love affair from the pulpit on Oct. 4, 1981, her suit contends.

An issue in Mrs. Guinn's suit against the church and three elders, ... is not whether a church has the right to discipline members, but how far it can go.

Mr. Moody told the court today that the boundaries of church discipline are defined by Scripture alone.

In a later issue of the *N.Y. Times*, March 19, 1984, the jury's verdict is reported:

... Twelve Tulsa jurors, only four of whom called themselves regular churchgoers, unanimously decided that Mrs. Guinn's privacy had been invaded. They awarded her \$205,000 actual and \$185,000 punitive damages.

Jurors also said they never doubted that the elders had erred. Two jurors said the panel wished it could have awarded her damages for harassment. "He was single, she was single, and this is America," said one juror ...



One often wonders about the accuracy of reports of this nature in the press. Misquotes or quotes out of context can create a different impression on the reader than the facts warrant. However, the report is disturbing.

It is true that, according to the report, the censured woman had asked for dismissal from the church *before* the announcement had been made concerning her fornication. The elders proceeded with censure, it appears, in spite of her "resignation."

Still, the jury awarded a large sum of money for "actual and punitive damages." This means that a jury has taken it upon itself to judge and condemn a church and its elders for Christian discipline, exercised according to their understanding of Scripture, on a woman who did not deny her guilt of fornication. The woman was voluntarily a member of the congregation and therefore bound to its rules and regulations — also with respect to Christian discipline. The procedure followed appears not that much dissimilar from that required in our own Church Order. The church did not beat her, tie her up, or harm her in other ways. They rather admin-

istered discipline according to Matthew 18 — though admittedly they continued the process after the woman claimed to have resigned her membership.

One wonders what effect such a decision could have in the churches. Discipline is not practiced faithfully much any more today. But what of those churches who consider this still to be necessary as Scripture teaches? One wonders if now any censured person might bring lawsuits against any church which carries out its calling. One wonders even more when a decision seems to be based on the philosophy, "He was single, she was single, and this is America."

The decision is one more sign of the direction in which this country goes. Though "separation between church and state" is a "religion" for the courts when churches are forbidden to interfere in any real or imagined way with state affairs, still the idea of "separation" is increasingly ignored when it comes to decisions of the state against practices within the churches. One can also expect more of this sort of activity in the future.

## The Rev. Marchiene Rienstra

The local press has reported the installation of Marchiene Rienstra as pastor in the Hope Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan. She had been Christian Reformed until the Synod of those churches refused to accept her candidacy into the ministry. Subsequently, she became pastor of the United Presbyterian Church of Port Sheldon (which grew from 10 to 70 families during her pastorate). Recently, she accepted the call to serve as first pastor at Hope Reformed.

One writer to the *Banner* stated:

This past Sunday afternoon I attended the installation service of the Reverend Marchiene Rienstra as the senior pastor of Hope Reformed Church (Holland, Mich.). As I was walking out, a member of Hope Church said to me, "You people in the CRC just keep sending us people like that — we think they're great!" I wonder how long we will continue to do just that.

Reports of this installation were given in the *G.R. Press* (Mar. 10, 1984) and in the *Holland Sentinel* (February 3, 1984). I quote from the latter:

The Rev. Marchiene Rienstra will be installed Sun-

day as senior pastor of Hope Reformed Church, becoming the first woman ever to serve in that capacity in the Reformed Church in America (however, the Reformed Church has several other women ordained as ministers — one of whom is serving at Pine Rest Hospital — G.V.B.).

... Participants in the service were chosen to emphasize the importance of family, ecumenicity, the role of women and children in the church. Included are members of Rienstra's family, representatives of other denominations, women in ministry and the children's choirs.

Presiding will be the Rev. Rick Van Haitsma of Beechwood Reformed Church, president of the Holland Classis. Also participating will be Rienstra's father-in-law, the Rev. Richard Rienstra, pastor emeritus of the Christian Reformed Church. Her brother-in-law, the Rev. Andrew Rienstra, senior pastor of First Reformed Church of Pompton Plains, N.J., will deliver the sermon.

Another brother-in-law, the Rev. Leonard Vander Zee, co-pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, will give the charge to the new pastor. Dr. Marion de Velder, pastor emeritus of



Hope Church and former general secretary of RCA, will deliver the charge to the congregation.

Reading scripture will be the Rev. Gerard Van Heest, chaplain of Hope College; Dr. John Francis, pastor of First United Methodist Church; Rabbi Philip Sigal of Ahavas Israel, Grand Rapids; and Neva Evenhouse, Western Theological Seminary, senior who served an internship at Port Sheldon Presbyterian Church with Rienstra. Sister Joan Mary Williams, liturgist at St. Francis de Sales Church, will offer the intercessory prayer . . .

The remarkable thing in the report is not the ordination of a woman into the office of ministry of the Word. This is increasingly being done today. Rather, what is startling is the report of those who participated in the ceremony in the church. Truly, "ecumenism" was evident. One would conclude that error breeds errors.

One notes, first, the members of the clergy in the C.R.C. participated in the ceremony. Is this participation in ordination into the office of a woman in violation to their own ministerial vows? It seems to

me that it is. Surely one ought not to take part in activities in other denominations which are forbidden in one's own.

But even more disturbing is that a Rabbi and a Roman Catholic nun also participated. True, the Rabbi evidently only read Scripture — presumably the Old Testament. But can one have an unbeliever (for such are all those who deny Christ and His cross) take part in a church service dedicated to the glory of God? And this is done under the guise of practicing "ecumenism"? And a Roman Catholic Sister can offer "intercessory prayer"? One who is charged in the Heidelberg Catechism of "an accursed idolatry" in the celebration of the mass, can make intercessory prayer in this Reformed Church? What would Martin Luther or John Calvin have to say of this? I have no doubt about their judgment.

All this is indication of the wrongness of the path chosen — for error follows upon error til nothing of the truth remains.

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

# The All-Controlling Interest

*Rev. John A. Heys*

After Esther had been chosen to replace Vashti as the wife of king Ahasuerus — and thus also to become the queen of that vast empire of Persia with its 127 provinces — and even after the king had made a great feast in her honour, the king's servants still brought a new group of virgins for his sinful gratification. That must be the meaning of the statement in Esther 2:19 that "when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate."

It is claimed by some that this simply means that those who had been rejected by the king were gathered into another building or room to be his concubines. Against this however is the fact that the notice speaks of gathering rather than of moving, and of gathering a second time. But more to the point is the striking and significant change of words here. And we ought to note this.

In Esther 2:2 we read that fair virgins were

sought for the king. In verses 13 and 14 we read that every maiden went in the evening to be with the king, and that she returned on the morrow into the second house of the women. That was moving to the place where they could serve as concubines to the king. There is no need to repeat this now after the feast in Esther's honour. But note also that in Esther 2:19 we read of *virgins* being gathered the second time. Those who went in unto the king before Esther did, and before she was chosen, were not virgins anymore. And it could not be said after Esther's feast that these maidens were gathered into the house of the women as virgins. Verse 19 speaks of a new group of virgins. All through this section from Esther 2:2-19 the word maidens is used as well as the word virgin. That word maidens is carefully avoided here, and an entirely different word is used, namely, the word that described these maidens before they went in unto the king. Gathered the *second* time, if it refers to the group in



which Esther was included, would also mean that they were no more virgins. The first time that they were gathered they were virgins. And the virgins of verse 19 are a new group that just arrived in Shushan from the corners of the kingdom.

Consider that in the days of Ahasuerus there were no phones or radio broadcasts. There was no such thing as airmail service and no jet aircraft travel. It took time therefore for the king's men to reach the extremities of the kingdom to scout out and bring back to Shushan what they deemed to be likely candidates for the queenship. We are so accustomed to fast-food services, instant coffee, super highways that speed us through and around cities. We are people that want everything done in no time flat! We hardly know what it means to be thorough, because we are so insistent that it be done quickly. But in that day men took their time. Life was at a far slower pace. And so it happened that a new group of virgins was brought to Shushan after the king had made his choice. There was no way to contact these servants and tell them that there was no need for bringing a new group. A plane crashes on the other side of the globe, and at once we here can be told who they were that died in the crash. With computers, phones, radios and even radar we can keep track of who is where, and even know at any moment their exact location. Ahasuerus could not do that. Nor could he contact them to call them home.

A bit in anticipation, but for further enlightenment, we may also note what is stated in Esther 4:11. There Esther complains to her uncle *that the king had not called her to come in unto him for thirty days!* That was quite strange for such an immoral king. Was he too busy with military affairs? Or were the fair virgins, who had not come in unto him prior to Esther's night with the king, still brought in unto him? One truth which the silence of Scripture on this score declares is that this new group was not sent home.

What we do read is that "then Mordecai sat in the king's gate." Before this he according to Esther 2:11, "walked every day before the court of the women's house to know how Esther did, and what should become of her." Now it was settled. She was the queen. His nervous walking stopped, and he sat in the king's gate.

There is some question as to the significance of the fact that he sat in the king's gate. Some claim, on the basis of Esther 3:2, that this means that he had been appointed to some lowly office in the kingdom. This would enable him to be near Esther, and to make contact with her through others in the king's service. For it brought him on to the very premises of the king's palace. This may well be the

case, although it does seem a bit strange that no statement of his elevation had been given prior to this statement. It is not at all impossible that he sat in the king's gate, that is, was an official of lowly standing long before this time, that he already was such an official when Esther was taken to prepare for her appearance before the king. Even such work would still allow him to walk nervously before the women's house. In fact it might even explain that he could do that and not be driven off as one who was "hanging around" and appearing too often near these quarters. One thing we know from subsequent events is that no one in the king's service knew his relation to Esther.

But the text speaks of when and then. Note that we read, "When the virgins were gathered together for the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate." This does not mean that he sat there because the virgins were gathered for the second time. It simply means that at that time he was no longer walking through the court but seated in the king's gate. And this information is given to us to prepare us for the relating of the incident of the two chamberlains who sought to lay hands on the king. It simply gives us the time of this incident. It happened in the days when the virgins were gathered the second time, and not during the days before Esther's selection by the king.

Sitting in the king's gate Mordecai is in a place to overhear the plot of the two chamberlains to lay hands on the king. We are not told what filled them with wrath against the king. The word chamberlain is translated that way 13 times in our translation, that is, the King James version. However, it is translated 17 times as eunuch and several times as officer. We find in Esther 2:3 that the man who was the keeper of the women is called a chamberlain, namely, Hege. For good reasons the king may have placed all his concubines under the care of eunuchs. And it is quite possible that their wrath was because of the king's choice of Esther over and above another maiden whom they were favouring. We do read that Esther obtained kindness of Hege, that she pleased him, and that he preferred her above all the other virgins. A thing like that can easily inflame other eunuchs who were favouring another maid. And if the king had seemed inclined to choose their maiden until Esther came along, it could easily explain that they became wroth with the king. After all, the king made the selection.

That Mordecai reported the plot and saw to it that it got to the king's ears was really doing nothing more than what was his duty to do. Yes, he was a Jew and these men and the king were not. And although Mordecai had no love for Israel's God, he loved Israel as a nation. He did not com-



mand Esther to hide her kindred and people because he was ashamed of being a Jew. As we read in Esther 3:4, he boldly tells some of the officers that he was a Jew. This was volunteered and not forced out of him, when he refused to bow before Haman (Esther 3:4). And for a Jew to save the life of the king of a nation that held his nation captive might seem unusual.

But consider first of all that the life of Ahasuerus, now that he is Esther's "husband", was so closely wrapped up with Esther's that, if he is killed and another gets on the throne, all the things Mordecai had hoped for and worked for would be lost. He had quite an interest in the king now, you may be sure.

But, as I began to say, this was his duty regardless of what advantage it might be to him. Whether it is a believer or an unbeliever whose life is in danger, if you can save that life, you must. Jesus taught us that in His parable of The Merciful Samaritan. And the law God gave at Mt. Sinai made no qualifications; and as interpreted by Jesus it states that we must love our neighbour — not stating or qualifying by saying your believing neighbour only — as ourselves. The Heidelberg Catechism states it correctly when it teaches that God commands us to show all kindness to our neighbour, and prevent his hurt as much as in us lies; and it exhorts us "that we do good even to our enemies."

With Mordecai it was a case of love of self, rather than of the neighbour. His method of reporting shows this. He did not go to the police or the equivalent of that day. Of course there was the danger that such would fail to attach his name to the warning, and as the source of this important information. Yet going through Esther, who still continued to do all his bidding, it is difficult to see how, after just being told in verse 20 that she still "did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him," that when she certified the

king thereof in Mordecai's name, that she was not obeying his command. Of this we read just two verses after that notice of her loyalty to Mordecai's commands. Following the dictates of sinful human flesh, he was looking for a reward from man, rather than striving to be pleasing in God's sight.

And yet, as we have seen, it all came to pass out of the counsel of God. Here we ought to see that, although Mordecai had a driving interest in Esther's good and in the good of the nation of Israel, God has an infinite interest in the church, the bride of His only begotten Son. There are human interests here. But never forget that in every event in history, and behind every turn of events, is that infinite, unchangeable interest of God in His church. No one at that time could see it yet. But He was laying the foundation for the salvation of His church. He is paving the way for the fall of Haman, that enemy of the Jews who would have wiped them all out and off the face of this earth. He is moving men and directing their steps so that there will be a cross and its triumph for the church. For He is insuring the birth of His Son which was to be threatened by Haman's plot.

Always there are divine and human interests. God cannot forget His people, for He has them engraven in the palms of His hands, the very hands wherewith He upholds and directs every creature. He has them engraven in His hands — as well as in His mind and heart — because with them He works and causes His counsel to be fulfilled. Today as always there are human interests. And that explains the terrible mess the world is in today, and the awful threats of a nuclear war with indescribable devastation. But do not forget that there is that divine interest that works all things together for good to those that love Him. And, as is the case here, He prepares the way for all things to happen, so that His Son will receive His bride and bring her into everlasting glory. Behind and controlling every interest of man is God's loving interest in His church.

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## FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

### The Nicene Creed

*Rev. James Slopsema*

Article 6 — *and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father.*

This article speaks of two very important works

of Christ: His ascension into heaven and His sitting (session) at the right hand of God.

These two works of our Savior are very closely



related to each other. It was through His ascension into heaven that Christ is seated at God's right hand. This certainly is the teaching of Mark 16:19: "So then after the Lord had spoken to them (disciples), He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."

Christ ascended into heaven and is seated at God's right hand for our salvation. This is not only the teaching of Scripture, which we hope to point out in the course of this article, but also the teaching of the Nicene Creed. In article 3 of this creed the early church taught that "for us men and for our salvation" the eternal Son of God "came down from heaven." Having come down from heaven, the Son of God was not only incarnate through the virgin birth, He was also crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered, was buried and rose again the third day. All this Christ did on earth for our salvation. Now, according to the creed, He Who came down from heaven to perform all these mighty works is also ascended back into heaven and sits at God's right hand. And this too is for our salvation.

The ascension was essentially a change of place for Christ. From the time of His birth until the moment of His ascension, the dwelling place of Christ was on the earth. This was in harmony with the human nature He assumed through the virgin birth. It was flesh and blood, of the earth earthy. However, at the resurrection His body was glorified. It was changed from an earthly to a heavenly body, from a physical to a spiritual body, from a body adapted to live on the earth to a glorious body adapted to live in heaven. Consequently, Christ ascended into heaven in His glorified human nature 40 days after His resurrection. As far as His human nature is concerned, Christ is no more with us on the earth. He has departed from us and is now in heaven.

The ascension is very significant.

The ascension was, first of all, significant for Christ Himself. For Christ the ascension meant His own glorification and exaltation. Heaven is the place of glory. It is that because it is God's dwelling place. God is in heaven in His friendship and fellowship as nowhere else. To live in heaven is to know God's love and fellowship perfectly. To live in heaven is to enjoy God fully. And it was to that place of glory that Christ entered through His ascension. In fact, Christ was exalted to the very pinnacle of heavenly glory. None is so highly exalted as Christ. And this great glory of Christ is all the reward of God for His perfect work on earth as our mediator. Certainly this is the teaching of Philippians 2:8 & 9: "and being found in fashion as a man, He (Christ) humbled Himself, and became

obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name."

But the ascension of Christ is also very significant for the church. For Christ is not ascended into heaven as an individual, but as our representative head. For that reason Christ's ascension into glory is principally our ascension.

To help us understand this, we may go back to Adam in paradise. Adam was the representative head of the whole human race. And that means that Adam represented all mankind in the garden. In fact, Adam represented us in such a way that when he sinned against God in the garden, we all sinned in and through him. Consequently, when Adam fell we all fell.

In like manner, Christ is now the representative head of the church and all the elect. That means that there is the closest possible relationship between Christ and His church. So close is this relationship that Christ is called the head, and the church His body. Consequently, when Christ suffered and died on the cross, the church died with Him. And when Christ arose again the third day, the church arose with Him (cf. Rom. 6:3-6). And, in like manner, when Christ ascended into heaven the elect of God also ascended with Him. Principally the ascension of Christ into glory was our ascension. We ascended in and through Him. Hence, we read in Ephesians 2:6 that God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." The Heidelberg Catechism states this very beautifully in Q & A 49 when it teaches us that through the ascension of Christ "we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that he, as the head, will also take up to himself, us, his members." In other words, because Christ's ascension is essentially and principally our ascension, we may know that one day we too will ascend into glory with Christ and have a share of His glory.

And this the early church evidently understood. For the early church fathers, in speaking of Christ's ascension, emphasized that the ascension was not merely the ascension of a man but of man. In other words, when Christ ascended into heaven mankind ascended. And by mankind we understand mankind as eternally chosen to salvation, mankind as redeemed in Christ. That mankind ascended into heaven at Christ's ascension.

And to her belief in this great work of salvation the early church gave expression when she confessed in this 6th article, "and ascended into heaven."

Having ascended into heaven Christ now sits at the right hand of God.



That the ascended Christ sits on God's right hand is taught in many passages of Holy Writ. It was prophesied already in the Old Testament Scriptures. The expression itself is found in Psalm 110:1, where David writes, "The Lord (Jehovah) said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy foot stool." And although this exact expression is not found elsewhere in the Old Testament, the idea it expresses is found repeatedly. The same is true of the New Testament Scriptures. At His trial, Christ Himself informed the Sanhedrin that they would see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power (Matt. 26:64). Peter, in his speech on Pentecost, informed the crowds that the same Jesus Whom they had crucified was now risen and exalted to the right hand of God (Acts 2:33). And there are more such passages. Christ's sitting at God's right hand, therefore, is a thought running throughout the whole of Scripture.

Christ's sitting at the right hand of God must be understood in a figurative sense. Certainly we must not imagine that God has a right hand in the literal, physical sense of the word. Neither is there a particular place in heaven that can be designated as being at the right hand of God. Nor does God literally sit in heaven. Hence, we must understand that to sit at the right hand denotes in Scripture a position of rule and authority. In Bible times the one who sat at the right hand of the king was the one upon whom the king had bestowed great powers and authority. He was the one who virtually ran the country for the king. He was the second in command. It was this sort of position that Joseph occupied when he was made ruler of all Egypt under Pharaoh. In like manner is Christ seated at God's right hand. At His ascension, God clothed Christ with all power and authority. Consequently, Christ rules over all things on the behalf of God. It is through Christ that God exercises His rule over all His creation. And this position Christ shall occupy for all ages and for all eternity.

This session of Christ at the right hand of God is the salvation of the church. This is due to the nature of Christ's rule.

Christ rules, first of all, over the church. And the church He rules in His grace. Whenever we speak of the rule of a king, we must speak of laws. To rule implies the right to impose one's will on another, or, if you will, to establish law. And this is what Christ does as King under God. He places all men under the holy law of God and requires obedience to it. However, when it comes to the church, Christ does more than to set God's law over her members. He also works in their hearts by the power of His grace so that they willfully and cheerfully keep that law. By nature, of course, no man can keep the law

and thus serve Christ. But through the power of grace Christ changes that. He transforms the heart of every member of the church so that they become willing servants whose chief delight is to keep God's holy commandments. This is the rule of Christ in the church and it is the salvation of the church. For it is in the way of willful obedience to God's law that the church finds God's blessing both now and eternally.

But there is more. Christ also rules in the church as King under God to preserve the church in this obedience and salvation. There are spiritual powers that seek to lead the church away into sin and destruction. There is the Devil and his host. There is also the world of wicked, unbelieving men. If the church will remain faithful to the service of God and continue in the way of her salvation, she must be preserved. For the church has little strength of herself. And this Christ also does in His rule over the church. He protects and preserves her against the wiles of the devil and the onslaughts of the world so that the church is kept through the ages and will one day be glorified with Christ in heaven.

Finally, the rule of Christ serves the salvation of the church because Christ also rules over the wicked world. Over the world of ungodly men Christ rules not in His grace but in His power. That means that over the world Christ too has set the holy law of God and demands obedience. But the world, being devoid of grace, refuses to obey. It walks in open rebellion against Christ and refuses to serve Him. Nevertheless, Christ rules. And He rules them in such a way that He uses their very rebellion to accomplish His purpose. This no other king has ever accomplished. Many kings have ruled and accomplished their purposes *in spite of* those that rebel. But Christ accomplishes His purpose *through* the rebellion of the world. And when He is done using their rebellion for His own glorious designs, He casts them all into hell. And what is this grand goal of Christ for which He uses even the wickedness of the world? It is the salvation of His church!

And, sensing the essence of this truth, the early church confessed in the Nicene Creed that "for us men and for our salvation" Jesus Christ "sitteth on the right hand of the Father."

*Take time to read  
and study the  
Standard Bearer*



## IN HIS FEAR

# Servants of the Lord

*Rev. Arie den Hartog*

Throughout the Scriptures we find that the people of God are repeatedly called the servants of the Lord. This is a great truth. Many examples of outstanding servants of the Lord in Scripture can be cited. Moses the man of God is often called the servant of the Lord. He was himself a beautiful picture of what it means to be the servant of the Lord. Godly king David often refers to himself by the designation servant of the Lord, especially in his prayers to the Lord. We find that the faithful prophets of God in the Old Testament are constantly referred to as servants of the Lord. In the New Testament we find the apostles often beginning their letters with reference to the fact that they are the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only do we find that the special leaders of the people of God are called the servants of the Lord but we find that all of God's people are called by that name. In the beautiful prayer of Hannah in which she prayed so earnestly for a son from the Lord she makes the confession concerning herself: "the handmaid of the Lord." Even the child Samuel, when the Lord called him during the night, was to answer, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Nehemiah, when praying to God for Israel, says, "Now these are Thy servants and Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy great power, and by Thy strong hand" (Nehemiah 1:10). When the virgin mother Mary was told the wonderful news that she would become the mother of the Lord Jesus she answered the angel, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word." After the aged Simeon had seen the Lord's Christ he said with joy in his heart, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy Word." We find in many of the parables of the Lord that He refers to His people as servants in His kingdom. On the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon the church, Peter declares that this Spirit was poured out according to the promise of God upon the servants and handmaids of the Lord.

Our Lord Jesus Himself is the supreme example of the servant of the Lord. He gave Himself com-

pletely for the service of the Lord. He came not to do His own will but the will of His heavenly Father. He so humbled Himself that He took upon Himself the form of a servant. He sacrificed Himself on the cross. He was perfectly obedient to His heavenly Father. He sought not His own glory but the glory of the righteousness and holiness of God. He came not to be ministered unto but to minister unto His people that He might bring them all to salvation.

It is really a tremendous thing to be a servant of the Lord. There is nothing more blessed and glorious for man. Are we profoundly conscious of our calling as the redeemed people of God to be the servants of the Lord? This is a practical reality for our lives. Those who call God their sovereign Lord and God must confess that they are His servants and they must live and act like the servants of the Lord. Otherwise, of course, all of our confession of the sovereignty of God means nothing and we are but hypocrites.

To be the servants of the Lord means that we know and acknowledge God as our sovereign Lord and Master. It means that we see as our whole obligation and responsibility only to obey and serve God. It means that we understand that God has given us work to do and that we faithfully perform that work. We understand that God has saved us by His grace. He has freely given us all things. He gave us even the wonderful gift of His Son Jesus Christ. He gave us all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. All that God has in love given to us cannot possibly be measured. Christianity however is not just knowing and receiving from God, as wonderful as this is. It also involves serving God, our Lord and our Savior. We must serve Him because He made us and because He redeemed us. There is no other reason why He leaves us in the midst of His world than that we must serve Him. Any man who does not serve God is a rebel against Him and he will be justly condemned to eternal destruction. If we do not serve the Lord we do not love Him and we are not truly thankful for His wonderful salvation.



To understand what it means to be the servants of the Lord we must begin by putting away all vain notions about this that are so current among many who call themselves Christians. We must always proceed from the great truth of the absolute sovereignty of God. In all things we must proceed from this most central of all truths. God is sovereign over us because He made us. He sovereignly gave us our life, our breath, and all things. We have nothing of ourselves. Daily the Lord sustains our life. In Him we live and move and have our being. Without Him we are nothing, and we can do nothing. The Lord is sovereign over us because He redeemed us through the death of His Son Jesus Christ. We were once guilty damn-worthy sinners, totally depraved, unable to serve God with any good, dead in trespasses and sins. The Lord, by a sovereign and almighty operation of His grace and Spirit, made us alive. He made us new creatures, creating us after the image of His Son in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. He transformed us from being the servants of the devil to being the servants of the true and living God of heaven and earth. God sovereignly made us His servants. We must not imagine that God needed us to be His servants, that He would have been hopelessly at a loss without us. Some men vainly think that God cannot get along without them and that His great cause and kingdom will never prosper without them. The Lord of heaven and earth does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor is He worshiped by men's hands as though He needs anything. We must not imagine that when we serve the Lord we give to God something of ourselves. In all of our service to the Lord we can never give Him anything that He has not first given to us. All that we have, including our very life, all our talents, all of our possessions we have only because the Sovereign God has given them to us. We must not imagine that when we serve the Lord we begin somehow to repay Him for all that He has given to us. That is forever entirely impossible for us to do. The very fact that we have been made to be the servants of the Lord is a wonderful gift of His grace. It is an honor and glory that God has bestowed upon us, though we were by nature wholly undeserving of it. When the Lord did not need us at all and when we could not at all serve Him of ourselves nor give anything to Him, He of His own good pleasure made us His servants. He is pleased to work in us and through us for the glory of His own name.

The Bible clearly outlines what is required of the servants of the Lord. First of all they must do the will of the Lord and perform the work which He has ordained for them. Absolute obedience is the first requirement of the servant of the Lord. We must not seek our own will nor imagine that we can

advise God on what we should do. The servant of the Lord is one who submits absolutely to the will of the Lord. He does not question or challenge the Word of the Lord because He knows that the Word of the Lord is the word of the absolutely wise and just and good sovereign God of heaven and earth. The only calling of the servant of the Lord is to know and do the will of the Lord. Never may he do his own will. There are absolutely no substitutes for the servant of the Lord to surrendering his own will completely to the will of the Lord. No matter what happens to the servant of the Lord, this and this alone must he do. The only thing that can enable a man who is by nature a rebellious sinner against God to do this is the almighty and irresistible power of the Spirit of God in Him.

The servant of the Lord must be humble. The proud man cannot be the servant of the Lord. In humility the servant of the Lord acknowledges the absolute Lordship of God over His life. The servant of the Lord knows his own smallness before his infinitely great and mighty Lord. He knows his own worthlessness and depravity before his perfectly righteous and holy Lord. The servant of the Lord knows his complete dependence upon his Lord. It is only by His grace and strength that the servant of the Lord can do anything at all. The very fact that the Lord should continue to have him as His servant is the reason for humble gratitude and praise on the part of the true servant of the Lord. Never does the servant of the Lord boast in his own works. He glories in the Lord alone who enables him to do all that he does. In humble gratitude to God he offers to the Lord what God has first given to him.

The servant of the Lord must be meek. He must never seek his own advantage and glory. Often in the world the servant of the Lord is mocked, ridiculed, and persecuted for the Lord's sake. But he does not insist upon his own honor and glory among men. He is willing to be put to shame before men as long as the name of his Lord and master is glorified and as long as he does His will. The servant of the Lord remembers how his Lord was crucified because He was hated and rejected by men. The servant of the Lord remembers the words of his master that the servant is not greater than his Lord. In meekness the servant of the Lord is willing to suffer for well-doing that the Lord's name might be praised. The servant of the Lord does not seek vengeance against his evil persecutors because he knows that vengeance belongs alone unto his Lord and Master.

The servant of the Lord must be willing to sacrifice his all for his Lord. He knows that all that he has really belongs to the Lord. Therefore he will



withhold nothing in the service of the Lord. He gives freely and liberally his money unto the service of the Lord. He is willing if necessary to sell all that he has and give all to the Lord. To do anything less than that would be to keep back rebelliously from the Lord the very things He has given to us. The servant of the Lord gives of his time, his talents, his energies for the service of the Lord. Above all he gives himself and his own heart unto the Lord. A person who is self-centered therefore cannot be a servant of the Lord. A person who keeps most of what he has received of the Lord while imagining that the Lord will be satisfied with a few meager offerings which represent only his leftovers cannot be the servant of the Lord. This matter of sacrificing unto the Lord is extremely difficult. Very few even among those who call themselves Christians are willing to do that. All these are disqualified for the service of the Lord. A person who is consumed with the lusts of the flesh and the pride of this life cannot be a servant of the Lord. One who loves money and seeks only to aggrandize himself and increase in this world's goods cannot be the servant of the Lord. The true servant of the Lord does not even count his own life dear to him when he is called upon to sacrifice it for the Lord's sake. He is willing to suffer extreme poverty and terrible hardship for the Lord's sake. The true servant of the Lord would count it a great blessing and honor to suffer and even to die for his Lord.

The servant of the Lord must be zealously devoted unto the Lord. Service of the Lord is a deeply spiritual matter which requires the offering of one's heart unto the Lord. The Lord is not pleased with mere outward ceremony and ritual. No matter how great a man's works may appear to men, in God's sight they are worth nothing unless they are offered in faith and devotion to Him. The servant of the Lord must constantly burn with fervent love and devotion unto his Lord. The Lord hates lukewarmness in His servants. He requires sincere and wholehearted devotion unto Him.

The servant of the Lord must be holy in all of his life. God will not be served by evil and corrupt men. If there is any unconfessed sin that is not repented of in our life it will hinder us in the service of the Lord. If we defile ourselves with the corrupt philosophy and practice of the world we will not be able to serve the Lord. In the service of the Lord we must show forth holiness, righteousness, and truth in all our life. The life of the servant of the Lord must manifest the mercy and love of God. Those who have hearts full of bitterness and wrath and cruelty cannot be the servants of the Lord.

The servant of the Lord must be steadfastly committed unto the Lord. The Lord has no part-time servants. Nothing in life must deter the servant of the Lord from his calling and obligation. The servant of the Lord cannot be satisfied with serving the Lord in only certain areas of his life while keeping other areas for himself and the world. The servant of the Lord must constantly be on his guard against every temptation that might draw him away from the Lord. He must constantly cleave unto the Lord his God and find all his strength from Him so that he does not become discouraged nor fail in his service.

The above-named characteristics of the Lord's servants are very simple and basic. We have all learned of them before. We can see them all portrayed in the servants of the Lord mentioned in Scripture and especially in the great Servant of the Lord Who is the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet it is necessary for us to consider them over and over again. We need constantly to examine our own lives whether we are truly living as servants of the Lord. Where we have failed we must repent in true sorrow of heart before the Lord. Each day we must seek again to be more faithful in our service for the Lord.

In the next several articles in this department we shall consider some of the practical implications of being the servants of the Lord in the various areas of our life.

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## ***GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH***

# **The Latin Fathers and the Word of God**

*Rev. T. Miersma*

Thus far in considering the early church's approach to Scripture, we have treated the church as a unity. This it was fundamentally, both in doctrine

and in its approach to Scripture. The difference between the eastern Greek-speaking churches and the western Latin-speaking churches were matters of



temperament and character, not doctrine. Both branches received the doctrines of the Trinity formulated at Nicaea and the Christology of Chalcedon. So also, the church's doctrine of Scripture, as it was formulated by the church at the end of the early period of church history, was one common doctrine. The principles developed by the early fathers continued in the church into the Middle Ages. The threefold approach of Origen which we considered last time, though it was moderated somewhat and used with more restraint, became the fundamental basis of the church's approach to interpreting the Scriptures.

The Greek church however differed in temperament from the West. The Greek church was more speculative in its turn of mind, directing its theological energies toward the development of the doctrines of the Trinity and of the person and natures of Christ. In a certain sense it exhausted itself in the controversies which surrounded these doctrines, and with this exhaustion, doctrinal leadership and development passed to the West. The line of the history of doctrine runs therefore through the western church, and this is true also of the church's development of the doctrine of Scripture.

The western church had a more practical turn of mind. In part this was due to the difference in temperament between the Greek and Oriental peoples of the East and the Romans of the West. While the East gave rise to the heathen philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, Rome devoted itself to law and jurisprudence. These cultural differences also made their presence felt in the development of the church in east and west. The West had not been disrupted by the theological controversies concerning the Trinity and the doctrine of Christ in the same way that the eastern church had been. And so, while the eastern church focused its attention on the truth and significance of the incarnation, the western church directed its thought to the significance of the cross, of the atonement, and of sin and grace. This interest came to a head in the controversy between Pelagius and Augustine in the early 400s. In this controversy, while the church formally repudiated the Pelagian doctrine of free will and the natural goodness of man, it also failed to endorse the truth of total depravity and divine predestination as developed by Augustine. Instead it tried to take a middle position between the two, a semi-Pelagianism. These doctrinal issues in the western church and the attempted compromise between them were to form much of the basis of medieval theology.

The church was also entering a new era. In A.D. 323, with the complete rise of Constantine the

Great to power, the church found peace from persecution under the first Christian Roman emperor, and Christianity soon became the state religion. In the years that followed, the church in the west, particularly as centered in Rome, was more and more submerged by invasions of Germanic tribes into Western Europe. Constantine moved the capital of the empire eastward to Constantinople, leaving a vacuum in power in the West which was soon filled by the church and particularly the bishop of Rome. The Latin-speaking West and Greek-speaking East, already divided by language and temperament, became more and more separated. In 590 Gregory the Great became bishop of Rome and the first real pope of the church in the West. The separation between East and West was to continue until it became formally complete in the middle of the medieval period.

This has significance for our study of the history of the doctrine of Scripture and its development. It is through the Latin-speaking church fathers that the church's common doctrinal heritage, also of Scripture, was transmitted to the West. Men such as Hilary of Poitiers, who could read the Greek language, brought into the Latin heritage the views of Origen and the Greek church fathers. By such men the foundation of medieval doctrine was laid in the church. Of these men, two demand our special attention: Jerome and Augustine. These men were contemporaries: Jerome lived from 340-420 and Augustine from 354-430. Both had a profound effect upon the history of the church, though in different ways.

Augustine stands out for his development of the truths concerning sin and grace, concerning the depravity of fallen man, and concerning God's sovereign grace. He was perhaps the greatest theologian of the ancient church. Augustine has significance also for the church's doctrine of the Word of God, and that significance is both positive and negative. Because Augustine did not know either Greek or Hebrew he stands on the foreground, not so much for his exegesis, for which he was not well-equipped, but for his comprehensive understanding of the Word of God in its underlying unity, rooted in the truths of sin and grace. Positively, he led the church to see the Scriptures in their unity, generally following in his work the literal sense of the passage, though occasionally falling into allegory. His theology was not based on isolated texts. Indeed, his inability to read the original languages forced him to approach Scripture in its essential unity and to penetrate that underlying unity as it was revealed in the sovereignty of God and His grace. He emphasized the necessity of taking Scripture as a whole and interpreting Scripture



with Scripture. Doctrine was not to be developed from one text alone, a common tactic of heretics, but Scripture as a whole, in its doctrinal unity, must set forth the rule of faith.

At the same time there is a negative element of his work. Because he was limited in his labors by his lack of knowledge of the Biblical languages, he also emphasized that exegesis was to be governed by the historic interpretation of the church, for the rule of faith included also the church's traditional understanding and interpretation of the Word of God. This approach, in Augustine's use of it, had an inherent weakness.

It is true that the church, in her study of the Word of God as she is guided into the truth of that Word, sets forth that truth in its unity as an organic whole. Our own creeds and confessions give expression to that unity. We do not approach Scripture as theologically neutral or in historical isolation, for the creeds and confessions and the church's interpretation of the Word of God are the fruit of the leading of the Spirit of Truth. But that work of the church in the past is not infallible. We bind ourselves to it freely because it is a faithful expression of the truth of the Word of God and of the rule of faith.

Augustine's weakness was that he went a step further, and made the past interpretation of the church and the traditions of the church authoritative for exegesis in such a way as to stymie theological development. Thus, difficult passages which were hard to understand were to be explained according to traditional interpretation. It can be well understood that Augustine, lacking the necessary linguistic tools, needed to adopt such an approach, but the effect was to elevate tradition and the received interpretation of the fathers above Scripture and make it of greater authority than the Word of God. By such a line of thought theological development must necessarily grind to a halt. We find this to be the case in the Middle Ages, that the commentaries of the fathers and the study of the doctrine of the church superceded the direct study

of Scripture. The development of the truth under such circumstances stagnated. Augustine was by no means the sole cause of this unhealthy traditionalism, but he aided in its development.

Jerome also was to some extent a traditionalist in this sense. He was also an ascetic who promoted the monastic ideal which was taking hold of the church. He is unique among the ancient fathers in that he took great pains to learn not only Greek, but also Biblical Hebrew. In his commentaries, which were often hastily written, he follows an eclectic method, doing some of his own work while also drawing much upon the work of those who preceded him. He was well acquainted with Origin's works as well as others of the Greek fathers, and he served as an instrument of transmission both for their comments on Scripture and for their methods of interpretation.

Jerome's major contribution was his translation of the Bible into the Latin language. Various older translations had already existed before his time, but Jerome went back to the original languages to produce a new translation. The fruit of his work was the Latin Vulgate. While far from perfect it had the advantage that, particularly in the Old Testament, Jerome attempted to work directly from the original Hebrew rather than merely translating the Greek Old Testament translation into Latin. In this he departed from the common position of the church which had regarded this Greek translation as if the translation itself were inspired. In doing this he also rejected the apochryphal books which were included in the Greek translation, but not found in the Hebrew. Though he was forced to include them in his translation because of the popularity of these books, yet he denied them the status of Holy Scripture. By his work he gave to the Western church a better translation of the Word of God in the common language of that day than was to be had prior to this time. His translation, the Vulgate, was to serve the church in the West for centuries as the standard Bible.

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## **GUEST ARTICLE**

# **The King James Version of the Bible (1)**

*Rev. Steven Houck*

### **THE INCEPTION OF THE NEW VERSION**

Many times God uses the incidental, the unexpected, and even the seemingly evil things of life to

perform mighty wonders for His church. Who would ever have expected that the words of a little Jewish maiden would lead to the conversion of



Naaman the Leper? Who would ever have thought that the evil deeds committed by Joseph's brothers would have resulted in the preservation of Israel in the time of famine? But so it was in the wondrous providence of God.

So it was also in the production of the King James Version of the Bible. This version, used of God in such a mighty way, had its beginnings in a very unexpected and incidental way — yea, in the midst of great disappointment on the part of some of God's people.

Four Puritans, along with fourteen representatives of the Church of England, were gathered together at Hampton Court for an ecclesiastical conference in January, 1604. The Puritans had many objections concerning the English church as it was then established. They were hoping that their new king, James I, would so guide the church of God in England that there would be further reformation of the church. In fact, they had already met him on his way to London where he was to receive the English crown and had presented him with a petition stating their grievances. The petition was signed by about a thousand clergymen and therefore called the "Millenary Petition." It was on account of that petition that James had called the conference "to hear and determine things pretended to be amiss in the Church."

It did not go so well for the Puritans, however. Not only were they in the minority at the conference, but King James, rather than sympathizing with them, supported the cause of the bishops of the church. In the midst of their struggle Dr. John Reynolds, the Puritan president of Corpus Christi College, suddenly petitioned the king "that there might be a new translation of the Bible, because those which were allowed in the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI were corrupt and not answerable to the truth of the original." This motion of the Puritan leader evidently was not something that he had planned but something that was introduced incidentally in order to keep from losing all ground at the conference.

This is confirmed by the Translators' Preface to the Reader which is found in the first edition of the King James Version. There we read, "... the very historical truth is that upon the importunate petitions of the Puritans, at his Majesty's coming to the crown, the conference at Hampton Court having been appointed for hearing their complaints; when by force of reason they were put from all other grounds, they had recourse at the last, to this shift, that they could not with good conscience subscribe to the Communion Book, since it maintained the Bible as it was there translated, which was as they said, a most corrupted translation."

The Puritans did object to the translations of the "Great Bible" and the "Bishops' Bible" which were quoted in the Prayer Book, but they did not feel that much of a need for a new translation. They were content with their "Geneva Bible" and its Calvinistic notes. The motion for a new translation was incidental to them. In fact, if it were up to them, there probably would not be a King James Version.

On the other hand, the bishops were not immediately in favor of a new translation either. Bishop Bancroft of London expressed his opposition this way: "If every man's humor should be followed, there would be no end of translating." Indeed, the bishop made a very good point. That is exactly what we have today with all of the new versions. Thus neither party in the Church of England was zealous for a new translation.

It was the king's zeal and enthusiasm for the project that caused the work to be undertaken and that saw the work through the end. In the Dedication to the King, found in most of our King James Version Bibles, we read this concerning the king: "... your Majesty did never desist, to urge and to excite those to whom it was commended, that the work might be hastened, and that the business might be expedited in so decent a manner, as a matter of such importance might justly require." Indeed, the king seems to have been the driving force behind the grand undertaking.

Yet we make a mistake if we attribute his zeal to totally good motives. It may have been that he had a genuine interest in the Scriptures. He is said to have done some translating of the Bible himself. Most, however, attribute his zeal to an ambition to advance his own cause and glory. He disliked greatly the marginal notes of the "Geneva Bible," which he thought encouraged disobedience to kings, and therefore wanted a new translation to replace it. He was shrewd enough to see that a new translation, which was acceptable to all, would do much to enhance his own glory.

We must conclude from all of this, therefore, that our King James Version of the Bible, as to its source, is not a "Puritan Bible," nor an "Anglican Bible," and no, not even a "King James Bible." How could a Bible which is so great and which has been used of the Lord for hundreds and hundreds of years be merely the product of an incidental suggestion or the zeal of mixed motives? No! It is God's Bible. It was conceived in His Divine mind, brought into being by the wondrous working of His providence, and all motivated by His great love for His church. This Bible is the result of the almighty work of God. Even the translators acknowledge that it was God who had put the zeal for a new



translation into the heart of the king. They exhort us, "Let us rather bless God from the ground of our heart, for working this religious care in him, to have the translations of the Bible maturely considered of and examined." God in His providence took the incidental remarks of a Puritan, the zeal of a king for his throne, and in the midst of the opposition of bishops, gave to His church a Bible that has been her blessing and strength for three hundred and seventy years.

Some men praise it for its pure English and forceful style, others for its beauty and majesty, and still others for its masterful translation. It is all of that and more. But even more important, we must see the King James Version as the Bible which God has providentially given to His English speaking church. It is the Word of God — that is, a faithful translation of the inspired originals which have been providentially preserved by God in the thousands of manuscripts which have come down to us. Thus we can be assured that with this Bible we have the authoritative Word of God.

#### THE TRANSLATORS OF THE KJV

In the providence of God, although all other seemed little concerned about a new translation, the suggestion of Dr. Reynolds was fixed in the mind of the king. In due season that suggestion ripened into personal enthusiasm on the part of the king and also on the part of those he appointed to

take charge of this great undertaking. Bishops and Puritans alike with great zeal and dedication were ready to begin their tasks. By June 30, 1604 (six months after the Hampton Court Conference), fifty-four men had been approved as translators of the new version, and a plan of procedure had been set down. Bishop Bancroft, entrusted with the general management of the work, was busy making all the necessary preparations.

The translators were formed into six companies: two meeting at Westminster, two at Cambridge, and two at Oxford. Genesis through II Kings was translated by the first Westminster company, I Chronicles through Ecclesiastes by the first Cambridge company, and Isaiah through Malachi by the first Oxford company. The second Oxford company translated the four Gospel accounts, Acts, and Revelation. The second Westminster company did Romans through Jude. The Apocrypha was done by the second Cambridge company.

Not that the Apocrypha was considered to be the Word of God. It was translated and bound with the Bible, but the King James Version translators did not count it as God's Word. In that they differed from the Roman Catholics. The fact that the Apocryphal books were separated out of the Old Testament and put after it indicates that they did not consider it to be part of the Bible. In later editions it was dropped all together.

(to be continued)

## Book Reviews

**DANIEL, SIGNS AND WONDERS** (International Theological Commentary), by Robert A. Anderson; Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984; 158 pages, \$5.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. R.D. Decker).

The author of this commentary: 1) does not believe Daniel to be the secondary author of this book of the Bible; 2) refers to the author as "the compiler" or "storyteller"; 3) dates the book very late (174-164 B.C.); 4) finds a historical inaccuracy in chapter 1:1, 2. For a good explanation of these verses one should consult the late Edward J. Young's Commentary on Daniel (also an Eerdmans' publication).

The following quotation is part of the author's comments on chapter 4:28-33 (the account of Nebuchadnezzar becoming as a beast). It will furnish the reader a sample of the kind of exegesis found in this commentary. "Does this (Nebuchad-

nezzar becoming as a beast, R.D.D.) have any historical basis? Are there any records suggesting that what is described in vs. 33 did befall Nebuchadnezzar? If a negative reply is given to these questions, it is not wholly on the grounds of an argument from silence. Nebuchadnezzar was an extremely important king; his reign extended a little over four decades from 605 to 562 B.C. and was well documented. Nothing would indicate an absence from regal duties nor give any evidence of abnormal behaviour" (p. 48). Then follows a rather elaborate explanation suggesting that the reference might be to Nabonidus, the last of the new-Babylonian rulers who reigned from 556 to 539 B.C.

When Jesus spoke of the signs of the coming of His Kingdom He called attention to Daniel the Prophet who spoke of the abomination of desolation (Matthew 25:15; Mark 13:14). Concerning this



reference the author writes: "The Book of Daniel has from time to time exerted considerable influence on Christian thought. This influence extends as far back as some of the New Testament writers, if not to Jesus Himself. A thorough investigation of this would amount to a study in itself. Our immediate purpose is met if we single out two areas for relatively brief mention.

"The first Gospel to be written, Mark, contains a long discourse in its thirteenth chapter, attributed by the writer to Jesus. This chapter contains some thirty instances of knowledge or use of the text of Daniel. In an exhaustive treatment of the provenance of Mark 13, L. Hartman concluded that 'perhaps the apocalyptic ideas in Daniel played a more important part in Jesus' thinking than modern, nonapocalyptic, sober-minded western scholars may imagine at first glance' (*Prophecy Interpreted*, 250). Not all scholars have been unaware of this possible influence on Jesus, but at times the suggestion that it may have been formative has been stoutly resisted . . ." (pp. 153, 154).

The believing student will not get much assistance exegetically from this commentary. If one wishes to know (and one ought to) what is currently being done in Old Testament Exegesis and Isagogics he should read this and similar books.

The book would be "tough going" for anyone who lacks a formal, theological education.

*Read and Study  
The Standard Bearer*

**CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT**, Robert A. Peterson; Prebyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, New Jersey; 113 pp., \$4.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema]

The subject matter of this book is set forth by the title. The book deals with the question, "What was Calvin's doctrine of the atonement?" And this is, of course, a worthwhile subject.

As I have stated before when commenting on books about Calvin, one must always be cautious about accepting what a book says that Calvin taught. The same is true of this book. There are numerous quotations from Calvin as well as references to Calvin's writings in this book. This is a plus. However, to appreciate Calvin and to be sure that Calvin is correctly represented in the book, it is necessary to check up on the quotations and to consult the writings of Calvin himself *in their context*. Only then can one fully grasp and appreciate Calvin's doctrine.

In as far as I have checked, Calvin is for the most part correctly represented in this little work.

There are two exceptions to this statement. In the first place, I would disagree with the author's contention that it is uncertain what position Calvin would have taken on the question of the extent of the atonement, i.e., the question whether the atonement was limited or unlimited. The argumentation on this subject (pp. 90, 91) is extremely weak, in my opinion. In the second place, I would be inclined to question the claim that Calvin largely bypassed Anselm with respect to the doctrine of satisfaction.

Nevertheless, this is a worthwhile book on an interesting and important subject.

## News From Our Churches

March 30, 1984

Congratulations to Candidate Barry Gritters who has accepted the call to be the first pastor of Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church. Candidate Gritters' examination will be at Classis East on May 9. His ordination is set for Sunday, May 13. May God bless Candidate Gritters' and Byron Center Church.

Rev. C. Hanko is busy in Bradenton, Florida. The attendance from Sunday to Sunday ranges from sixty to eighty. The address of the church in Braden-

ton is: 3304 W. 43rd St., Bradenton, Florida. The church services are held at 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. May He Who gathers His church remember this work.

The Building Committee of First Protestant Reformed Church is presently negotiating for a building site on the northeast corner of Fulton and the East Beltline. Negotiations with a potential buyer for our East Paris property are also in progress.

The Reformed Witness Hour is still financially in



the red. The deficit has been reduced from \$5,000 to \$3,000. This has enabled them to catch up on the printing and mailing of sermon booklets. The sermon booklets are good for personal devotions and distribution to others who show interest in the truths of God's Word.

Southwest Protestant Reformed Church has a new Clerk, Mr. Gerald Feenstra. His address is 7643 Cardinal Drive, Jenison, MI 49428.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On April 19, 1984, our parents, MR. AND MRS. DEWIE VANDER SCHAAF, will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary. We are thankful for the love and Godly instruction that they have and yet provide, and we are grateful to our covenant Father for granting them these years together.

"Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations."  
(Psalm 90:1)

Peter and Dorothy VanDer Schaaf  
Gary and Karen VanDer Schaaf  
and six grandchildren

## Report of Classis West

March 16, 1984

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches met in Loveland, Colorado for two, full days, on March 7, 8, 1984. Eleven ministers, twelve elders, and one deacon represented the churches of the West. Rev. W. Bekkering presided over the Classis. Elders B. Driesen (Hull) and P. Van Dyken (Lynden) and Deacon L. De Zwarte (Pella) were present as delegates for the first time and signed the Formula of Subscription. Rev. R. Van Overloop, missionary in Birmingham, Alabama, was present and was given advisory vote.

An appeal against the decision of a Consistory was treated in closed session.

Classis approved and sent on to Synod the protest of a Council against the decision of the 1983 Synod to add the Symbol of Chalcedon to the three trinitarian creeds (the Apostles, the Nicene, and the Athanasian) that are to be placed in *The Psalter*.

A brother appealed the decision of his Consistory allowing ministers to preach in churches of other denominations that are not confessionally one with the Protestant Reformed Churches. Classis decided that the appeal was not legally before Classis on the ground that the appeal was, in reality, a protest against decisions taken by the Synods of 1977 and 1978, which decisions must be considered settled and binding (Article 31 of the Church Order) and on the ground that matters once decided upon must not be raised again unless there is a good reason for doing so (Article 46 of the Church Order).

Subsidy requests from Edgerton, Edmonton,

Isabel, and Pella, in the amount of \$51,108, were approved and sent to Synod. Besides these requests, Houston's request for subsidy will be sent to Synod through the Classical Committee. Isabel adjusted its subsidy for 1984 by reducing it \$1,000. Classis approved and sent to Synod the request of Hull to be relieved from paying \$2,776 of their synodical assessments for 1983 because of a loss of families.

Results of the necessary elections were the following:

Stated Clerk: Rev. Engelsma

Assistant Stated Clerk: Rev. Bekkering

Classical Committee: Rev. Kamps

Delegates ad examina:

1) *Primus*: Rev. Lanting

2) *Secundus*: Rev. Kortering

Church Visitors: Rev. Kortering and Rev. Lanting

*Primi* Minister Delegates to Synod: D. Engelsma,

M. Kamps, J. Kortering, J. Slopsema

*Secundi* Minister Delegates to Synod: W. Bekkering,

R. Cammenga, K. Koole, G. Lanting

*Primi* Elder Delegates to Synod: W. Buys, Egbert

Gritters, T. Hugg, L. Regnerus

*Secundi* Elder Delegates to Synod: R. Brands, P.

Brummel, E. Van Ginkel, B. Van Maanen

Classis will meet next in Pella, Iowa on September 5, 1984, the Lord willing.

Rev. David Engelsma  
Stated Clerk  
Classis West