

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

...We may well all ask ourselves, when was the last time I actually invited someone to come to church with me? If we have not done that for a long time we should be ashamed of ourselves. This type of mission work in our own churches is not just an option, or something nice and wonderful, it is our calling and obligation as servants of the Lord.

See "Servants of the Lord in His Church"

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THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

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

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

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

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

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

MEDITATION

The Lord's Chosen Possession

Rev. H. Veldman

"For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His peculiar treasure."

-Psalm 135:4

"Indeed, praise ye the Lord, praise ye the Name of the Lord." With these words the psalmist begins this one hundred thirty-fifth psalm. The word "praise" means fundamentally: to be clear, brilliant. This word also appears in Scripture with reference to the wicked, as in Psalm 5:6; 73:3; and

75:5. Then it means: to make a show, and it is used to refer to an external appearance. The wicked, then, are vain, puffed up, proud, insolent, glorying in one's own appearance. The Lord, of course, is not glorious in vain; He is truly worthy of all our acknowledgment and adoration. To praise the Lord

means that we acknowledge, proclaim the glory and greatness of our God. Indeed, according to verse 3, the Lord is good, and to sing praise unto His Name is pleasant.

Indeed, praise the Lord, "for the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His peculiar possession." Give praise unto the Lord, extol His greatness — hath the Lord not chosen you, O Jacob and Israel, unto or *for Himself*, His own glory? Is He not the Lord Who does all things, alone, for His own Name's sake, that we may be to the praise of His glory? Well may we note what we read in the verses 6-12 in this one hundred thirty-fifth psalm, and also in the verses 15-18. And, all these wonderful works of our God reach their climax in the cross, the wondrous cross of Jesus Christ, our Lord. And do not all these amazing works of our God, including Calvary, find their source and eternal beginning in God's sovereign election? Indeed, the Lord has chosen Jacob unto Himself, and Israel for His peculiar possession or treasure.

Jacob-Israel!

Concerning this Old Testament patriarch we can be brief. He is Jacob, and this name means "heel-holder." He, Jacob, Esau's twin brother, holds his brother's heel at the time of his birth, striving as it were to be born first. Jacob is he who struggles with Esau for the birthright blessing. However, for a long time, prior to Peniel, he struggles in his own strength, resorts to his own cunning and ingenuity. At Peniel, the brook Jabbok, he becomes Israel, "Prince of God." Here, at Peniel, he struggles with the Lord. Here he becomes a cripple; but he learns to struggle in the strength of his God. Now, as he is about to confront Esau, coming with four hundred men, he crosses the Jabbok. The sun, we read, arose; and we believe that it also arose in his own soul. He now will face Esau as Israel, the prince of God, in the strength of his faithful covenant God.

Also the people of God throughout the ages bear this name. It is obvious from the verses 1, 2 and 12 that the psalmist speaks of this people, the church of God; Jacob-Israel is therefore God's covenant people throughout the ages, the people who struggle in the cause of God's covenant in the strength of the Lord.

Jacob-Israel, God's own peculiar possession and treasure!

How utterly amazing! In the first place, is not everything the Lord's? He is the Creator of all things. He spoke creatively and it was; He brought forth the entire universe through the word of His power, gave being to the number of the host of

heaven. He measures the waters with His fist and the heavens with a span; He weighs the heavens and the hills in the balances and, altogether, they are less than a particle of dust. Besides, He is also the Sustainer of all things. In Him all creatures move and live and have their being, also constantly. And He never abdicated or relinquished His throne. He, therefore, continues to be the sole Possessor of all things. Is it not an amazing thing that we should be His possession and peculiar treasure and possession when all things are His? Secondly, what an amazing truth this is when we consider who and what is the Lord's own possession! Not only is it true that not all are His peculiar treasure. But we must bear in mind that it is not even true that the largest part of the world, or that the mightiest and noblest and richest of our race, belong unto Him. Imagine: Jacob-Israel is His peculiar treasure! Indeed, the Lord did not choose the rich and the noble and the powerful of this world. We read in Deuteronomy 7:7: "The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people." Is this not applicable to the church throughout the ages? Is not the church always a little flock, according to Luke 12:32: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"? Hence, is this all that the Lord could choose and gather to be His own peculiar treasure? Does this not speak of poverty with respect to the Most High? Why did not the Lord, even in that covenant sense, choose to make all things and all men His possession? What an amazing phenomenon! Is this all that is His, this Jacob-Israel?

Jacob-Israel is the Lord's chosen possession. The psalmist declares in verse 22: "Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God." Hence, Jacob-Israel is God's possession in the sense that they are His own — they constitute His House — there He chooses to dwell. Of them He declares that they are His people in a wonderful sense of the word. Around them He has drawn the cord of His fellowship; there He has set up His Name, His revelation in all the glory of His grace. He lives with them, dwells with them, gives them His love and mercy, is their God and they are His people in that unspeakably blessed sense of the word. Of them He declares: "They are My people. To them I reveal Myself in all the glory of My love and grace." And, as far as the far more numerous wicked are concerned, them I use unto the everlasting salvation of My own, to reveal that My love is sovereignly particular and that I am surely mighty to save.

Indeed, the Lord is wholly sovereign.

This truth is denied by the Arminians who would revolve all salvation around the free will of the sinner. The word "chosen" in this text means: to approve, choose, select. Selection as such can mean that one chooses something; he prefers it to something or someone else because of its or his superior qualities. This is the Arminian conception of election: a selection by God based upon foreseen faith or works. And how common, how prevalent this view is in our church world today!

We give thanks to God that this view is utterly impossible. It is literally denied in Deuteronomy 4:37; 7:6, 7; 9:5; and in Ephesians 1:4. To quote only the last passage, we read: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." We do not read that we were chosen because we were holy and without blame before Him in love, but that we should be holy. Hence, our holiness is not the basis for our election but its purpose and fruit. Moreover, what is there in God's people, in you and in me, which could possibly serve as an inducement for God to select us? Was Jacob, the conniving and plotting Jacob, so preeminently and outstandingly pious? Besides, this Arminian heresy is also denied in this text. Do we not read that God chose us unto, or *for Himself*? And this surely means that He elected us, chose us for His own Name's sake, His own glory, to glorify and magnify Himself. And did He select us because we were outstanding or better, because there was some good in us? Indeed, He chose us to focus attention, not upon us but solely upon Himself. Finally, this is also denied in the verses 1 and 3. In these verses we are exhorted to praise the Lord, to sing praises unto His Name, for it is pleasant. Indeed, we must proclaim His praises, not our own. The Lord does all things for His own Name's sake. And this surely applies to the salvation of His people.

To be sure, the Lord's choosing of us, His people, is absolutely sovereign. This is surely exemplified in the scriptural presentation of Jacob. We read in Romans 9:12-13: "It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." According to Genesis 25:21-23, Rebecca conceived and the children struggled together within her. She did not understand this activity within her. She said, "If it be so, why am I thus?" This activity within her must have been an amazing phenomenon and she probably discussed it with her husband, Isaac. She thereupon inquired of the Lord. And the Lord informed her that the elder shall serve the younger. However, why is this incident recorded in Holy Writ? Of course, the Lord revealed this to Rebecca for Rebecca's sake. This we understand. But, why is this recorded upon the pages of the Word of God?

It is certainly not recorded in the Word of God for her sake. She has passed on into everlasting glory; she does not need this revelation as recorded in Scripture. This is recorded here in the Word of God for our sake. But why is this recorded? This is recorded to emphasize the absolute sovereignty of our God, that He does as He pleases, willing that the elder shall serve the younger, in order that the purpose of God according to election might stand. When presently these twin sons of Isaac and Rebecca are born and grow up, Isaac and Rebecca, judging them in the light of and according to their behavior, could conceivably conclude that Esau had been rejected, reprobated by God because of his sin. Did he not reveal himself as profane? Did he not reveal himself as unworthy of the birthright blessing? Did he not sell this birthright blessing for a dish of pottage? Then the Lord would have hated Esau because he had done evil; and this would be contrary to the Word of God as recorded in Romans 9:12-13. However, Isaac and Rebecca must understand and the church of God throughout the ages must understand that God is sovereign, also in the decree of election and reprobation, that it is God's sovereignty that the elder shall serve the younger, that Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated before either did good or evil. Indeed, the purpose according to election must stand. And this election is rooted in the absolute sovereignty of our God.

Hence, praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, praise the Name of the Lord, not because of any goodness in us, but because He hath chosen Jacob unto Himself, unto His own glory, and Israel for His peculiar treasure or possession. Of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things; to Him be all the glory, now and forevermore.

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EDITORIAL

A CRC Split?

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

In recent weeks more than once the subject has arisen of the possibility of a division, a split, in the Christian Reformed Church. I have seen it mentioned in more than one of the papers which circulate among Christian Reformed people. More than once this subject arose in connection with a proposed meeting in the Chicago area which has been advertised, for example, in *The Outlook* (April, '84, p. 15) as a "Conference of Concerned CRC Office-bearers Adhering to the Biblical and Historic Reformed View of Ecclesiastical Office." From the latter reference it is clear, too, that the issue over which a possible split might come, and either should or should not come, is the issue of women in ecclesiastical office. This issue is supposed to be decided by the 1984 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in June.

As of this writing, the conference mentioned above has not yet been held; it is scheduled for May 4. Neither have I as yet had the opportunity to study the reports about this matter which will be on the agenda of the CRC Synod. It has been reported that the Study Committee will present a divided report, with the majority advising that the office of deacon be open to women.

Now it is not my intention to try to predict what the coming synod will decide on this matter, though there seems to be considerable pressure for the synod to decide this matter, after many years of hesitation, with finality, and though there also seems, judging from various writings, to be considerable pressure for the synod to "cross the Rubicon" and to open at least the office of deacon to women. At the same time, however, some voices have been raised in favor of postponing the matter again, in order to allow time to educate the CRC membership and to prepare them for this major change. Synods have been known to vacillate when it comes to crucial issues; and it is not impossible, I believe, that if the coming CRC synod should see signs of potential trouble down the road, it might take measures to avoid a head-to-head conflict.

However, I will refrain from putting on the cloak of a prognosticator.

Neither do I intend in this editorial to discuss the issue as such. The issue is indeed a very serious one. Involved is not only the immediate issue of opening the office of deacon to women. Also involved, in my opinion, is the issue of opening *all* ecclesiastical offices to women. In other words, if this year the office of deacon would be opened to women in the CRC, it would be only a matter of time before the offices of ruling elder and teaching elder (minister) would also be opened to women. In fact, this is precisely what some in the CRC are already pressing for and even to some extent practicing. But there is an even more important issue involved. In this respect I agree with a recent statement by Editor Kuyvenhoven in *The Banner* when he pointed out that the underlying issue was one of hermeneutics. Basically, the issue at stake is that of one's view of Scripture, one's view of the question whether Scripture is "time-bound" in its statements about the place of women (among other things) in the church and with respect to the offices.

Neither will I venture to predict whether there might be a split of either small or large proportions if the coming synod would take a firm decision in favor of opening the offices, or even simply the office of deacon, to women. Frankly, I am rather skeptical. For one reason, I believe the basic issue was decided years ago when Report 36/44 was adopted; and it seems as though almost everyone, including some of whom better things were expected, is able to live with Report 36/44. Besides, there have been too many other crucial issues in the past—the Dekker Case in 1967, for example—with respect to which the threatened (or promised?) opposition disappeared like the morning mist when once a synodical decision was reached. But, once again: I will not predict. Such a prediction would be idle speculation; and, besides, I might be proved wrong.

However, I do wish to say that in my opinion a CRC split on this issue would be regrettable.

Why do I say this?

Certainly, I do not say it because the issue itself is not sufficiently important. It is indeed important. I could not and would not belong to a church which allowed women in office. And when I say this, I am not referring merely to a local congregation, but to a denomination. For it must be emphasized that one does not escape his responsibility by belonging to a congregation which does not tolerate what is practiced in sister congregations and that, too, with the approval of the churches in common as gathered in synod. I fear that for too long there have been those who soothed their consciences with respect to various issues in this way. To open the offices to women is wrong because it is contrary to Scripture. It may not be tolerated. And, in fact, it should not have been tolerated in the CRC even temporarily. And when I take into account the broader issue of the view of Scripture and the hermeneutical method that is involved here, then I am even more convinced that the issue is indeed of crucial importance. It is not for lack of importance, therefore, that I say that in my opinion a split over this issue would be regrettable.

Nor do I say this because in general I feel that a split is always regrettable. From a certain point of view, of course, there is always something regrettable about a split. And I think I know whereof I speak both from study of history and from personal experience. I would not wish the pain and the anguish, the trouble and sorrow, the conflict and bitterness of a split on anyone. But if a split involves *reformation*, genuine reformation, then it is not only not regrettable, but also mandatory and commendable, as well as salutary and even joyful and spiritually refreshing.

Nevertheless, I believe a division in the CRC about this issue at this point in history would be regrettable.

Why?

In the first place, because such a split would be over an issue which does not belong to the very genius of the Reformed faith, does not belong to the peculiarly Reformed distinctives. Once again, let me stress that the issue is an important one; and no truly Reformed man can tolerate the position which is being advocated. When the battle becomes one about women in office, or even about the doctrine of Holy Scripture, then you are getting back to what the writer to the Hebrews calls "first principles," from which a church long ago should have gone on "unto perfection." In the second place, if a separation would take place over this issue, it would be entirely possible—unless more took place—that the final product of such a separation would be two groups of which neither would be genuinely Reformed. It would be regrettable—in my opinion, not even worthwhile—to split over this issue when the heresy of general atonement and the heresy of the denial of sovereign reprobation, for example, are not only tolerated but also officially approved. And that leads me to a third point in this connection, namely, that such a split would be regrettable because it would not involve genuine and total reformation. It would be a partial—very partial, in fact—measure. But genuine reformation is in its very nature total. It involves a wholehearted and complete return to the truth. Reformation is not like shopping in a supermarket, so that you choose this issue and reject that issue, take a stand on this truth but not on that truth.

For these reasons I would deem such a division regrettable. I would also deem it "too little and too late." And, frankly, though I make no predictions, I have little expectation of it.

CORRESPONDENCE AND REPLY

A Belated but Necessary Reply

[Editor's Note: This reply of the Rev. Heys is in response to comment by Mr. Jacobson in the March 15 issue, p. 273].

To reject the interpretation of a particular passage of Holy Writ, one that appeared in the *Stan-*

dard Bearer, and in the first articles of a series on the book of Esther—is one thing. It is quite a different thing when the accuser charges the one who wrote these articles with writing 'below the standard of the *Standard Bearer*' and of missing a point

no Calvinist should overlook. This is especially true when the accuser does not give his own interpretation with undeniable proof from the Scriptures that it is the correct interpretation. Such actions call for a reply which is necessary lest silence be misconstrued to mean agreement and a guilty conscience and lest as much as one *Standard Bearer* reader is misled by this public charge sent not to the writer of the articles but to the *Standard Bearer*. This reply is belated because at the moment the accused is in New Zealand working for our churches, so that hundreds if not thousands of *Standard Bearer* readers knew the unfounded, unproven charges at least two weeks before the accused did. And even with airmail it will come long after the charge appeared.

In a letter to the Editor-In-Chief of the *Standard Bearer* Mr. Warren Jacobson states unequivocally that I "missed the forest for the trees" and also missed a point that no Calvinist should overlook. Now I know full well what that expression about the forest and trees means. But I find it difficult to understand what the brother means by it. I can only wish that he had waited with his criticisms until the whole series had been published, so that *he* would have the whole forest before him instead of the few trees of the early articles in the series. I can only wish that he had waited until he read the two articles which I wrote this past week—the week of March 25, 1984—and which will not appear in print until July or August, since I have four or five articles at the printer that come before these two. The one is entitled "Human Craftiness and Divine Faithfulness" and the other "The Enemy Beginning to Fall." He just might have realized then that I do see the forest, and that as a Calvinist. For in them I draw the picture all the way to the second coming of Christ and the blessedness of God's people in the new Jerusalem. And I can only wonder how carefully he read the first two articles entitled "Our Sure Salvation" and "A Comforting Pinpoint of Light". In these, as well, the whole picture of the salvation of God's people is set forth, and that *before* I even begin to speak of Esther and Mordecai.

I am at a great disadvantage in that I am 10,000 miles away from my files and must answer to a great extent from memory. But although the brother fears that I missed the point of "God's sovereign grace being played out in behavioral patterns in people which we might never expect, in ways which we might never suspect, to bring to pass purposes which we might never expect," I fear that he has not come out with his basic criticism of my articles because he wants to defend Esther and Mordecai as elect, believing children of God. Then his statement really means, "God's sovereign grace

(is) being played out in the behavior of Esther and Mordecai in ways we would not expect, in deeds we would not expect that grace to produce, and for purposes we do not expect." But does the brother mean to say that God's *grace* produces the sinful deeds of these two, and that it makes them behave as sinfully as they did? God's grace makes His elect, believing children refuse and fail to use His name, to confess Him, to worship Him openly? Is that a point no Calvinist should overlook? James tells us that faith without works is dead. And now I am running ahead of my series, but can the brother show me and our readers from this book or anywhere from Scripture that Esther and Mordecai confessed their sins, and that they gave ONE word of thanks to God for the enlargement and deliverance? THAT is what God's sovereign grace produces. Those behavioral patterns we will always find in those who receive God's grace. Everywhere in Scripture where an elect's sins are made known to us there is evidence given of repentance and thankfulness. O, we did not expect anything like that of that thief on the cross. Minutes before he became the recipient of that grace he too railed on Christ. But grace brought a beautiful confession before he died. In two articles, if my memory does not fail me, I ask those readers who want to maintain that Esther and Mordecai were elect, believing children of God to give me one word, one deed that even suggests of faith.

A Calvinist must not confuse God's grace with His providence. That providence serves the grace, but they are very distinct in what they produce but also as far as in whom they work. When we accuse others of missing the forest for the trees we had better be sure the forest we have in mind is not a mirage that is then a forest of man's imagination, and/or that it is the forest that at the moment must be looked at, and which God wants us to see in this passage of Holy Writ as being on the foreground.

A Calvinist lets Scripture speak and does not try to say something for Scripture. Scripture deliberately shows these children of Abraham making absolutely no use of God's name. And grace always produces this use in fear and reverence. That is not unexpected in those born again in that grace. A Calvinist sees the chaff in God's providence serving the wheat. That is the picture in the book of Esther. That forest I had before me in every article.

The brother is entitled to his opinion provided it is in harmony with Scripture. And he owes our readers his proof that Esther and Mordecai produced any behavioral patterns that Scripture presents as the work of God's grace. Paul says that we are *saved* by grace. Now that salvation is not merely from hell fire and the punishment we deserve. A

Calvinist always stresses the point which we may never overlook, namely, that we are also saved from the love and power of sin and receive, as we read in I John 3:9, a life that cannot sin. The brother

must show where that life *ever* came to manifestation anywhere in the lives of Esther and Mordecai. He must show where Scripture shows this of them.

Rev. Heys

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Our Order of Worship

Prof. H. Hanko

In our last article on the order of worship we discussed the question of the reading of the law in the worship service. Usually, within our Protestant Reformed Churches, the law is read in the morning worship service and the Apostles' Creed is read in the afternoon or evening service. In this article we shall discuss the reading of the Apostles' Creed.

There are several aspects to this question which need to be discussed, all of which are worth some thought and consideration. We shall treat these different aspects separately.

While, as we have noticed before, there are several parts of our order of worship which are expressly commanded in Scripture, this is not true of the reading of the Apostles' Creed — or of any other creed for that matter. Quite obviously, this would hardly be expected. At the time in which Scripture was written there were as yet no creeds to be used in the worship services; the creeds were formulations of the truth of Scripture which arose in the church through the work of the Spirit of Truth Whom Christ had promised on the eve of His suffering and death on the cross. Reading of the creed in the worship service, therefore, belongs to the area of Christian liberty. It is not a violation of Scripture to omit it.

Nevertheless, the idea itself is wholly Biblical. This is clear when we understand, in the first place that the unity of the church of Christ is a unity of *faith*: "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, *one faith*, one baptism. . ." (Eph. 4:3-5). And in the second place, this is evident when we consider that this faith which unites the church must come to verbal expression: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and *with the mouth* confession is made unto salvation."

(Rom. 10:10). When the church comes together in worship — when in a worship service we have an earthly manifestation of the body of Christ—then nothing could be more in keeping with this characteristic of the church than that she together confesses her faith.

Apparently, the church of Jesus Christ has felt this very deeply. It is possible that there are to be found in Scripture early creedal formulations of the truth which were used by the church already at the time of the apostles. We have one instance of this in I Timothy 3:16: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Many scholars take the position that Paul speaks here of a confession which was used in the early church to give verbal testimony to the faith which the church believed. It is quite possible that this is indeed the case.

However that may be, it is clear that the Apostles' Creed was used by the church already as early as the ninth century; it was used extensively in the church from that time on; and this practice was taken over by the Reformers, although in some instances it was used along with the Nicene Creed. It has been used ever since in many churches of the Reformation.

The Apostles' Creed is ideal for liturgical use in the worship services. It is sufficiently brief — it is difficult to imagine how any of the creeds of the Reformation, as long as they are, could be used for confession of faith within the worship service. It is a creed which contains all the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. So much, in fact, is this true that the Heidelberg Catechism bases a large part of its instruction in the truth on this Apostles' Creed and expounds it as a way of expounding the truth of Scripture.

It is in this connection that it might be well to discuss briefly the use of other creeds for liturgical purposes. In some of our churches it is becoming increasingly common to read, in the place of the Apostles' Creed, either the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, or the Chalcedonian Creed. While there cannot be anything wrong with this practice as such, it ought to be obvious that each of these creeds is very limited in its doctrinal contents. The Nicene Creed deals chiefly with the doctrine of the trinity and the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Chalcedonian creed deals almost exclusively with the relation between the human and the divine natures of Christ in the one Person of the Son of God; and the Athanasian Creed is a broader expression of the two doctrines contained in the Nicene Creed and in the Chalcedonian Creed. The Apostles' Creed has none of the limitations, but includes all the basic doctrines of the Christian doctrines of the Christian faith.

The Apostles' Creed is also a truly ecumenical creed. There is a good ecumenicity and there is a bad ecumenicity. The latter is that practiced in our day which seeks to unite the church world on the basis of the lowest doctrinal common denominator. The former is the true union of the one, holy, Catholic Church of Jesus Christ. It is sometimes forgotten by us that we are a church which stands in true union with all the church of Christ in the past — the church which has now gone to glory to join the company of just men made perfect; and we are one with the church of Christ which is found, even at the present time, throughout the world, gathered from every nation and tribe and tongue. The Apostles' Creed, because of its early origin, is the possession of the whole church of Christ throughout the world. It was formulated at about the time that the church began her great mission enterprise, and it is a creed which the church has carried with her throughout the entire world. So it has become the possession of the whole church. Wherever the church of Christ gathers, this creed is confessed. It is in this way that the creed is a bond which unites God's people everywhere in the one unity of the faith. It would be well if we were more conscious of this in our Sabbath worship services when we confess these truths together.

All of this is not to say, of course, that there are not many in the world who confess this creed as well as we, but who do not belong to the church of Christ. This stands to reason. Just as there are many who outwardly claim to stand on the basis of our Three Forms of Unity, but who in fact deny the truths set forth in them, so also it is true that this happens with the Apostles' Creed. But this ought not to deter us from its use. They may confess with their mouth what is said in this creed while they

deny these truths with their heart. Sometimes even talk is made of giving the words of the creed a meaning other than the historical meaning which the church has always given to it. Sometimes people speak of reciting the creed "with tongue in cheek." But in this way they bring the judgment of God upon them. The creed still belongs to the church of Christ and it will remain her possession as long as the world continues.

What place ought the confession of the Apostles' Creed to occupy in the liturgy? There have been various opinions on this. For example, Lasco put the speaking of the creed in the liturgy after confession of sin and absolution as an expression of praise to God for His grace in the forgiveness of sins. It ought to be apparent from this that no firm rule can be made concerning this matter. Generally speaking, it seems appropriate that the speaking of the creed ought to come as near to the beginning of the service as possible. It seems appropriate that very near the beginning of her worship, the church confess together her unity of faith — her unity in her own fellowship; her unity with the denomination of which she is a part; her unity with the church throughout the world, and her unity with the church of Christ throughout the ages. But I say again, no firm rules can be made about this. (It is a point worth talking about sometime, that the whole of the liturgy ought to have unity, harmony, progression, and beauty to it. Perhaps this can be discussed in some future article.)

Finally, the question has sometimes been raised whether the creed ought to be recited in unison by the whole congregation, or whether it ought to be read by the minister, while the congregation speaks these words of the confession in her heart. If the latter practice is followed, the minister usually introduces the creed with the words: "Let us make confession of our faith, each one saying in his heart. . . ." There is, however, some good ground for favoring the speaking of the creed by the whole congregation. Earlier in the article, I referred to Romans 10:10 where explicit mention is made of the fact that those who are saved both believe in their hearts and *confess with their mouths*. While, of course, the text has wider application than the speaking of the Apostles' Creed in the worship service, it nevertheless makes a point of emphasizing that confession with the mouth is important and necessary to salvation. Further, our Communion Form includes the creed in the prayer which is made after the didactic part of the creed is read and before the Lord's Supper itself is celebrated. Apparently the authors of the form wanted this part of the prayer to be spoken aloud by all, for they introduce this section of the prayer with the words: "Strengthen us also by this Holy Supper in the

catholic undoubted christian faith, whereof we *make confession with our mouths* and hearts, saying. . . ." And then follow the words of the Apostles' Creed.

Once again, while we become so accustomed to

the reading or speaking of the creed that we hardly know what we are doing, we ought nevertheless understand its importance in the liturgy of the worship service and truly make this a part of our worship of Jehovah our God.

ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

Is This Christ's Suffering?

With some hesitation I continue to comment on the installation of the Rev. Marchiene Rienstra at Hope Reformed Church at Holland, Michigan. I hesitate because an end must come in condemning this kind of wrong which so many wish to embrace openly anyway. Those who would receive women into the offices within the church remain of the same mind still.

Yet, it becomes apparent that when one will distort Scripture to allow for one wrong, it becomes easy to distort other Scriptural truths as well. It might be profitable for us to recognize this—and in the concrete instance of Marchiene Rienstra. In order that she be installed into the office of the ministry, those passages of Scripture which forbid woman the right to speak in the church (based on the creation ordinance and the law of God) must be relegated to the "trash heap" of "time-conditioned" instruction. In spite of the obvious truth, the claim must be made that these passages apply to Paul's day—but not to ours. Women might not serve in the ministry 2000 years ago because of the cultural situation then, but today the times have changed. Paul's word no longer applies.

But when one does this sort of thing to Scripture, the infallible Word of God, he (she) can do the same with other important passages of Scripture. This became very clear in an article which recently appeared in the *Holland Sentinel*, written by the Rev. Marchiene Rienstra in celebration of the Lent season. Her remarks concern the suffering of Christ—but what she has to say of this is both shocking and contrary to the teachings of Scripture itself. I can not know what she might say within the church from the pulpit, but if this article is

representative of her "gospel," it is neither Reformed nor Scriptural. She says this of the suffering of Christ:

The suffering of Christ is central to our common reflection during Lent. That suffering did not end when Christ cried "It is finished" on the cross. For what happened on the cross is a sign to us of the awesome reality of the suffering of God for us through all time.

Because of the union of Christ with all humanity through his incarnation (the word made flesh), he continues to suffer in all of our suffering. When children starve to death, Christ suffers the pangs of starvation in and with them. When the elderly are forsaken and alone in their need, Christ suffers the pain of abandonment in and with them. When people inflict terrible violence on each other in the name of justice and freedom, or for no good reason, Christ suffers the anguish of wounding and death in and with them.

This both comforts us, who are united to Christ in our baptism and by faith, because we know that whatever happens, nothing can ever separate us from Christ and his love. But it is also a terrible judgment on the human race. For whenever one precious person suffers needlessly, because of the greed, carelessness or cruelty of another, it is Christ who is being attacked. For he is especially with those who are in great need and suffer in any way.

The suffering of Christ, therefore, faces us with the awful fact that when we do or threaten violence against others, justifying it by calling them our enemies because they live under a different government or political and economic system, or because they believe and think differently than we do, we are doing and threatening violence against Christ, who embraces all human beings in loving forgiveness as the lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the whole world.

To take away the sins of the whole world is to reconcile everyone to God and to each other—and this means loving unity between all people. The church is called to be a sign of this unity which God so greatly desires for all humanity that he gave his only son....

One might wonder if this is the Theology (or Christology) presented from the pulpit at Hope Reformed Church in Holland. One would hope that it is not the Theology taught at Calvin Seminary.

Notice: Christ's incarnation is made to be a "union....with all humanity." The question might well be asked: What does that really mean? Did Christ really assume our human nature? What is a union "with all humanity"? Does Christ, then, in His suffering and death represent all humanity? Is He then too united with the antichrist? Is He united with the reprobate? Is He united with those who remain in their sins?

Sad too is the presentation that Christ's suffering is representative of the suffering which is His when people on this earth suffer. The suffering on the cross is not presented as atonement, as payment for sin before God—but as an act of One Who shows His concern for the suffering of all peoples. Does the suffering on the cross mean that "when children starve to death, Christ suffers the pangs of starvation in and with them?" How much more glorious is the testimony of Scripture: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I

Pet. 3:18). Christ indeed suffers long with *His people* while they are on the earth—but the cross is atonement whereby He would deliver us from sin and death.

Finally, though there is a reference to "sin," one can well ask the question: What is meant by that term in the article? Rienstra states: "To take away the sins of the whole world is to reconcile everyone to God and to each other...." First, there is taught the idea that Christ's death is for every single individual—elect and reprobate alike. That is something entirely foreign to Scripture and Reformed confessions. Secondly, what is stated surely appears to teach a universal salvation. Though now there is the struggle to attain unity, still Christ has reconciled everyone to God and to each other. Finally, the description of "reconciliation" does not appear to involve the removal of original and actual sin committed against God. Rather, it is that which seeks "loving unity between all people." Such presentation can not give assurance of salvation and glory, nor can it possibly be of comfort then to God's people.

But I began by insisting that error breeds error. First, there is denial of the clear teachings of Scripture on "women in office." Then there is an ecumenism which can even include Jewish rabbis. Now there is a false presentation of the cross itself. Surely one can not tamper with Scripture with impunity.

The P.C.A. Invites the O.P.C.

The Presbyterian Church in America has now officially invited the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to join in organic union. A few years ago an attempt was made to do this, but it failed in a rather embarrassing manner. Then, the assemblies (our:synod) of both bodies agreed to this receive and join procedure. But the various presbyteries (our:classis) had to approve—in the PCA by a 3/4 majority and in the OPC by a 2/3 majority. The OPC presbyteries provided the necessary approval—only to learn that the PCA presbyteries did not approve the invitation by the necessary 3/4 majority.

But now the invitation was re-issued. The final presbytery of the PCA took its vote—and it was the deciding vote in connection with the invitation. Exactly 3/4 of the presbyteries voted to issue the invitation. Now it remains to be seen what the OPC will do. Many in the latter denomination are strongly opposed to union. Still, the last time the majority indicated their approval. The *Presbyterian Journal*, April 4, 1984, reports that the "OPC is still eager to celebrate its 50th anniversary as a denomination in 1986. Even if it accepts the PCA invitation, it may wait a year or two to make that celebration possible."

When to Support—and When to Oppose— Union Membership

Interesting, it is, to observe how that denominations long involved in certain social activism will advocate a cause—until they become personally involved. Some of the more liberal denominations of our land have pushed for organization of the workers. These churches have fought for the "right" of the worker to organize. But now some of their own employees are seeking to organize—and that does not meet with approval of the same denominations. *Christianity Today*, March 2, 1984, reports:

United Methodist and Roman Catholic leaders are being accused of following a double standard when it comes to workers' rights. Both churches have stood behind the trade union movement in the past. But when some of their own employees have organized to bargain for improved wages and benefits, the churches have not always been supportive.

The 9.5 million-member United Methodist Church has long stated its support for collective bargaining. In

1908, the Methodist Church—a forerunner of the United Methodist Church—issued a statement upholding the right of workers to organize. United Methodists supported California farm workers in 1976 and employees of the formerly antiunion J.P. Stevens Company in 1980.

But when denominational employees are involved, the support seems to falter. In 1982, employees of the church's General Board of Global Ministries, with headquarters in New York City, voted 133 to 88 to join the United Auto Workers Union. However, their attempts to negotiate a contract with improved wages and benefits has been fruitless so far.

They say they are among the lowest-paid denominational workers in the nation. Although a wage increase became effective this year, it was less than the employees wanted, and they lost many benefits they had previously enjoyed....

All this is somewhat of an indication of the sincerity of the "social gospel" as proclaimed in the churches today.

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

Preservation and Perseverance (3)

Rev. H. Veldman

In our preceding article on the subject of Preservation and Perseverance, we called attention to the fact that these truths are confessional. As one might expect, the preservation and perseverance of the saints are set forth particularly in the fifth head of our Canons, although we also read of them in Heads III and IV of these Canons. However, also the Scriptures, of course, emphasize the certainty of the everlasting salvation of the church of God. We say "of course" because these Canons, we know, are based upon the Word of God.

On the one hand, the truth of the preservation of the people of God is clearly set forth in the Word of God. We read in I Corinthians 1:8-9: "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Here the preservation or confirmation of the saints is based upon the truth that God is faithful. In Philipians 1:6 we read the familiar passage: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun

a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." We do not read here that the Lord will perform this good work *at* the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (this, of course, is also truth), but that He will perform and complete it *until* the day of Jesus Christ. And this refers to the completion of this work from the moment of its beginning or inception until the day of Jesus Christ. Never does the Lord leave His own. The same truth is clearly held before us in I Thessalonians 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." In I Peter 1:4 and 5 we read the beautiful passage: "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." We do well to bear in mind that this passage is addressed to the people of God who are pilgrims and strangers in the midst of the world, whose position in the midst of the world is therefore a humanly impossible position; as such pilgrims and strangers they can never of themselves attain unto this everlasting inheritance. And notice that two truths are held before us in this Word of God: the inheritance itself is preserved and is ready to be revealed at the last time, and we, too, are kept and preserved unto that eternal salvation. And the last passage which we would quote is John 14:16: "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." Indeed, we are also reminded, may I add, and I would say, of course, of that wonderful passage in Romans 8, verses 35-39, where we read that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, and that in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

On the other hand, of course, the truth of the perseverance of the people of God is also set forth very clearly in the Word of God. We must endure unto the end. We read in Matthew 24:13: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." In Romans 2:7-8 the apostle writes: "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath." Indeed, eternal life is promised to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality. In this we must continue and persevere. In Hebrews 3:14 and 6:11 we read: "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.... And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." In Revelation

2:10, 26 the exalted Christ writes unto His church: "Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.... And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations." And we conclude by quoting Revelation 3:11: "Behold, I come quickly' hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Preservation and perseverance — both truths are clearly taught in the Word of God. Preservation, as is indicated by the word, refers to the work of God upon us, God's work in which we are wholly passive. Mind you, it is not that preservation is God's work whereas perseverance is our work, a work of *man*. Preservation, however, is the work of God upon us in which we are passive, whereas perseverance is the work of God in us in which we are active. We are preserved, kept, according to the apostle Peter, by the power of God until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What, now is the Scriptural truth of Perseverance? We ask, first of all, what is not meant by it? When we ask the question what this perseverance of the saints is all about, we do well to understand that to persevere unto the end surely does not mean that we assume the offensive in the sense that we conquer the world for Christ. To overcome and keep the works of Christ unto the end (Rev. 2:26) does not mean that we work for Jesus, persist therein, win the world for Jesus, transform the kingdom of the devil and of darkness into a kingdom of light and of God's dear Son, cleanse the world of all debauchery and crime and filth and shame, of all corruption and immorality, and thereby extend the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ so that it will cover the face of the earth and embrace every living mortal that dwells upon the face of this earth. How could this be possible? O, it may sound attractive and appealing to do great things for Jesus, to win the world for Him, but this is surely not the calling of the cause of the living God and of His Son. Indeed, to persevere does not mean that we untiringly work for the peace of this world and strive unto the end that all swords may be beaten into plowshares and all spears into pruninghooks, and that the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus may cover the face of this present earth as the waters cover the face of the sea. How often we hear this in our present day and age! Man likes to hear this. It flatters him to be told that he can do big things for Jesus, transform this world of crime and shame and filth into a kingdom of God and of His Christ! Of course, this transformation, as performed by the natural man, will never be a spiritual

transformation. It will remove only the results of sin but never sin itself. Such is surely not our calling, either as a church or as individuals, as people of God. Our calling is never synthetic; it is always antithetic. We are not called to transform the kingdom of the devil and of darkness, but to be of the party of the living God, and to testify against it. When they who are in high places, who occupy responsible positions in government speak of delivering this world from crime and corruption, is it not noteworthy that crime and corruption continue in these high places? Our calling is not to cleanse and purify the garments of all others, but to keep our own clean and unspotted in the midst of this world. We must shine as lights in the midst of darkness, speak of the truth over against the lie, put on the whole armour of God and never imagine for a solitary moment that the time will ever come when such preparedness will no longer be necessary in the midst of this world.

What, then, is this perseverance of the people of God? Is it not striking that a modern dictionary defines Perseverance as: "In the Calvinistic system of theology, the continuance in grace and certain salvation of those whom God effectually calls, accepts in Christ, and sanctifies by His Spirit"? Indeed, this perseverance means that we in grace and in the certain salvation of those whom God effectually calls, irresistibly, and, we would say, receives in Christ, receiving all those who by His grace come unto Him, in Christ Jesus. To be sure, we may and must be on the offensive. We must take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. We must fight, indeed, as conquerors; only, our offensive is not that we conquer the world for Christ, but that we stand in the victory of the Captain of our salvation, and untiringly proclaim that we are conquerors, and that the day will dawn when we shall be revealed as such in the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, as far as our position in this world is concerned, we are purely on the defensive, and we must persevere in the sense that we hold fast that which we have, as we also read it in Revelation 3:11.

In this holding fast we must persevere. No man must take our crown. The Greek has two words for crown. The one word is the symbol of royal dominion (the crown of a king), and the other word is a symbol of victory. This crown refers to a laurel-wreath, a prize which is given the winning contestant at the end of a race. And, as far as the content or meaning of this crown is concerned, it refers to everlasting life, the life in heavenly immortality, eternal fellowship with God in the holy city, the New Jerusalem, the heavenly Paradise, the house of our Father with its many mansions, heavenly life and glory. No man, now, must take our crown. O,

this does not mean that the wicked desire it, seek it for themselves; they surely do not want this crown of everlasting life and glory. They are not interested in the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem. But they would take the crown from us; they do not want us to have it; they would deprive us of that eternal life and glory.

Unto that end we must hold fast that which we have. What we must hold fast is clearly set forth in the Word of God, even as we read it in Revelation 3:8: "And thou hast kept My word and hast not denied My Name." Indeed, life and doctrine are inseparably connected. They can never be divorced from each other. On the one hand, we must maintain and proclaim the truth; on the other hand, we must surely practise it and walk accordingly. Our doctrine determines our walk of life; our life is the seal and crown upon our doctrine. The one affects the other: if I love God I will love His Word and maintain it. Hating God I will also hate His truth, distort and corrupt it. On the other hand, if I maintain not the truth I will be as a sailor without a compass, as a traveller without a guide. On the other hand, I must also seal the truth with a godly walk, practise it, and walk in all the commandments of the Lord. This is our calling: hold fast that which we have, doctrine and life. We must cling tenaciously to the truth, revealed in Christ Jesus, revealed in His Word, and as maintained by our Protestant Reformed Churches as the perfect doctrine of salvation. We do not proclaim and teach anything new; we have continued in the old paths, except that we have developed them. May the Lord give us His grace to continue in these old paths, and do this particularly with the children whom God has given us and continues to give us. This is our calling. How important it is that we maintain this calling, adhere to the infallible Scripture as the only lamp before our feet and light upon our path, especially because of the many departures from these Scriptures in our present day and age, making it increasingly difficult to maintain the truth of Holy Writ, as they center in Christ Jesus, our Lord, God's only begotten Son, Jehovah's revelation in Him as the only God of our salvation.

*Take time to read
and study the
Standard Bearer*

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

Missionary Methods (23)

(The Views of Rufus Anderson)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

The fundamental principle of Anderson's (1796-1880) views on missions is this: the aim of mission work must be the gathering of indigenous churches which are self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. In this connection Anderson stressed that the task of the missionary is solely evangelism, i.e., the preaching and the teaching of the gospel. The missionary is not to engage in the work of civilization. He must not attempt to transform the heathen society in which he works so that it conforms as much as possible to European-American society. To this principle we shall return in later articles. For the present we wish to consider some of Anderson's views concerning some of the more practical aspects and problems involved in missions.

These matters apply especially to the work of foreign missions, although to a lesser degree some may also apply to domestic work. Certainly one of the greatest problems is that of the missionary moving away from his homeland to a foreign and often primitive land. Is it possible for a man to do this? Would a missionary be able to take his wife and children with him? How would his children be properly educated? These questions and more have prompted some to conclude that a man with children cannot serve on a foreign field. This is what Anderson said in 1845: "His (the missionary's) embassy and message are as really from the other world, as if he were an angel from heaven. He who devotes himself to the work of foreign missions, comes thereby under peculiar engagements and obligations. His situation is in some important respects peculiar, compared with that of all others. His sphere of action lies beyond the bounds of his native land, beyond the bounds of Christendom, where society and the family and human nature all lie in ruins... They are required therefore preeminently to renounce the world. From the nature of the case they make a greater sacrifice of worldly blessings, than their brethren at home can do, however

much disposed. They forsake their native land and the loved scenes of their youthful days. Oceans separate them from their relatives and friends. They encounter torrid heats and strange diseases. They traverse pathless wilds, and are exposed to burning suns and chilling night damps, to rain or snow. Yet these things, when in their most repulsive forms, are reckoned by missionaries as the least of the trials appertaining to their vocation. The foreign missionary's greatest sacrifices and trials are *social* and *religious*. It is here that he has a severity of trial, which even the domestic missionary ordinarily cannot have. Whatever the devoted servant of Christ upon the frontiers may endure for the present, he sees waves of a Christian civilization not far distant rolling onward, and knows that there will soon be all around him gospel institutions and a Christian community. But it is not so with the foreign missionary. It requires great strength of faith in Christ for him to look at his rising family, and then with unruffled feelings toward the future. True, he sees the gospel taking hold of minds and hearts in consequence of his ministry; he sees around him the germs of a future Christian civilization. But then owing to the imperfect and disordered state of society in heathen communities, he dares not anticipate so much social advancement for two or three generations to come as would make it pleasant to think of leaving his children among the people for whose spiritual well-being he delights to spend his own strength and years. And then his heart yearns oftentimes to be braced and cheered by social Christian fellowship of a higher order than he finds among his converts from heathenism. It is not the flesh-pots of Egypt he looks back upon, nor any of the pleasant things that used to gratify his *senses* in his native land; but he does sometimes think of the kindred spirits he would find in that land, and of the high intellectual and spiritual fellowship he would enjoy in their society, and how it would refresh and strengthen his own

mind and heart. Often there is a feeling of weakness and faintness arising from the want of such fellowship, which is the most painful part of his sufferings. The foreign missionary is obliged, indeed, to act preeminently upon the doctrine of a future life, and of God's supreme and universal government, and to make a deliberate sacrifice of time for eternity, and of earth for heaven. And this he does as an act of duty to his Redeemer, for the sake of extending the influence of his redemption, and bringing its reconciling and saving power to bear upon the myriads of immortal souls dwelling beyond the utmost verge of the Christian church" (*To Advance the Gospel*, Rufus Anderson; R. Pierce Beaver, ed., pp. 77, 78).

Dr. J. Herbert Kane, a missionary to China for fifteen years and currently professor of missions emeritus at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, has some interesting and instructive comments on this subject. One of the qualifications a missionary must have according to Kane is this: "*Assurance of divine guidance*. Missionary work is not getting any easier. Some of the physical hardships have been eliminated, but in their place is a whole host of other difficulties, psychological, ideological, and interpersonal. The short-termers may be able to get along fairly well without any great 'sense of call,' but the career missionary will find it mighty handy when the going gets rough. It will help him immensely if he can say, 'I am a missionary by the will of God.'... If a missionary has a deep, abiding conviction that he is in Brazil, or Borneo, or Burundi by the will of God he will not turn and run at the first sight or sound of danger, nor will he give up when the difficulties multiply and the frustrations almost drive him crazy. He will go the second mile and stay on the job long after the sun has gone down only if he is sure that he is in the will of the Lord" (*Understanding Christian Missions*, 3rd. ed., pp. 82, 83). Another qualification cited by Kane is: "*Ability to endure hardness*. The Chinese call it 'eating bitterness.' There is no doubt that the affluent society in which we live has produced in all of us a love of ease and comfort that is the hallmark of the American way of life. We have central heating in the winter and air-conditioning in the summer and twenty-eight varieties of ice cream the year round. Physical well-being, financial security, material prosperity, peace and contentment, law and order—these are the main ingredients that go to make up the affluent society that is America. The individual is pampered and protected from the cradle to the grave. Dentistry, surgery, and now childbirth, are all rendered painless. Even Band-Aids must be 'ouchless.' The energy crisis that now threatens to change drastically the American life-

style is perhaps the best things that has happened to us since Thomas Edison invented the incandescent lamp. The American missionary, more than any other, finds it difficult to knuckle down to the simple life-style in most parts of the Third World. Like the children of Israel who hankered after the 'leeks and onions of Egypt,' he wants to retain as much as possible the American standard of living. That is why some of them take tons of household stuff, including canned goods, when they leave for the field.... Missionaries must be prepared to endure hardness, like good soldiers of Jesus Christ, in order to identify with the people they are seeking to win. The gap between the 'have' nations and the 'have not' nations is altogether too great. The Christian missionary by himself cannot close that gap no matter what he does, but he can help to bridge it at the local level if he is willing to 'eat bitterness'" (Kane, pp. 78, 79).

Some children of missionaries are tutored on the field, while others are educated at Boarding Schools. This latter involves separating the children from their parents for some months at a time. And, let it be understood, this is no small matter! Dr. Kane, whose children were educated in a mission boarding school, has this to say about it: "To begin with, we must go back to the Scriptures and discover what Christ had to say about the matter. Few of His statements are stronger or clearer than His statement on family ties. 'He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me' (Matt. 10:37). However difficult it is to work it out in practice, we are forced to confess that all horizontal relationships must be subservient to the vertical relationship between Christ and His disciple. Nobody, not even the dearest person on earth, must be allowed to come between the disciple and his Lord.... This does not mean that we abandon our children or repudiate our parents (I Tim. 5:8); but it does mean that *in principle* we recognize the supremacy of Jesus Christ in *all* relationships of life Once the child makes the initial adjustment, which usually takes only a few days, he settles down to a life of comfort and contentment. He has other children of his own age, language, and culture with whom he can study and play. Classes are small enough to permit individual tutoring where necessary. Teachers are dedicated as well as competent. Homework is done together under supervision, which means no one falls behind. And best of all—there is no television.... It is no exaggeration to say that the MKs (missionaries' kids, R.D.D.) in a mission school are given more attention and security than the children in American suburbia.... Schools for missionaries' children are not penal institutions nor are they reformatories. They are a combination of home, school, and church where

the prevailing atmosphere is surcharged with Christian love. There is no need to shed any tears for the MKs on the mission field. They should be reserved for the 'underprivileged' kids at home" (Kane, pp. 59, 60).

We certainly have no wish to minimize the hardships, the inconveniences, or the problems and many frustrations missionaries and their families must endure for the Lord's sake. These are many

and they are great. Not every Christian can be a missionary or a missionary's wife. It takes one called and qualified and strengthened by the grace of God. What we do wish to stress, however, is that it is by no means impossible for a missionary with a family to labor in a foreign land. Thousands upon thousands have done it in the past. It can be done today, by the grace of God. *To be continued...*

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

The Nicene Creed

Rev. James Slopsema

Article 8: *And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life; Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the prophets.*

There is quite a bit of history behind this 8th article of the Nicene Creed.

In its original formulation by the Council of Nicea in 325 this article briefly stated, "And I believe in the Holy Ghost."

You perhaps recall from earlier articles that the Council of Nicea was convened to settle the great trinitarian controversy that raged in the early Christian church. The controversy centered chiefly in the identity of Jesus Christ. There were basically three different positions in the church. There was first the orthodox position which maintained that Jesus Christ is truly divine. He is the eternal Son of God, one in essence with the Father. Then there were the Arians, followers of Arius, who maintained that Jesus was not God in the same sense as the Father. He is god-like but not truly God. For He is created of the Father and possesses a different nature or being than the Father. Finally, there was the middle party, called the Semi-Arians, who maintained that although Jesus is truly divine, the eternal Son of God, He is not one in being with the Father. His being is rather *like* that of the Father.

At the Council of Nicea, the orthodox position prevailed as the church confessed in the 2nd article of the Nicene Creed that Jesus Christ is "the Son of

God, begotten of the Father (the only begotten, i.e., of the essence of the Father, God of God, and) Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by Whom all things were made (in heaven and on earth)."

This same council concluded the Nicene Creed with a brief confession concerning the Holy Spirit: "I believe in the Holy Ghost."

There are several reasons for the brevity of this confession. First, the Scriptures do not speak only of the Father and the Son. They speak of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Time and again these three are mentioned together. And so, having confessed faith in the Father and the Son, it was deemed necessary also to express faith in the Holy Ghost. However, the identity of the Holy Ghost was not the issue at this particular time. The issue was the identity of Jesus Christ, God's Son. Besides this, the church at this time was not even clear as to the true identity of the Holy Spirit. Some thought the Holy Spirit to be a creature of God. Others leaned to the position that the Holy Spirit was no person at all, but simply a power or attribute of God. And so the Council of Nicea was content with the simple statement, "I believe in the Holy Ghost."

However, controversy continued to rage after the Council of Nicea. The Arians and some of the Semi-Arians maintained that they had been pressured to endorse the statements of Nicea. Besides that, there was a confusion in terminology. This was due to an inability to distinguish properly

between the concepts "person" and "essence." Because of this, many did in fact endorse the truth of Nicea but balked at the language used to express the orthodox position. The upshot of all this was that over the years the Semi-Arian position and terminology began to prevail in the church. And for a while it appeared as though the orthodox position of Nicea would be lost to the church. However, through the diligent work of a handful of dedicated men of God the proper distinctions were made and the church was won over to the original position and language of Nicea.

As the issue of the Son's identity became more settled, the question of the Holy Spirit's identity came more to the fore. The church saw that she must also come to grips with the true identity of the Spirit as she had done with the Son. There were various positions held in the church. There were those who maintained that the Holy Spirit is merely a power or attribute of God. This was held even by some who embraced the orthodox position of Nicea on the true divinity of the Son. Then there were those who taught that the Holy Spirit was created by God and thus merely a creature. This had been the original position of the Arians, who had also taught the same concerning the Son. The Semi-Arians, who after Nicea came to dominate the church for some time, also maintained the same teaching concerning the Spirit. They taught the eternal generation of the Son, but the creation of the Spirit. As late as 380 Gregory of Nazianzen wrote, "Of the wise among us, some consider the Holy Ghost an influence, others a creature, others God himself, and again others know not which way to decide, from reverence, as they say, for the Holy Scripture, which declares nothing exact in the case. For this reason they waver between worshipping and not worshipping the Holy Ghost, and strike a middle course, which is in fact, however, a bad one."

At the great Council of Constantinople in 381 the issue concerning the Holy Spirit was by and large settled. The Council of Constantinople added to the original confession of the Nicene creed concerning the Holy Ghost. At Constantinople the church confessed that the Holy Ghost is the One "Who is Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the prophets." The Council of Constantinople gave us this 8th article in its present form with but one exception. At the Council of Constantinople the church confessed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. She made no mention of the Holy Spirit's from the Son. This was not added until later by the Western or Latin branch of the church at the Synod of Toledo in 689.

The additions to this 8th article by the Council of Constantinople were designed to establish the true divinity of the Spirit.

The question arises why the Council of Constantinople did not use some of the language it used to assert the divinity of the Son to confess the divinity of the Spirit. Article 2 of the Nicene creed asserts the true Godhead of the Son by describing Him as "very God...being of one substance with the Father." Certainly, these same descriptions are applicable to the Spirit as well. He too is very God, of one substance with the Father. We would conclude therefore that having established the true identity of the Son with these terms, the early church fathers would also have used these same terms to describe the Spirit. However, according to some church historians, the Council of Constantinople chose not to use this terminology to avoid offending some of the more "conservative" Bishops of the church. Evidently there were still some in the church who were not ready to apply this very specific terminology to the Spirit. Hence, the early church chose to assert the true divinity of the Spirit in other ways.

To assert the true Godhead of the Spirit, the early church first confessed that the Holy Spirit is "Lord." The term "lord" emphasizes the twofold idea of ownership and therefore of rule. A lord is one who owns another. And therefore, because he is owner, he is also ruler over that which he owns. This term, with this twofold meaning, is applied in the Scripture to a slave-owner (cf. Parable of Talents, Matt. 25:14-30). This same term is also applied to God Himself in a host of different passages. We even read quite frequently the expression "Lord God." That God is Lord emphasizes that, as the Creator, God is divine Owner of all things. The heavens and the earth with all that they contain belong to God. All the silver and gold is God's. Even the cattle on a thousand hills belong to God. And so He is also the absolute, sovereign Ruler over all things. To God belongs not only the right but also the power to impose His will upon the creature. And His is also the right and power to maintain His will by rewarding the good and punishing the evil. He is Lord of lords and King of kings.

And now in this same sense the early church confessed that the Holy Spirit is Lord. By this the early church meant that the Holy Spirit, with the Father and the Son, is the Creator, Owner, and Ruler over all and is therefore truly God. What the Council of Constantinople sought to confess with this term is the same as we find in verses 17 and 18 of the Athanasian Creed: "17. So the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord. 18. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord."

In the same breath the writers of the Nicene Creed also confessed that the Holy Spirit is the "Giver of Life." The word found in the original Greek of the Nicene creed has the meaning of "to cause to live, to make alive (quicken), to give life." This same word or term is used in Scripture first to define God the Father and God the Son. Thus, for example, we read in I Timothy 6:13 of "God, Who quickeneth all things." In Romans 4:17 we read of "God, Who quickeneth the dead." In John 5:21 we read, "For as the Father raiseth up from the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." In all these and other passages God the Father and God the Son are designated as the "Giver of life." And this is quite obviously a distinction that is reserved solely for God. Who else

has to the power to give life, to quicken from the dead, except God? But now this same distinction is also applied in Scripture to the Holy Spirit. In II Corinthians 3:6 we are informed that the Spirit giveth life. In John 6:63 Jesus tells His disciples, "It is the spirit that quickeneth." And the spirit here, although not capitalized in the KJV, is the Holy Spirit. In Romans 8:11 we read that the Spirit shall quicken our mortal bodies. The Spirit therefore also is the "Giver of life" and thus is truly divine with the Father and the Son. It was evidently this line of thought that prompted the Council of Constantino-ple to confess the true Godhead of the Holy Spirit by acknowledging Him as the "Giver of life." In short, He is God because divine works are ascribed to Him.

IN HIS FEAR

Servants of the Lord in His Church

Pastor Arie den Hartog

It follows from the fact that we have been saved by the wonderful sovereign grace of God that we have now become His servants. We now owe our whole life to the Lord. We are not our own to live unto ourselves. We must live unto Him who has delivered us from death and from judgment. If one therefore confesses that God is his sovereign Lord and God, and on the other hand refuses to serve Him, such a one is no better than a hypocrite. If we love the Lord we will earnestly desire to serve Him. The Psalmist confesses, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant and the son of thine hand-maid: thou hast loosed my bonds" (Psalm 116:16). If we look for the great day of the Lord with eager expectation then we desire in that day to hear of our Lord and God, "Well done thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21).

Of all the areas in our life where we must serve the Lord the chief one is surely the church of God. Reading through the Psalms we find this mentioned many times. Though the Psalmist surely understood that he had to serve the Lord in every area of his life, it was his urgent desire especially to serve the Lord in His house. In Psalm 66 he says, "I will

go into Thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay Thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble. I will offer unto Thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullock with goats. Selah. Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul" (Psalm 66:13-16). In Psalm 96 the same truth is expressed: "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth" (Psalm 96:7-9). We read of this again in Psalm 100. "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Psalm 100:1-4). Once again this is expressed in Psalm 116. "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord" (Psalm 116:18, 19).

From the above Psalms we can learn much about

what it means to serve the Lord in His house. We serve Him when we come to worship Him, to acknowledge Him as our Lord and our God. We serve Him when we come to offer our sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise unto Him. We serve the Lord when we enter His house to declare among His people His mighty deeds and what wonderful things He has done for our salvation. In the house of the Lord His servants serve Him with gladness and singing. In the house of the Lord we come to pay our vows before the Lord, wherein we resolve to serve Him in all our life. In the versification of Psalm 66 in the *Psalter* we sing, "Here in Thy house I give to Thee the life that Thou dost bless." Each week as we enter into the Lord's house we come again to dedicate and consecrate our whole life to the Lord as His servants.

Do we know what it means to serve the Lord in His house in this manner? Is one of the principle reasons for our going up to the house of the Lord our great desire to serve Him and to consecrate our whole life to Him in humility as His servants? How sad when the Christian has no desire to go up to the house of the Lord or when he goes there merely out of slavish necessity. When we refuse to go to the house of God or are careless about this we are really rebels against God, we are refusing to serve Him as our Lord and acknowledge Him as our Great God and Savior.

We serve the Lord in His house when we come to hear His Word and submit ourselves unto it. We come ready to speak, in the words of Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." We are the Lord's servants when in His presence we resolve to be doers of His word as well as hearers.

We serve the Lord in His house when we show forth His praises before His people. God is glorified in the sight of His people when they show each other His great goodness in their lives. By doing this we encourage our fellow saints to praise God together with us.

We bring our offerings to the house of the Lord to serve Him. Not of course as though the Lord has need of our offerings. Surely the cattle on a thousand hills are His and He has no need of offerings from our hands. Yet He delights in the offerings of His people and He is pleased to use those offerings for the progress of His kingdom on earth. The servant of the Lord enters His house to give joyfully and liberally unto the Lord.

We serve the Lord when we seek to bring our friends and neighbors and relatives to the house of Lord with us. This is the calling of all servants Lord. There may be many reasons why our not growing in numbers. It may be due to
 of our age. It may be due to the

natural man's hatred for the truth that we preach. It may also however be due to our unfaithfulness as the servants of the Lord to bring others to the Lord's house. We must earnestly and zealously exhort our friends and neighbors to come up to the mountain of the Lord's house with us that the Lord might teach them of His wonderful ways and in order that we also might tell them what wonderful things the Lord has done for us. We may well all ask ourselves, when was the last time I actually invited someone to come to church with me? If we have not done that for a long time we should be ashamed of ourselves. This type of mission work in our own churches is not just an option, or something nice and wonderful, it is our calling and obligation as servants of the Lord.

We must serve the Lord in His house in the midst of the communion of the saints. This means that we must come to the Lord's house to give of ourselves to our fellow saints. We must not come to criticize and to cause division in the church and to discourage our fellow saints. We must come to dwell together with our fellow saints in the unity of love and peace. We serve the Lord in the communion of the saints when we make it our business to exhort and encourage one another. Scripture often commands us to do this. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). The Lord has given to His church special office bearers to equip all of the members of the church for "the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12 and 13).

We must serve the Lord in the communion of the saints also during the week at the weekly meetings of the church. It is tragic when a member of the church of Jesus Christ is convinced that he has done his duty by merely going to the worship service on the Lord's Day and afterwards quickly hurrying home again. A church that has few attending weekly meetings such as Bible study classes and societies is in a sad condition. One who is not engaged in the Lord's work in the church during the week can hardly be called a faithful servant. We serve the Lord when we come to such weekly meetings well prepared, ready to contribute to discussions and to teach our fellow saints what God has taught us. Being too busy with our secular occupation that we cannot attend at least one weekly meeting at the church cannot be justified in God's sight. What a beautiful example we find in the apostolic church at Jerusalem. In Acts 2 we read that the saints there continued daily with one ac-

cord in the temple in the fellowship of the saints and the praise of God.

We serve the Lord in His church when we consecrate and dedicate our gifts and abilities to the Lord. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Peter 4:10). God has given manifold grace to the members of His church, giving each of them a gift or gifts. All have received a gift from the Lord. There is no such thing as a member of the church of Jesus Christ without a gift, because then such a one would be a useless servant and there would be no reason for the Lord to have added him to His church. We must all soberly discern the gift that God has given to us and use that gift for the spiritual benefit of the whole church. The parable of the talents speaks of this same matter. Each of the servants received a talent or talents. Though one received five, another two, and another only one, yet all received at least one. All the servants of the Lord had the solemn obligation before the Lord to use that talent. When one of the servants did not use his talent, then the

Lord called him a wicked and slothful servant. The Lord will judge in this manner today also concerning any member of the church who does not use his talent. How wonderful it would be if all the members of the church would stir up the gifts that the Lord has given them and as faithful servants before the Lord actively use them. Our churches would prosper and be greatly blessed of the Lord.

We are faithful servants in the church of the Lord when we earnestly love that church, when we love the Lord that dwells in her midst, when we love the Lord's Word that is declared by her. We are faithful servants when we support and defend that church and her cause in the world to the utmost of our abilities. We are faithful servants when we love the saints in the church, when we seek to help them, pray for them, and seek for their blessing. We are faithful servants of the Lord in His church when we pray for and strive for peace and unity in her midst and the glory of the name of God to shine in her. May God make us all faithful servants in His church.

TRANSLATED TREASURES

A Pamphlet on the Reformation of the Church

Dr. A. Kuyper

(In the last paragraph Kuyper has concluded his discussion of how an individual engages in church reformation and finally makes a break with his church when such church reformation proves impossible from within. In the following paragraph, Kuyper goes on to discuss the whole concept of the true and the false church for reasons which he himself gives.)

59. The Distinction Between the True and False Church.

In order that the believer may have a definite standard by which to decide when his church ceases to be a true church and begins to be a false church, we must explain further what the marks of the true and false church are.

In the doctrinal and church political struggle which was carried on by our fathers in the Six-

teenth Century with Rome, Rome determined fifteen different characteristics as marks of the true church. The Reformed theologians found these to be too superficial for a number of reasons. Over against them they ventured an attempt to establish more correct characteristics. If we sum up what was maintained at that time, then it is clear that all Reformed theologians establish as a necessary characteristic the preaching of the Word of God. Most added to it as a second mark the administration of the sacraments. And a few added to these two the exercise of Christian discipline. A very few substituted for this latter or added to it the mark of Christian love, the holiness of morality, etc. Our Confession of Faith states in Article 29, as is well-

known, the three marks: 1) the preaching of the Word; 2) the administration of the sacraments; 3) the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline. It sums up these three marks in the one general mark, that we must hold to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things which are opposed to it and holding Jesus Christ as the only Head of the church.

It is also to be observed that our oldest theologians, as well as Article 29 of our Confession of Faith, added to each of these three marks the requirement of purity. The preaching of the Word is not enough. There must be the pure preaching of the gospel. Likewise, the pure administration of the sacrament is required. And the exercise of Christian discipline must be so applied that not only a few, but all sins are punished.

Reading this, a few brothers have come to the conclusion that each church must be considered as falling away from the true church when something is lacking in the preaching, when the administration of the sacraments is wrong, or when the exercise of discipline is lax.

In keeping with this, these same brothers take the occasion to terminate membership from such a church hastily and to set up a pure church with the purpose of showing the fault and sin of the old church and to give the old church a bill of divorcement.

It is not proper to handle such a profound question so superficially. It is a well-known fact that such a man as John a' Marck, followed by Bernhard de Noor, talked of two other marks: i.e., "purity in the fundamentals of doctrine and holiness of life." This makes us think that we ought to refrain from so superficial a judgment. At any rate, wiser and better men such as de Noor, Turretin, and whoever else have pointed out that not each of these three marks is equally indispensable and that in the requirements of these three marks there is a certain latitude left for minor differences.

It is on that ground that we make bold to treat this extremely important point somewhat more carefully than has commonly been done.

In the first place, our attention is fixed on the point that in connection with the drawing up of the marks of the true church, usually three trends apply. We may call these three trends the personal, the Scriptural, and the ecclesiastical.

We can be brief concerning the last one because it is represented by Rome and the controversy which we have with Rome is left out of our consideration in this pamphlet.

But we ought to describe briefly the contrast between the Scriptural and personal trend which, according to another principle can also be distin-

guished as the objective and the subjective.

In all ages a group of Christians have pressed the point that the mark of the true church should be sought in the subjective and personal holiness of her members. Confessing correctly that the church is the gathering of the elect, these brothers set up the questionable but extremely dangerous demand that these elect should show themselves as children of God. On this they base their risky idea that the church must be known by the holiness of her members, holiness meant in the spiritual, not in the external sense.

On the other hand, over against that subjective idea, throughout all the history of the church of Christ, the idea has been maintained that the external church must be judged, not according to the spiritual state of her members, but only according to the external appearance of the church as such. This insight leads of itself to this proposition: The marks of the church lie not in the holiness of her members, but in the character which she shows as church.

We ought not to judge this first idea too harshly. A thirst for holiness is created in God's child along with the new birth. How can it be different if the worldmindedness into which the church continually sinks gives pain to him who knows God's hidden ways? One must seek for a separation of the pure and impure and must check that which is evil. If these brothers understand more fully the unbelievable power of sin and if they have learned in fearful wrestling of the soul how each flake of grace which falls as white snow on our souls is dirtied by the stain of our souls, then they would not set the fantasy of imagined purity against this abomination, but would rather engage in an earnest and pressing warning. But those who are fanatical and live too much in the over-excitement of the mind, such as Donatists, Cathari, the Brownites, the Labadites, and whoever else wants to sort out the content of the fishnet before its time and lives in the beautiful hope of their holy purpose, such a one is bound to face bitter disappointment and the risk of the fading of their own freshness of faith.

It can be no different. They fall into error in four respects. 1) They forget that the genuine character of the work of God in the soul does not permit of external judgment. 2) They forget that the dispensation under which we live until our death involves the continual influence of sin in the saints according to God's inscrutable purpose during the whole of this present age. 3) They forget that the elect can live a long time in the church before they are translated out of death into life. 4) They forget that people are transitory and pass away, while the church remains.

All the Reformers, and especially Calvin, have always opposed this Donatist struggle with deep conviction. Calvin writes: "In bearing the imperfection of the members, our compliance must go very far, because the path is so slippery and the tricks of Satan to make us fall are so sly . . . And if one says that it is unbearable and intolerable as long as the plague of iniquity continues to eat as a cancer in the church of the Lord, then I ask if the opinion of the Apostles does not satisfy them. In the Corinthian congregation there were not only a few who had fallen into sin, but almost the whole body of the congregation was sick. It was not only a single sin which was rampant there, but much iniquity was present. And it was no sin of minor significance but of fearful abomination. Not only were the morals corrupted, but corruption had also crept into the teaching. And what now does the holy Apostle do as mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit with Whose judgment the church stands or falls? Does he recommend separation? Does he exclude them from Christ? Does he subject them to an anathema? Nothing of the kind, but just the opposite. He still recognizes them as a church of Christ and as a gathering of saints. This is true also of Jesus and His disciples. The depictions which the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, and Habakkuk give us of the sins of the Jerusalem of their days are fearful and horrible. Everything was corrupted among the people and the rulers, even the priests themselves, to

NOTICE!!!

According to the decision of the Synod of 1983, the Consistory of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church, Hull, Iowa, was appointed the calling church for the 1984 Synod. The Consistory of Hull hereby notifies our Churches that the 1984 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America will convene, the Lord willing, on Wednesday, June 13, 1984 at 9:00 A.M., in the Hull Protestant Reformed Church. The pre-Synodical service will be held Tuesday evening, June 12, at 7:45 P.M. Rev. G. Van Baren, President of the 1983 Synod will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are to meet with the Consistory before the service. Delegates in need of lodging should contact Mr. Bert Van Maanen, 1818 First St., Hull, Iowa 51239 (Phone: (712)-439-1803).

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Aid Society of The First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, mourns the loss of a faithful member, MRS. LUCY WOUTENBERG, whom the Lord took to Glory on April 14, 1984. We express our sympathy to her family and pray that the Lord will comfort them with His everlasting mercy.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
(I Cor. 15:22).

Mrs. Peter Decker, Pres.
Mrs. Gerard Bylsma, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Congregation and Consistory of the Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church wish to express their sincere Christian sympathy to their pastor, Rev. Bernard Woudenberg and his family in the death of his mother, MRS. LUCY WOUTENBERG.

"For this God is our God forever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death" (Psalm 48:14).

such a degree that Isaiah does not hesitate to call Jerusalem a Sodom and Gomorrah . . . Was this any better in the days of Christ and His apostles? Really not. The false piety of the Pharisees no more than the licentiousness of the Sadducees prevented Christ and His apostles from going up with them to the same temple and using the same sacrament with them . . . And if you are still not persuaded, look at David, who was burdened by God with maintaining morality, but who covered the misdeed of his shameful lust by abominations of the violation of right and of bloodshed. And yet was not the same David regenerated? Is he not with honor named among the regenerated? Nevertheless what itself aroused horror among the heathen, he, David, thirsted to perpetrate." (Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, L, IV, c, 1.)

Nearly our whole church has judged in the same way. As far as we know no one who is competent to judge defends this Donatist idea, and we shall let this idea of the subjective or personal mark the true church go, in order to direct the attention of the reader to the second or Scriptural and objective tendencies which the marks of the true church seek not in the personal state of the members, but in the state of the church itself.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 22, 1984, the Lord willing, our beloved parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, MEINDERT and SUSAN GAASTRA, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our Heavenly Father for these many years they have had together and for blessing us with God-fearing parents who guided us in His ways. It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless them and keep them in His care during their remaining years.

"I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever; with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations" (Psalm 89:1).

Anne Lindeman

Edwin and Clarice Gritters

Ray and Carol Gaastra

Otto and Mary Gail Gaastra

17 grandchildren

17 great-grandchildren

TEACHER NEEDED!!!

Covenant Christian School of Lynden, Washington, will need a teacher for Grade 3 through 5 for the 1984-85 school year. Those interested may contact our Administrator, Mr. Henry Kuiper at his home. Phone (206) 354-2592 or at the school - (206) 354-5436.

Applications should be sent to the school at 9088 Northwood Road, Lynden, WA 98264.

John Meyer, Sec'y.

NOTICE!!!

The STANDARD BEARER has loose issues from the last 60 years of printing, many that will make complete volumes. You may obtain these as they are or we have some of them that are bound. If you would like to purchase some of these, please contact our business office. The address is: THE STANDARD BEARER, POST OFFICE BOX 6064, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49506

R.F.P.A. BOARD

James Koole, Sec'y.

News From Our Churches

April 30, 1984

From the April issue of *Across the Aisle*, Rev. Arie and Sherry den Hartog write in part, "Let me begin by telling you what is uppermost in our hearts and mind. We thank the Lord for the gift of a son to our family last week Tuesday, Matthew Farrand. We are so thankful that the Lord has given us six healthy children. Both mother and son are doing well.... We are very thankful also that many of the members of the church are helping out in the home. Two ladies are taking turns bringing in the meal for the next two weeks.

"The church has just rented two additional rooms at the kampong where we have our meetings. This has made it possible to move two of the meetings out of our apartment.... We still have at least three meetings every week.... We do enjoy being able to open our home for the members of the church....

"The biggest event going... is still the matter of the purchase of the building at Blair Rd. and the formation of the second congregation there. The purchase should be finalized this week. We already have 32 people signed up for the new congregation.... It probably will be several months before the place is ready for us to move in and for the beginning of worship services there....

"The numerous Bible study groups that we have...are well attended....and serve a very good purpose in the church especially in the Singapore situation.

"We have received another request from the brethren in Trengganu Malaysia that either Pastor Lau or myself come there for a couple of weeks to preach for them.... We want very much to help them as much as we can but because of the load of work we have in ERCS it will be difficult...."

Rev. Bruinsma has received the call to be missionary to Jamaica. Rev. Kenneth Brown, one of our Jamaican ministers, was in Grand Rapids and visited the congregation of First Church to tell them about the work on that island. Rev. Brown ministers to the congregation at Diaz.

The congregation of First Church has decided to purchase the property at 2800 Michigan N.E. and to

begin building there as soon as all the preparations can be made. The cost is \$100,000. All the improvements are in and paid for except for a \$2,018 sewer assessment to be paid within 5 years. Closing costs will consist of a \$3,000 realty fee and about \$500 for survey and title insurance. The property is very accessible for anyone using the Expressway or the East Beltline.

An interesting fact is that a marriage ceremony took place during a Sunday evening worship service at Hope Protestant Reformed Church, April 15. Some people have commented that it is about time our weddings take place during the Sunday worship services. Others say that having the wedding on Sunday draws too much attention to the people getting married. One thing is certain, and that is that every ceremony of holy matrimony must reflect the relationship of Christ and His church. The emphasis should always be on Christ, the bridegroom, taking unto Himself the church, the bride.

Newsletter No. 7 of the Randolph Protestant Reformed School Society reads in part, "Some are of the opinion that education is spiritually neutral. In other words, what is taught in the school is merely objective fact. In math, children learn to use numbers. In science, they learn about the earth and the laws of nature. In history, they learn certain dates and events. They learn to read, write and spell. And, of course, if this be true, then there is no need for Christian schools....

"However, the fact is that education is never neutral.... Educators see it to be their duty to teach values. They set before the child certain goals. They seek to mold the child to live a productive life....

"The viewpoint and values that are taught in the public school are rather those of the world. That only stands to reason. If the church does not control the perspective of the school then the world does....

"Can we afford to send our children to these kind of schools? Financially the price is right. But what of the spiritual cost? Can we afford that?"