

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

" . . . an individual in the congregation can sing an entire song without really realizing that he has sung at all. But such worship is not really worship at all. In fact, it is particularly offensive in the sight of God . . . . It is almost as if this kind of formal worship is worse than no worship at all."

See "Our Order of Worship"

— page 466

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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## MEDITATION

## Self-Examination

Rev. C. Hanko

*Ques. 80: What difference is there between the Lord's Supper and the popish mass?*

*Ans.: The Lord's Supper testifies to us, that we have a full pardon of all sin by the only sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which He Himself once accomplished on the cross; and, that we by the Holy Ghost are engrafted into Christ, Who, according to His human nature is not now on earth, but in heaven, at the right hand of God His Father, and will there be worshipped by us: — but the mass teaches that the living and the dead have not the pardon of sins through the sufferings of Christ, unless Christ is daily offered for them by the priests; and further, that Christ is*



*bodily under the form of bread and wine, and therefore is to be worshipped in them; so that the mass, at bottom, is nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and sufferings of Christ, and an accursed idolatry.*

*Ques. 81: For whom is the Lord's Supper instituted?*

*Ans.: For those who are truly sorrowful for their sins, and yet trust that these are forgiven them for the sake of Christ; and that the remaining infirmities are covered by His passion and death; and who also earnestly desire to have their faith more and more strengthened, and their lives more holy; but hypocrites, and such as turn not to God with sincere hearts, eat and drink judgment to themselves.*

We are confronted here with the question: Who are the true partakers of the Lord's Supper? Our Book of Instruction has repeatedly reminded us that the Table of Holy Communion assures us of Christ's one perfect sacrifice on the cross as a complete atonement for all of our sins. Moreover, that we become partakers of Christ and of all His benefits by a living faith wrought in our hearts by the Holy Spirit of Christ. In the Lord's Supper we worship a living Savior, Who from heaven bestows upon us every spiritual blessing that God has prepared for us, even from eternity. Our celebration of the Lord's Supper is an act of faith, which, in turn, is blessed by God with an enrichment of His grace.

It is in this connection that the fathers felt compelled to warn us against the mass of the Roman Catholic Church, in which we had our roots in the past. We should remember that the mass is not the same as the Supper, but actually precedes it in the Romish church. In the mass the priest supposedly performs a miracle. Bread and wine are said to be changed into the body and blood of Christ. Thereupon the bread and wine, now supposedly the body and blood of Christ, are sacrificed in "an unbloody manner" for the daily sins of the participants. The mass is considered an extension of Calvary and serves to remove sin and convey grace. When the communicant receives the wafer on his tongue he is supposed to receive the body of Christ, which he tastes, swallows, digests, and thus receives the blessings of salvation. The number of times the communicant partakes, not whether he partakes in faith, is important. It is no wonder that our fathers call this entire ceremony an accursed idolatry, placing our trust in the wafer rather than in the one perfect sacrifice for sin once completed on the cross of our Savior.

This makes the question more important for us: Who is the true partaker of the Lord's Supper? Am I? In confronting this question we are in full harmony with the Scriptures, in which we are admonished: "But let every man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread (still examining himself), and drink of that cup, for he that eateth

and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (I Cor. 11:28, 29).

This accounts for our customary preparatory services. In the week of preparation we face the question: Who examines whom? And, of what does this true examination consist?

Well may we ask: Who am I that is called to do the examining? Immediately the unbeliever is ruled out. Since partaking of the Lord's Supper is an act of faith, he cannot partake without eating and drinking condemnation to himself. Nor can he be honest with himself and with an examination of himself. Our Catechism also rules out the hypocrite and any one who does not turn to God with a sincere heart.

The hypocrite belongs to the carnal element in the church. Likely he is baptized and reared in the church. He attends the public worship, even as he was instructed in the catechisms and made confession of faith. He prays. He reads the Bible. He may even be thoroughly acquainted with the content of the Scriptures, so that he knows sound doctrine. He may be able to discuss fluently the truths of God's Word, may become an elder or deacon, or even a minister. To all appearances he is sincere in his confession and walk, so that he is considered a sincere child of God. He also wants to make that impression upon others. Possibly the question arises in your heart: Might that be true of me? Actually, anyone who is afraid that he might be wearing a mask of hypocrisy need have no concern. The hypocrite knows very well that he is not sincere, not in his prayers, nor in his church attendance, nor in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. He may deceive others, but he does not deceive himself. Judas is the perfect example of the hypocrite. He could spend three years with Jesus and the disciples. He could listen as Peter was the spokesman, declaring, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He could hold out even after Jesus' word of warning, "One of you is a devil." He continued to play the hypocrite right up to the last greeting and kiss in the garden. Hypocrites are warned that they have no place at the Lord's Table.



Scripture also warns against those who do not turn to God with sincere hearts. These are ungodly persons within the church. They love the things of this world and the service of sin, yet they want to keep a back door open to heaven. Maybe they sleep in church. Maybe they allow their thoughts to wander. They are not singing from the heart, even though they may be very good singers. They only close their eyes and wait out the congregational prayer, which never touches them. They are not edified by the preaching, but they either blame the minister for this, or it is no great concern to them. They never feel a need for celebrating the holy Supper, but they do so anyway from some ulterior motive. They do experience a certain remorse for their sins. Either they are afraid of being discovered, or they are sorry for the consequences they experience from their sins. They may even pretend to turn to God, yet not with sincere hearts. Theirs is an Esau's sorrow, which has nothing in common with a true repentance. Conversion is a sincere sorrow that we have offended God with our sins, even as David cried out, "Against Thee, against Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight" (Psalm 51:4). Conversion brings us on our knees in true repentance, confessing and forsaking our sin, and pleading for forgiving mercies. For the sincere child of God there is a continual sorrow for sin, guilt, and depravity, with a seeking after God and a longing for perfection. Those who do not experience this true conversion are admonished to refrain from celebrating the Supper, lest they bring greater condemnation on themselves.

The sincere examiner is the child of God, who lives by faith and seeks to be strengthened in the faith.

Whom does he examine? Himself. Does this mean that he stands off at a distance, as it were, to take an objective look at himself? Does this self-examination imply that I begin by asking myself: Am I a Christian? Am I a child of God? Does this mean that I look to myself for some virtues, good works, or even a bit of perfection? If that were the case, I might despair of myself, be filled with doubts and fears, or else assume the Pharisee's position: "I thank Thee, Lord, that I am not as other men are." Scripture nowhere admonishes this, since I cannot look at myself objectively, any more than I would get up in the morning, look in the mirror, and ask myself whether I am the same person who retired in sleep last night.

Scripture does admonish us to examine ourselves whether we are *in the faith* (II Cor. 13:5). That is something quite different. Then we ask ourselves, first of all, whether we are sound in doctrine, whether we believe the truth of the holy Scriptures,

and, moreover, whether our daily walk of life is in harmony with our profession. Do we desire, will and think, speak and act as children of God? As our Form for the Lord's Supper expresses it, "Considering that we seek our life outside of ourselves in Jesus Christ, we acknowledge that we lie in the midst of death; therefore, notwithstanding we feel many infirmities in ourselves, as namely, that we have not perfect faith, and that we do not give ourselves to serve God with that zeal as we are bound, but have daily to strive with the weakness of our faith, and the evil lusts of our flesh; yet, since we are (by the grace of the Holy Spirit) sorry for these weaknesses and earnestly desirous to fight against our unbelief, and to live according to all the commandments of God: therefore we rest assured, that no sin or infirmity, which still remains in us against our will, can hinder us from being received of God in mercy, and from being made worthy partakers of this heavenly meat and drink."

That leaves us with the question: Of what does this self-examination consist? After taking an honest inward look at ourselves, we might ask: What do the other members of my family think of me? What impression do I leave with my fellow church members? Do my friends and acquaintances speak well of me as a child of God? On the other hand, does the world hate me? In one word, am I a friend and companion of those who fear the Lord?

Yet, this examination of ourselves includes more than that. The Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper leads us in the right direction, informing us that the true examination of ourselves consists of three parts. It is interesting to note that these three parts are also the basis for the division of our Heidelberg Catechism and are found in the first part of our Baptism Form. They are drawn from many passages in the Psalms, such as Psalm 51, 116, 130, as well as from the three parts of Paul's epistle to the Romans.

I must know how great are my sins and miseries. I must realize that I am conceived and born in sin, and therefore am subject to all misery, yea, to condemnation itself. We must consider our sins and the curse due to us for them, so that we abhor and humble ourselves before God. With the Psalmist we cry from the depths of our sin and misery: Lord, hear my voice. If Thou shouldst mark my iniquities, Lord, how could I ever stand before Thee? (Psalm 130:1-3).

Moreover, we must know how we are delivered from all our sins and miseries. We must examine our hearts whether we believe this faithful promise of God, that all our sins are forgiven us for the sake of the passion and death of Christ, so that His



perfect righteousness is imputed to us so perfectly as if we in our own persons had satisfied for all our sins, and fulfilled all righteousness. We must have the song in our hearts: "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, in whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, in whose spirit there is no guile" (Psalm 32:1, 2).

Finally, we must purpose henceforth to show

true gratitude to God in our whole lives, and to walk uprightly before Him, laying aside all enmity, hatred, and envy, resolved to walk in true love and peace with our neighbor.

All those God will certainly receive in mercy and count them worthy partakers of the Table of His Son Jesus Christ (Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper).

## Editor's Notes

*Sixtieth Anniversary.* We called your attention earlier to the fact that the current volume-year, which will be concluded with the Sept. 15 issue, is our sixtieth. To mark this anniversary, there will appear in this issue and the next a special section entitled "Our Rich Heritage," in which you will be given a sampling of the writings which appeared in our *Standard Bearer* beginning with Volume 1.

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*Celebration.* The Board of the RFPA thought it fitting to commemorate this sixtieth anniversary, and you are invited to this celebration at our Hudson-

ville Protestant Reformed Church on September 27, D.V. The Board has asked your editor-in-chief to speak at this occasion. The subject of my address will be: "One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty."

\* \* \* \* \*

We at the Seminary mourn the loss of a faithful secretary, a true friend, and a cheerful and helpful person, Mrs. Geraldine Meyer, who had worked for the faculty for almost 19 years. Mrs. Meyer went to glory unexpectedly on Saturday, August 4, at the age of 70. We extend our Christian sympathy to her husband, Ralph, and to the bereaved family.

## EDITORIAL

# The Hypocrisy of a Heresy Declaration

*Prof. H.C. Hoeksema*

At its annual Synod in June the Christian Reformed Church in North America, according to a report in *RES News Exchange* (July 10, 1984), voted to declare a church that supports *apartheid* to be heretical. The background of this decision is, of course, the situation in South Africa, where there are Reformed churches, black and white, which are members of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. This decision is in support of the stand of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, which has declared the issue of *apartheid* to be a *status confessionis*, that is, "a concern about which it is impossible to differ without its affecting the integrity of our communal confession of Reformed churches.

The Christian Reformed decision, which follows the recommendation of the Synodical Interchurch Relations Committee, is quoted in full in the *RES News Exchange*. It reads as follows:

It is the judgment of the Synod that

- where citizenship (with the full rights and privileges of membership) in a territorial state is allowed or disallowed on the basis of race or nationality (ethnic identity);
- where membership (with the full rights and privileges of membership) in a congregation of the church of Jesus Christ is allowed or disallowed on the basis of race or nationality;
- where participation in the Lord's Supper is allowed or disallowed on the basis of race or nationality;



- where free and untrammelled participation in the economic life of a community is allowed or disallowed on the basis of race or nationality;
- where unrestricted participation in the public educational system of a society (or political entity) is allowed or disallowed on the basis of race or nationality;
- where unrestricted participation in social units (marriage/family, political parties, service or cultural associations, labor organizations, athletic organizations, etc.) or social functions (weddings, funerals, recreational or cultural gatherings, etc.) or public facilities (medical, travel, entertainment, athletic, recreational, service, etc.) is allowed or disallowed on the basis of race or nationality;
- or where the according to any human being of the official status of a person with full dignity, rights, and privileges is *conditional upon his/her having been assigned by authority a specific racial or national identity*;

there race and/or national identity have been made an absolute that fundamentally conditions and qualifies the common humanity of all human persons (as absolute, if not more so, than the created distinction of male and female). As a result, the state, which under God is appointed the guardian of the rights and privileges of every human being and the defender of justice, becomes a power structure enforcing a false ideology and administering systematic injustice. As a result, also, the church, which in Christ has been made and called to be the one new reconciled humanity, denies its confession of unity in Christ (one, holy, catholic church) and repudiates its calling to live together as the one body of Christ that acknowledges only the distinctions of spiritual gifts.

Where such an ideology is the guiding principle for the systematic policies of the state and where the evil of such an ideology, with all its sinful consequences, has been clearly and persistently exposed from within the church itself and where the church(es) nevertheless continue to support and/or do not oppose such an ideology and its resultant injustices, and where they reflect that same ideology in their own life and structure, a *status confessionis* concerning this matter must surely (though humbly and with anguish) be acknowledged.

Any church that supports or warrants such an ideology in the name of the Word of God is untrue to the Word of God, and the teachings it propounds in support or defense of such an ideology must be judged heretical. And any church that does not vigorously oppose such an ideology must be judged guilty of disobedience to God's Word and to Christ its Lord.

Now it is not my purpose to enter into the issue of *apartheid*, although I always have the impression in connection with pronouncements of the kind under consideration that they are the work of ecclesiastical social activists and that they illustrate the old proverb that "the best steersmen are on the shore." But for our present purposes let us assume that this sweeping Synodical pronouncement is correct.

Neither is it my purpose to criticize this Synodical pronouncement on the ground that it makes bold charges of heresy without appealing to Scripture or the creeds. I looked in vain for such grounds. They were not included with the report of the *RES News Exchange*. Nor were there grounds given in the Report of the Interchurch Relations Committee in the *Agenda*. After all, a proper judgment of heresy should have grounds; and these grounds should be from Scripture and the confessions. But no such grounds are cited. Nevertheless, let us pass this by.

The point I wish to make is that this is a piece of ecclesiastical hypocrisy.

Consider:

1) That the Christian Reformed Church in the 1960s was confronted by a clear instance of the denial of the doctrine of particular atonement by one of its own seminary professors. But all that Synod would say about this heresy was "ambiguous and abstract."

2) That the Christian Reformed Church in the late 1970s was confronted by the denial of the doctrine of sovereign reprobation. But the Synod interpreted the Canons of Dordt in order to solve the problem.

3) That the 1984 Synod trampled the clear testimony of Scripture in order to open the office of deacon to women.

4) That recent Synods have opened the door to the corruptions of the movie and to dancing — in the name of common grace.

5) That the Christian Reformed Church still has on its own record the adoption of the heretical doctrines of common grace and the general, well-meant offer of the gospel — not to mention the infamous and unjust deposition of ministers and consistories to whom it had given the testimony that they were Reformed.

But it is so easy and so safe and harmless to one's own denomination to make heresy pronouncements about other, unnamed, churches which are thousands of miles away on another continent! And especially when it concerns an issue like *apartheid*, it can appear to be so very pious and righteous in the eyes of some segments of the church today!

But our Lord would surely say, "Thou hypocrite, first remove the beam that is in thine own eyes; then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the sliver that is in thy brother's eye!"

*Read the Standard Bearer*



## Our Rich Heritage

(How The *Standard Bearer* Has Instructed And Guided Us For Sixty Years)

[In this section you will find quotations on various subjects from articles going back all the way to Volume I. They are random quotations from the writings of various editors and departments. They will show that our magazine has from the beginning spoken with one voice and emitted one sound. For this reason, and to arouse your curiosity, I have not included the author's names with these quotations. HCH]

. . . Scripture teaches no dualism, but an antithesis. There are no two primal causes and eternal principles, constantly warring with each other, but God is One. He alone is eternal and the Primal Cause, and there is no other eternal principle or primal cause next to Him. Neither is He both good and evil, nor are the principles of good and evil to be traced to His Being, for He is a Light and there is no darkness in Him. But this good and glorious God according to His eternal and sovereign good pleasure wills to reveal His praises, His eternally adorable virtue antithetically, that is, in opposition to darkness. Darkness, evil, sin are not primal principles, eternally coordinate with Light, Goodness, Righteousness, but the former are subservient to the latter, darkness must serve to bring out the glory of the light, the Devil serves to enhance the unsearchable riches of God's Being and virtues and works.

In the light of this idea of an antithesis we can understand the placing of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" in paradise. By means of it God carries the antithesis into the life and before the consciousness of Man, made after His image.

Adam was God's covenant-friend. He stood in covenant relation to his God. This covenant-relation is not to be conceived as a sort of contract or alliance between God and Adam, mechanically established. We do not read of a compact between them according to which each agreed to live in relation to the other. On the contrary, the covenant-relation is rooted in man's very creation, and is established the moment Adam stands as image-bearer of God in the garden of Eden. (Vol. 1, p. 7)

\* \* \* \* \*

. . . The Lord shall bring the flood of waters upon the earth and all that is in the earth shall die, *but* with Noah He will establish His covenant. It is a

covenant as He does not and cannot establish with the wicked world. It is the covenant of grace and friendship always referred to in Scripture to which the Lord also here has reference. It is exclusive of all the wicked, for these shall be destroyed. Neither can there be any question that the Lord here mentions His covenant with Noah and his sons as the reason why and the purpose for which they are saved from the flood. The covenant is the reason and basis for the salvation of Noah from the destruction of the first world, in as far as God will never destroy the righteous with the wicked. The righteous shall inherit the earth. And even though all the wicked of the earth are destroyed, God will remember His covenant with His people and save them. Noah, therefore, is saved from the flood, not as mere man, or as a sort of progenitor of a second human race, but as the just man in his generations, as God's covenant friend, that has found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God will confirm His covenant with him. By virtue of that covenant God is the Friend of those that are His friends, and He loveth the righteous. Hence, on the basis of the covenant of grace Noah enters into the ark and is saved from the flood. But it is also *the purpose* for the which Noah is saved. God intends to continue His covenant in the world even after the flood. (Vol. 2, p. 43)

\* \* \* \* \*

It is evident that this (the separation at the tower of Babel) was not a matter of grace, neither was there any restraint upon the development of sin imposed by the confusion of tongues. Only the race was forced into new channels of development, and these same organic lines of development sin would needs follow in the future. This development is such that a premature unity and world-kingdom is prevented for the time being. The power of antichristendom that is in the world cannot realize its needed unity and establish its great and universal kingdom. Henceforward the sinful world shall be a kingdom divided against itself. For as each nation separately strives to attain the purpose that could not be attained in Shinar's valley, nation rises against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there are wars and rumors of war. And as long as this separation and division and conflict continue, the kingdom of Antichrist cannot come and the man of sin cannot reveal himself in all his power. In the meantime this development of the race in different nations along organic lines, as it is today,



serves God's purpose with regard to the realization of His church and covenant. For out of every nation and tribe and tongue He gathers His church, and the elect are combined into the one great body of Christ Jesus. The diversity of nations and tongues must, of course, serve the riches of the body of Christ. For in that new organism, realized according to the eternal counsel of God, each individual and group of individuals must take their own proper place. Presently, from these nations shall the entire multitude, which no man can number, be gathered and shall constitute the glorious harmony of the new and heavenly Jerusalem. (Vol. 3, p. 342)

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Scripture loves to compare man's life to a way. From a spiritual-ethical viewpoint man is not adrift aimlessly, but he walks in a definite path. There is progress, advance in his life. There is direction in this progress. He walks in the way of righteousness or in the paths of unrighteousness, in the way of light or of darkness, in the way of God's covenant or in the way of the world. And there is destination. He is walking in the way of sin to eternal desolation or in the way of righteousness to eternal glory.

According to the way in which he should go, must be the training of the child.

That is, his bringing up, his education must be such that it leads him in the way of God's covenant; for that is, undoubtedly, the way in which he should go!

A question, parent-reader: Can you say before God and your conscience that you heed this admonition to the utmost of your power?

That is what you and I promised when we presented our children in baptism unto the Lord.

How much time do we personally devote to the training of our children in the way in which they should go? Do we ever take them around us in our home to instruct them in the fear and admonition of the Lord? Do we teach them in the Word of God, in the knowledge of the truth? Do we admonish them, pray with them and for them? Do we know where they are when they are not at home? Are we acquainted with their companions, with the friendships they form? Do we know what they read? And do we teach them to read proper literature, so that they may develop a taste for what is wholesome spiritually? (Vol. 8, p. 524)

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The explanation of Melchisedec as a historical phenomenon in his priesthood is not the so-called common grace but simply the grace of God which is in Christ Jesus and which operated in the generations of the true people of God. The narrative of Genesis strongly suggests that in Melchisedec we

have to do with a common historical phenomenon. He was king-priest, and there was to him a people over which he ruled and whose highpriest he was. The appearance of Melchisedec implies that even at the time of Abraham there was found in the land of Canaan a tribe or group of people who knew the Lord and worshipped the most high God and who through their priest-king brought Him sacrifices in His sanctuary. Melchisedec was king-priest of Salem, and in this place there was still found a people who truly loved and served the Lord. The land was also inhabited by the Canaanites. But in the midst of the Canaanites there also lived a people that knew the Lord and were represented by Melchisedec. If the priesthood of Melchisedec sprang from redeeming grace, it was a remnant not out of Paradise but out of the ark. In the ark was the church of God. And out of the visible church there will again come forth the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent according to the two lines of election and reprobation. The main line of the covenant runs through the generation of Shem and is limited to the seed of Abraham. But this does not mean that with the calling of Abraham all God's people had died with the exception of Abraham. Only gradually was the fear of God limited to the seed of Abraham. In the light of these observations, it is not strange that even at the time of Abraham there was found in the land of Canaan a people who truly feared God. So much for the historical appearance of Melchisedec. (Vol. 8, p. 13)

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As was said, further, the prophecy of Isaiah is characterized by remarkable farsightedness and breadth of vision. In it the time of salvation extends to the end of this world, thus to the regeneration of all things and the appearance of Christ with His church on the new earth. This period of salvation is set forth by the prophet as having three stages. The first is the deliverance out of Babylonian exile. This salvation, in turn, forms the ground in which a new salvation is typically described. The people of Israel will be delivered from its spiritual bondage to sin. The chains of idolatry will be broken. The central point of the second stage of salvation is the suffering servant of Jehovah. He becomes the redeemer of His people. He is lifted out of His humility. He becomes the judge of all the world. He destroys all the wicked, and the fruit of His redeeming work is a new humanity, serving God in Spirit and in truth, and a new heaven and a new earth. This is the third stage of salvation. (Vol. 18, p. 134)

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But is it not true that the school is exactly that sphere where the error of Common Grace is most prevalent and dangerous? Common grace and the



Christian School are mutually exclusive. We all know the purpose of the school. In the church we prepare our seed to assume their place in the midst of the church, to be able to partake consciously of the means of grace, such as the preaching of the Word and the sacraments, and to walk consciously as members of the body of Christ. But in the school we prepare the same children to assume their place in the midst of the world. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we teach them in such a way that they, in that world, may be a distinctive people, an wholly other people, walking in the world, but not as of the world. Feed my child the poison of Common Grace and I have utterly failed in my Christian calling, in my Protestant Reformed calling. Our beginning as a Protestant Reformed people urges us to hold fast that which we have, especially with regard to the Christian School. The principles of our churches and the antithetical instruction of our children are inseparably connected. (Vol. 20, p. 217)

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He has shown a new obedience.

The old obedience was shown by Adam in Paradise. And that was relatively easy for him. He was created in the image of God, good and upright. And he walked with God, knew Him at the cool of day. It was his joy to love his God and to walk in intimate communion with Him. And God smiled on him.

But Christ has shown the new obedience, such as no man ever did. This obedience is new in the sense that it was never seen before on earth. A new obedience, for He loved God while God struck Him down in hell. That is something different from Adam's life in Paradise. And Christ never ceased loving God, even though it pleased God to bruise Him with an eternal bruising. He loved God even for the righteous wrath's sake that burned Him in unspeakable anguish.

That, my dear reader, is fulfilling covenant obligations. Let us not talk so glibly of fulfilling our covenant obligations in the face of such Gethsemane and Golgotha.

Oh yes, we must trust God and love Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength! I would ask: who of you ever came anywhere near such a description of actual human endeavor to please your covenant God? Don't you feel ashamed of your lack?

Well, Christ, the covenant Head of the covenant of grace, with Whom God established His eternal covenant, representing you and me, and all God's elect people, this Christ has loved God exactly like that. He is the party of the second part *par ex-*

*cellence.* (Vol. 24, p. 293)

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Why did the Lord give us such a large part of His revelation in the form of history, if it was not His purpose to instruct our children, the children of the covenant, thoroughly in the works which He has accomplished for our salvation in the past? Moreover, and in close connection with this, all the main doctrines of the church, as revealed in the Bible, are historical and should be thoroughly taught in their historical form, in order, before we teach our own system of doctrine. What else are we taught in so-called Biblical History but the truths of creation and the fall, the truth of the covenant, the covenant with Noah, Abraham, Israel; the giving of the law, the apostasy of the old covenant people, and their rejection in the end? What else are we taught than the great doctrine of predestination as manifest in the line of Seth and Cain, the line of Shem and Ham, the line of Abraham and the nations, in the line of Jacob and Esau, in the line of the children of the promise and the children of the flesh? Besides, are not all the great truths concerning our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ taught in the historical form in Scripture? I mean such truths as the incarnation and the cross and the atonement, the resurrection and the exaltation, the truths of the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost and the establishment of the church of the new dispensation: all these truths are revealed in Scripture, not in the form of a dogmatics system, but in the form of historical facts, revealing to us how God established His covenant and kingdom on the ages of the past. Besides, are we to omit and to ignore such important parts of Scripture as the miracles and parables of Jesus and the discourses of our Lord and of the apostles? On the contrary; especially the older children should be taught all these things and become acquainted with the riches of Scripture as the living Word of God, rather than with the dead intellectualism of cold dogmatic system. (Vol. 25, p. 29)

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The question is, of course, whether faith may be presented as a condition of salvation, and whether the establishment and continuation of God's covenant with us is in any sense of the word contingent upon our fulfilling the conditions of faith and obedience. This, unless we juggle words, is the plain and simple meaning of the question; and in this simple form it certainly will stand before the minds of the people.

But I dare say that, in this sense, the term condition not only has no room in the Reformed system of doctrine, but is, as far as our Confessions are concerned, thoroughly unreformed.



For our Confessions uniformly present faith not as a condition which we must fulfill, but as a God-given means or instrument empowering the soul to cling to Christ and to receive all His benefits, and that is a radically different conception from that of condition. And as far as obedience or walking in the way of the covenant is concerned, also this is never presented as a condition but rather as the fruit, in fact, as the inevitable fruit, of our being ingrafted

into Christ.

Let us consult our confessions on these points.

In the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day VII, question and answer 20, we read: "Are all men, then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ? No; only those who are ingrafted into him, and receive all his benefits, by a true faith." (Vol. 26, p. 29)

## ***MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE***

# **Our Order of Worship**

*Prof. H. Hanko*

Singing is always an important part of the worship of God. In our last article we discussed some aspects of singing; in this article we propose to continue this discussion.

Singing must always be from the heart. This is an obvious fact and it is not uncommon to hear the minister remind the congregation of the importance of this. Such a reminder is not out of order. While it is true of all our worship that it is easy to slip into a mere routine, to go through the motions of worship outwardly while our thoughts are far away from what we are doing, this is especially true of singing. Most in the church have sung the Psalms of the church for years and years. They know the words and the music by heart, and need not give any thought to what they are singing while they engage in this part of worship. The result is that an individual in the congregation can sing an entire song without really realizing that he has sung at all. But such worship is not really worship at all. In fact, it is particularly offensive in the sight of God. The Scriptures make it very clear that God is angry with this kind of worship. How often is it not true in the Old Testament that God speaks in anger against a people who worship Him with their lips while their heart is far from Him? It is almost as if this kind of formal worship is worse than no worship at all.

When we worship God in His house on the Lord's Day, a kind of a holy "conversation" takes place between God and His people — as we have had occasion to notice before. Worship in God's house is an aspect of covenant fellowship. That fellowship between God and His people is characterized especially by "conversation." This is always

true, for fellowship can not really take place unless those who have fellowship together can talk together, can communicate with each other. This is no less true of the fellowship between God and His people. They talk together. God speaks to His people and they speak to Him. There is true worship when this holy conversation takes place.

There are several places in the worship service where God's people speak to Him. One of these is the singing of Psalms. But it stands to reason that we are not really speaking to God unless we sing from the heart. If our singing is mechanical, formal, outward, mere lip service, while our hearts are not aware of what we are singing, we are not really talking to God. It is a kind of an insult. It is like coming to someone's house and, while professing to engage in conversation with that person, doing nothing else but reciting memorized groups of words without any thought to what we are saying. Surely our host would have reason to be highly offended when we do this. No less is this true of God. Our "conversation" must not be the thoughtless recitation in song of verses we have memorized while we are not giving one bit of thought to what we are saying.

To sing from the heart means, as Paul expresses it in Colossians 3:16, to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom;" and thus "to teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." All of this implies that when we sing, we sing in such a way that the thoughts expressed in the songs are thoughts of our minds. It is a strange thing that we are able to sing, to read, to recite without this happening. Who has



not had it at one time or another that he can read an entire page or more in a book without realizing what he is reading. Not one single thought of the entire page has passed through his mind. The same thing can happen in singing. We can sing an entire song without any conscious awareness of what we are singing. But singing as an act of worship can never be this way. The words must pass through our minds consciously so that we know what we are saying, and so that we make what we are saying an expression of our own thoughts.

But this is never enough. What we say must also be an expression of our faith. It is possible to say something which we do not believe ourselves. I would suppose that every one has also had the experience at one time or another of being in a meeting where a thoroughly Arminian hymn is being sung. He feels himself caught in a dilemma: whether to join with the others and sing even though he knows that what he is singing is not the truth of God's Word, or to refrain from singing and stand there with the hymnbook in his hand and his mouth closed. It is better to do the latter. Singing, to be truly an act of worship, must be an expression of faith. While the thoughts of the words which he sings pass through his mind, he must also at the same time make these words his own personal confession. To cite but one example: when he sings the well-known words, "The Lord my Shepherd holds me within His tender care . . .," he must speak these words in such a way that he makes this statement his own personal confession; he speaks to God in his singing so that he tells the Lord that he believes that Jehovah his Shepherd holds him in tender care. Then he sings from the heart.

That the worshiper should do this is not strange, for his confession is always what God has said first of all in His Word. The child of God appropriates by faith what God has said in His Word and makes that his confession as he speaks to God. In fact, any confession is always only what God has first said. If he should speak anything but what God has first said, it is no longer a true confession.

But when he sings as a confession of his faith, he sings in such a way that this truth of God's Word is his own conscious and personal experience. He does not sing, only believing objectively the truth which is the content of his song, but he sings as that truth has become a part of his own personal experience as God has given to him salvation in the circumstances of his own pathway in life. Out of his own life, as God leads him through this life to everlasting salvation, he sings his songs of praise to God.

It is for this reason too that the idea of a choir in the worship services is abhorrent. Not that there is

no place for choirs in the life of the people of God; singing is an important part of the life of the people of God, and they find a particular delight in joining with fellow saints in choir singing. But choirs have no place in the worship service. One does not come to the worship service to be entertained, but to worship. And, as we said, this worship is the worship of the congregation. The congregation must speak to God. When choirs sing this is impossible.

It has been argued that congregational singing is not very edifying because the people are not trained to sing together. There are many voices in the congregation, sometimes very loud, which are off key; there are others who sing so loudly that their voices stand out in a kind of raucous counterpoint to the singing; the music is often not sung properly; the attacks and stops are not together; and the result is that the congregational singing is more noise than music. These "unedifying" aspects of congregational singing are effectively removed when a trained choir, under a director, sings in the place of the congregation.

But none of these arguments ought to deter us from insisting that the congregation itself must do the singing. It is true that each member of the congregation ought to sing the very best he can. It is also true that the congregation must strive together to make its singing as beautiful as possible. Sloppiness in singing detracts indeed from the beauty and edification of the congregation to some extent. But these things are not the main elements in the worship of singing. They may offend one with a trained ear so that he refuses to sing along with the people of God, but this is his problem, not the problem of the congregation. God is pleased with such music as comes from the heart. He delights in the singing of the person who pours out his soul to the Lord in song — even if that singing is not always on key. The congregation which sings together of her faith and hope and longing, with joy and gladness, making a joyful noise unto the Lord, is the congregation whose worship arises before the face of the Lord as a sweet-smelling savor with which the Lord God is pleased. Everyone must sing, whether he has the ability or not, for this is pleasing in God's sight.

We have talked before about a certain "line" which ought to run through the worship service. By this we mean that the worship service ought to be, as much as possible, an organic whole. It ought to flow smoothly from one element in the worship to the next. There ought to be progression in thought and idea, progression in the whole service so that each element of the worship flows as naturally as possible from the preceding element. The singing of the Psalms is an important part of tying the worship



together.

There are, of course, no hard and fast rules to govern this. Each minister ought to decide, in connection with the choice of songs, how he intends to do this. Sometimes, e.g., this order is followed: Song 1, a song of praise to God; Song 2, a response to the law; Song 3, a song which introduces to the congregation the main idea of the sermon which immediately follows; Song 4, a song which emphasizes the climax and conclusion of the sermon, or which elicits from God's people a response in keeping with the thought of the sermon. But this order need not necessarily be followed in every case. There are certain times in the life of the congregation when a worship service begins with a song which expresses some profound experience through which the congregation has passed. Perhaps, e.g., a congregation has lost one of its members in a sudden death; perhaps a member has been, or is about to be, cut off for impenitence; perhaps a particular joyful event has taken place in the congregation, such as the acquisition of a new undershepherd. It would be altogether appropriate that the congregation begin its worship with a song which expresses what is especially on the minds of all God's people. There are also occasions for songs of penitence and sorrow for sin, occasions for songs which express the truth of God's Word as it has become a particular element in the confession and walk of God's people.

All in all, the minister has a wonderful opportunity to use the songs sung in the worship service for leading the congregation into the proper frame of mind to worship and for tying the various elements of the worship service together into one smooth-flowing whole. Perhaps sometimes a word of introduction is in order when a song is announced; and perhaps it is sometimes well for the minister to call the attention of the congregation to a particular verse or expression in the song which expresses the reason why he chose that particular song. But all these things help to make the singing more sincere and edifying.

In the Protestant Reformed Churches the *Psalter*

which is in common use is the *Presbyterian Psalter* first published in 1912 by the United Presbyterian Church. This is the *Psalter* with which we are acquainted and which we have come to know and to love. It is sometimes objected that this *Psalter* leaves much to be desired. There are lyrics in it which are not too faithful to the Scriptures; there are tunes in it which are not genuine church music, and are, in fact, folk songs and barroom ditties; there are various numbers which are extremely difficult to sing; there are numbers in which the music simply does not fit the words.

While all these things may be true, it remains a fact that the *Psalter* we now use is a beautiful *Psalter* with many, many numbers in it eminently suited to congregational worship. On the whole, it is true to God's infallibly inspired Word, and its music is usually very beautiful and inspiring. We should not let the shortcomings of the *Psalter* give us the impression that the whole book is really no good.

Nevertheless, this *Psalter* is by no means the only *Psalter* in use in churches which limit their singing to the Psalms. And there are many beautiful numbers in other Psalm books (some chorale numbers set to the tunes of the old Dutch *Psalter* of Dathenus, the Scottish *Psalter*) which we could profitably sing. It might be well, as our churches from time to time consider a revision of the *Psalter*, that some of these other *Psalter* numbers be introduced into the worship. Perhaps our schools could make use of some of the other *Psalters* in the classroom singing so that our children would learn to sing them. In this way, over the years, our congregations would be taught to make use of these songs as well.

At any rate, singing is a beautiful and wonderful part of worship. And we ought to learn to make the most of it. It is inexcusable for a saint to stand during the singing with his mouth shut, no matter what the quality of his voice. And it is incomprehensible that a child of God can fail to join in this part of the worship of his God.

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## GUEST ARTICLE

# The King James Version of the Bible (V)

*Rev. Steven Houck*

(A BIBLE FOR WHICH MEN DIED — continued)

But even more than the Greek New Testament, the Roman Church feared the translation of the Bible into the language of the people. In the Translators' Preface to the Reader we find the following reference to this attitude of the Roman Church: "So much are they afraid of the light of the Scripture that they will not trust the people with it, no not as it is set forth by their own sworn men, no not with the Licence of their own Bishops and Inquisitors. Yea, so unwilling they are to communicate the Scriptures to the people's understanding in any sort, that they are not ashamed to confess, that we forced them to translate it into English against their wills." Thus all the wrath of Rome came down upon those who were involved in getting the Bible into the hands of the people.

John Wycliffe, translator of the first complete English Bible, was one of the first to feel the wrath of Rome, even though he translated from the Latin. He translated the Bible with the expressed purpose of promoting the Reformation of the church. But the circulation of his Bible was bitterly opposed by the Roman Church. Those who read it and disseminated it were denounced as heretics. Wycliffe himself was accused of being "a master of errors" and was condemned as a heretic. Even though they could not capture him in life because of his powerful friends, nevertheless, forty years after his death they disinterred his body, burned his bones, and scattered the ashes in the Swift River.

William Tyndale, who so greatly influenced the King James Version, was so persecuted that he was not even allowed to translate the Bible in England. He had to do it in Germany. But even there he was not left alone. He was hunted down by both the emissaries of Henry VIII and of the Roman Church. In order to elude them he was compelled not only to move with great secrecy, but to assume other names. When finally his translation came off the press and was circulated in England, it was branded as "crafty, false, and untrue" and was forbidden to be kept and used in the land. Many copies were

confiscated and burned. Tyndale himself was slandered by his enemies. They maliciously circulated the slander that his New Testament was only an English translation of Luther. Tonsal preached against Tyndale's Testament and alleged at St. Paul's Cross that it contained not less than two thousand mistranslated texts. His enemies finally captured him in early 1535 and imprisoned him for eighteen months in the castle of Vilvorde. All who talked with him in the castle witnessed of his purity of character. He was even instrumental in the conversion of some. But on the 6th of October, 1536, they led him forth to the place of execution where they tied him to the stake. Tyndale then cried with a loud voice and fervent zeal, "Lord! open the eyes of the King of England." That was his dying prayer. Then the hangman strangled him to death and burned his body.

John Rogers, who completed and edited Tyndale's version, found himself in great trouble when "bloody Mary" came to the throne. It was not long before he was imprisoned by that enemy of God and His Word. For half a year he remained a prisoner in his own house, and during all of 1554 he was confined to Newgate prison with thieves and murderers. He was very harshly and cruelly treated. All that time he was refused permission to see his wife and ten children. It was not until he was led to the stake on January 4, 1555 that they met him. There he was burned alive to become the first victim of the wicked Mary.

Thomas Cranmer, who exerted a great deal of pressure to get the Bible into the hands of the people, could not escape the wrath of Queen Mary either. He was tried and convicted of heresy with others of like faith. Before he was executed, he was forced to watch the burning of Latimer and Ridley, who were also of the faith of the Reformation. Mary thought that she had won the day when Cranmer signed a recantation of his Protestantism. But when the fire was put to him, he publicly repudiated his retractions and held the offending hand, which had signed the recantation, in the



flame until it was consumed. In his death he did not forsake the faith.

Although Coverdale did not die at the hand of Mary, he did suffer persecution with the rest. He was imprisoned for two and a half years. Several times he was examined by his inquisitors and was in extreme danger of losing his life.

The very existence of the "Geneva Bible" was due to religious persecution. Queen Mary sought to stamp out the Word of God in England and to destroy the faithful with fire and sword. As a result, hundreds of Protestants fled England to find refuge on the continent. Many of them settled in Geneva and there translated the Bible into English. Thus the "Geneva Bible," in a very unique way, is a Bible that came out of persecution.

Even some of the translators of the King James Version had to suffer for the cause of the Holy Scriptures. They were dedicated to translating the Bible accurately into the language of the people. Many of them sacrificed much for the work and were rewarded with very little. The translators' Preface to the Reader makes it very clear that there was much opposition to their work. They write, "Thus not only as oft as we speak, as one saith, but also as oft as we do any thing of note or consequence, we subject ourselves to everyone's censure, and happy is he that is least tossed upon tongues; for utterly to escape the snatch of them is impossible." But none of this could keep them from doing their work. Like their predecessors, they were willing to endure great hardship in order that they might see the Holy Scriptures in the language of the people. Dr. John Reynolds, the Puritan who petitioned the king for the new translation, died before the work was finished. His death was caused in part by his diligent study and work on the translation. But when his friends urged him to cease his labors he replied that "for the sake of life, he would not lose the very end of living!" The King James Version is a martyrs' Bible because the Word of God meant more to these men than the life of this world.

#### GOD'S WORD TO HIS CHURCH

The new translation did not immediately take over all others. For some time there was a struggle with the "Geneva Bible." But in the end, the people of God recognized the superior qualities of the King James Version so that it conquered all others. It has gone through hundreds and hundreds of editions in the past 370 years. Some changes have been made in the spelling, punctuation, italicizing, and cross references. Nevertheless, the King James Version which we have today is basically the same as that published in 1611. It is still the choice of God's people too. More King James Version Bibles

are sold today than any other, even with all the competition from the modern versions.

As far as we know, the King James Version, also called the "Authorized Version," was never authorized. Even though it was appointed by the King, it was never approved by Parliament nor the Convocation nor the Privy Council. Nevertheless, it is recognized by God's people as the "Authorized Bible" — God's Authorized Bible. God has so worked in the hearts of His people that it has been recognized by generation after generation of English speaking Christians as God's Word. Yea, it has been recognized as the Bible God has given to us in His good providence. There is no other translation so universally regarded as God's Word. It is the Bible which we must use and which must be our authority in life and doctrine.

Even though the King James Version is not absolutely perfect, it is an excellent translation and by far the best version available today. We must not be taken in by the modern versions and their claims. Our 370 year old Bible is to be preferred above all others because it is better than them all.

- 1) It was translated by men who are unsurpassed in their knowledge of Biblical studies.
- 2) The translators were pious men of God who believed in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.
- 3) It is the mature fruit of generations of English translations as well as the careful work of its translators.
- 4) The King James Version is based upon the "Received Text" rather than the critical texts of modern versions.
- 5) It is a word-for-word translation which faithfully and accurately reflects the originals.
- 6) The language is one of reverence and respect which gives honor to the majesty of its Author.
- 7) Of all the English versions of today, it alone is the Bible of the Reformation.
- 8) Our spiritual forefathers thought so highly of it that they were willing to suffer and even die for it.
- 9) It is the version which has been recognized for generations and generations as the Bible God has given to His English-speaking church.

The translators' admonition to the reader concerning the new translation is certainly just as applicable to us today as it was in 1611. They exhort us, saying, "Ye are brought unto fountains of living water which ye digged not. Do not cast earth into them with the Philistines, neither prefer broken pits before them with the wicked Jews. Others have labored, and you may enter into their labors; O receive not so great things in vain, O despise not so



great salvation! Be not like swine to tread under foot so precious things, neither yet like dogs to tear and abuse holy things . . . . If light be come into the world, love not darkness more than light; if food, if clothing be offered, go not naked, starve not yourselves . . . . It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, but a blessed thing it is, and will bring us to everlasting blessedness in the end, when God speaketh unto us, to hearken; when he setteth his word before us, to read it; when he

stretcheth out his hand and calleth, to answer, Here am I, Here we are to do thy will, O God."

Indeed, in the King James Version of the Bible we find the fountain of living water. Do not despise it and reject it for the modern versions as so many today. Stand up for the truth of God and defend your Bible against the attacks of its enemies. Do not let them take your Bible away from you. It is yours by the good providence of God.

## ***BIBLE STUDY GUIDE***

# **I John — True Fellowship in Love (Conclusion)**

*Rev. J. Kortering*

The keynote of fellowship in love is emphasized much in our day. Oftentimes, leaders in the church emphasize love at the expense of the truth or its opposite, emphasize the truth at the expense of love. The Holy Spirit has given us this small letter to teach us that true fellowship is in the truth and must be sanctioned by love. Let's see how this is true from the letter itself.

### **A BRIEF OUTLINE**

1. Introduction (1:1-4). The usual identification of author and intended recipients is lacking. Instead, he begins by introducing Christ Who is the Word of Life, and John states that he was eyewitness of His work (1:1). In addition, Christ is the manifestation of eternal life (1:2). The purpose of writing this letter is to declare the truth of Christ in order that we may have fellowship with the Father through Him and that this fellowship includes both Christ and one another (1:3). In this fellowship is true joy (1:4).

2. True fellowship is in the light (1:5-2:6). God Himself is light and in Him is no darkness at all (1:5). Fellowship with Him is expressed not by walking in darkness, but rather by walking in the light. In this way we know that the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from sin (1:6, 7). We must not say that we have no sin (this would make God a liar); rather we must confess our sin and be forgiven and cleansed (1:8-10). He tells us that he is writing this letter to guide us in being victorious over sin in two

ways. First, that we avoid sin in the first place: "I write that ye sin not . . . . we know Him if we keep His commandments . . . . In Him is the love of God perfected. . . . We ought then to walk as He walked" (2:1-6). The second is that if we do sin we may enjoy forgiveness, for we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, and He is effective as an advocate for He is the propitiation for our sins and that of the whole world (2:1, 2).

3. True fellowship is in the way of loving the brethren, not in the love of the world (2:7-17). God comes with His commandment that we should love one another. This commandment is both old and new. The true light (Christ) has come into the world, and anyone who says he is in the light, but hates his brother, is in darkness. In contrast, those who love their brothers and sisters are in the light (2:7-11). He makes special mention that he writes unto little children because their sins are forgiven and they have known the Father. He writes unto fathers because they have known the Father from the beginning. He writes unto young men because they have overcome the wicked one and they are strong because the Word of God dwells in them (2:12-13). None are to love the world, nor the things of the world such as the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. If we love that world, the love of the Father is not in us and we will perish. The love of the Father is demonstrated in doing His will and, by doing that, we will abide forever (2:15-17).



4. John warns against heretical teaching and exhorts us to confess that Jesus is the Christ (2:18-29). There are many antichrists, and their presence indicates that it is the last time. The heretics which left the church, only prove by that act that they were not really one with them. They must understand that all who deny that Jesus is the Christ is antichrist (2:18, 19, 22, 23). The faithful have the unction of the Spirit and know the truth. This truth is the same word which they had from the beginning which the Spirit taught them. He exhorts us to abide in Christ and do what is right, so when He appears we shall not be ashamed (2:20, 21, 24-29).

5. We are admonished to live consistently, to flee from sin, and walk in righteousness (3:1-12). The love of the Father is demonstrated in that we are called the sons of God. Our sonship will become even more clear when Christ shall return, for then we shall be like Him (3:1, 2). As sons of God we purify ourselves and overcome sin. If we continue in sin we cannot claim to be His sons (3:3-6). This contrast is set forth; one who continues in sin is of the devil, one who is born of God does not continue in sin for His seed remains in him. This is the manifestation of sonship: we forsake sin and walk in righteousness (3:7-10). Cain and Abel illustrate this contrast (3:11, 12).

6. The proof of our salvation is seen in our practice of love (3:13-24). Hatred is natural, love is spiritual. If we love the brother, it is proof that we are spiritually alive. All who hate a brother are murderers. Rather, we should follow our Lord Who loved so much He laid down His life for us (3:13-16). Love is demonstrated by deeds of love — e.g., sharing our goods with the poor (3:17, 18). God commands us to believe in Jesus and to love one another. If we fail in this, we may receive forgiveness; if we practice it we become confident of our sonship for it is proof that Christ abides in us (3:19-24).

7. We are to try the spirits (4:1-6). The spirits are teachings of men, they are to be tested by the Word of God. If they confess that Jesus is come in the flesh, they are of God; if not, they are antichrist. We confess this because we have overcome these false spirits by God's presence in us. The world confesses the lie and has a large following. We who are of God confess the truth and all who know God hear us.

8. Another exhortation is given to practice brotherly love (4:7-21). We are to love one another, for love is of God, and all who are born of God have this love. Without love, we know not God (4:7, 8). God manifests His love in the sending of Christ to die. It is not that we love God, but that He first loved us (4:9, 10). In that great love of God we ought to

love each other. God dwells in us by His Spirit, and to confess that Jesus is the Son of God is proof of it (4:11-15). God is love, and one who dwells in love dwells in God. Boldness is proof of love, perfect love casts out fear. We love Him because He first loved us (4:16-19). If we claim God's love, but hate our brother, we lie, for how can we say we love God Whom we have not seen if we cannot love the brother whom we do see. We must love God and our brother also (4:20, 21).

9. True fellowship expresses itself in obedience (5:1-12). Children of God express their faith by believing in the divinity of Christ, this is witnessed to us by the three in heaven (Father, Word, and Spirit) and the three on earth (Spirit, water, and blood). Our faith is in the Son of God (5:1, 6-12). This is also shown in our daily conduct, we love God and keep His commandment and thus overcome the world (5:2-5).

10. The assurance of our salvation is expressed (5:13-21). Through faith in the Son of God we have eternal life (5:13). Our confidence in Him is that we may ask anything according to His will and He will give it (5:14, 15). This is so powerful that we may pray for the forgiveness of each other's sins (excluding the sin unto death) (5:16, 17). We know that whosoever is born of God does not continue to commit sin, but keeps himself pure. Our security is in God and His Son. We are to keep ourselves from idols (5:21).

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What evidence is there in this letter that John, the brother of James, was the author?

2. Consider why John calls the heretical views of Cerinthus and his followers "antichrist"? What evidence is there today that these antichristian views are also present?

3. Show from this letter that John is combating a heresy that denies that Jesus is really the Son of God. Also, how does he show that a denial of the divinity of Christ is a denial of our true fellowship with the Father.

4. Go through this letter and quote passages that show that true fellowship with God is in the truth and that the lie destroys this fellowship.

5. This is often called the "epistle of love." Make a list of texts that teach us what love really is (over 30 of them). How do these passages teach us that true love of the neighbor cannot exist without love of God?

6. How do you explain the paradox of 1:8 and 3:9?

7. Explain in the light of many passages in this letter, e.g., 1:13, 1:15, 16, 3:10, 4:5, 5:19 the doc-



trine of the antithesis, that is, the church must be spiritually separated from the world.

8. How can we apply the instruction to share our goods with the poor brother (3:17) to our brother today? Does this include an individual responsibility as well as one of the whole church?

9. Illustrate how we can be guilty of the sin men-

tioned in 4:20.

10. Why does John qualify our asking anything in prayer by "according to His will"? How specifically must we do this?

11. Give specific ways in which you believe our congregational life would improve if we would all heed the words of this epistle.

## ALL AROUND US

# Women in Office

*Rev. G. Van Baren*

By now, virtually all within Reformed circles are aware of the action of the Christian Reformed Synod this past June in allowing women to serve in the office of deacon — and amending their Church Order that this could immediately be done.

The whole of the decisions related to this question was confusing and even contradictory. The Synod first adopted a study-committee report which emphasized the Scriptural teaching of the headship of man. That was adopted, however, by a very slim margin. Many took this decision to mean that the deacon's office would be kept closed to women. So it was reported in the news accounts. Tearful women were observed on Calvin's campus who were themselves convinced that their cause had failed.

Still, the very next day the same Synod adopted the motion to allow women to serve as deacons in the church. Though the offices of elder and minister remained closed to women, most were of the opinion that this would shortly change too in the C.R.C.

The various church periodicals, as well as the local press, carried extensive accounts of the decision taken. Perhaps the account in the *Presbyterian Journal*, July 4, 1984, is as comprehensive and representative as any:

Women in the Christian Reformed Church may be elected to the office of deacon, but not to the office of ruling or teaching elder, following a series of sometimes confusing decisions here by the church's Synod.

This year's Synod has been seen by many throughout the church as a watershed, as some conservatives dug in their heels to prevent opening any offices to women while a small minority on the other side hoped for a crack in the dike which would open all offices.

Over three days, almost every crucial question was answered by a vote so close that as few as three delegates made the difference.

Early in the discussion, conservatives seemed to have things going their direction as the CRC Synod approved 81-76 a statement that "the headship principle, which means that the man should exercise primary leadership and direction-setting in the home and in the church, is a Biblical teaching recognized in both the Old and New Testaments."

But the next day, by a more convincing voice vote which was not challenged, the Synod declared that there is insufficient Biblical evidence to say that the same headship principle is a creation norm. Therefore, said the CRC, the headship principle is not applicable to areas of life outside the home and the church.

That statement backed off substantially from the main committee report which had supported a kind of universal male headship.

Then, in still another vote which appeared to contradict the first position on headship, the Synod rejected 82-77 a statement that the first position excludes women from the offices of minister, elder, and evangelist. No one at this year's Synod explicitly pushed to have these offices opened to women, but the reluctance to approve a statement of principle excluding that possibility was disturbing to many conservatives in the church.

The actual decision to open the office of deacon to women came on an 82-75 vote, but was qualified in several important ways. For one thing, in congregations where deacons sit regularly with elders in the church "consistory" (the CRC equivalent of a Presbyterian session), such deacons are clearly forbidden to exercise "consistorial" authority. In many CRC congregations, the two bodies sit together in what is sometimes called the church "council," and functions are at least blurred by the joint work. The Synod here



asked churches, if they elect women as deacons, to keep the functions separate.

Further, every CRC minister is guaranteed freedom of conscience in connection with the ordination of women as deacons. No minister may be required, under the new rules, to participate in such an ordination if he chooses not to do so.

. . . Although the limits of this year's action are clear, many in the church remain fearful that there will be a continuing effort to open the offices of elder and minister as well. "If that is the case," says John Hultink, editor of *Christian Renewal*, a conservative CRC-tabloid in Ontario, "what happened here is the beginning of the disintegration of the Christian Reformed Church."

Those who believe all offices should be open to women, while thought to be a small minority, have hardly hidden their views. The Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven, editor of the official denominational magazine, the *Banner*, has written repeatedly in support of the wide open position, allowing minimal space in the magazine for the more widely held conservative viewpoint. "He acts more like a papal authority than an elected officer of a Protestant denomination," complains Hultink.

One reason for conservatives' distress is a set of statistics published early last spring by the *Banner* indicating the grassroots support for women in all offices continues to grow in the CRC. "Naturally," one layman told the *Journal*, asking not to be identified, "they control the magazine, the college, and the seminary. They can teach future members anything they want to."

The president of this year's Synod, Rev. Roger Van Harn, wrote in the *Grand Rapids' Press*, Aug. 4, 1984, concerning his own impressions of this decision:

The students of tomorrow will find the conditions of today hard to imagine — just as it is hard for some of us to imagine the days when churches did not have microphones and did not need Sunday bulletins.

The students will have grown up hearing men and women preach from their pulpits. They will have received the bread and wine of holy communion from male and female hands. They will have watched an offering plate move from a silver-haired deacon working one end of the pew to a nervous novice young enough to be her grandson working the other.

The students will learn that for the first 35 years the CRC worshipped only in Dutch, for the first 70 years its members sang only psalms, and for the first 127 years they ordained only men. (And that the church for the 2000 years before this time, also only ordained men? G.V.B.)

I am convinced the day is coming when men and women will serve together in all the offices in the Christian Reformed Church.

My prophecy is not bold. For the last 10 years I have been engaged — sometimes embroiled — in

studies and discussions about women in church office. When I ask others if they believe that women will someday hold all the offices in this denomination, the answer is almost invariably, "Yes, it will come."

Some fear it and wonder how long it can be held back. Others hope it and wonder how the day can be hastened . . .

Some already envision some practical problems which can arise. One writes in "Voices" in the *Banner*, July 16, 1984,

Choose four men for deacons, and choose four women for deaconesses, not related to any of the men.

When you have consistory meetings until about eleven or twelve o'clock, or when the deacons and the deaconesses are sent out on missions, and a deaconess comes home to her husband, he can ask, "What man have you been out with tonight?" Also, when the deacon comes home to his wife, she can ask, "What woman have you been out with tonight?"

Outside of any possible practical problems which might arise, the more fundamental problems remain. Those who support the position of women in church office, usually are ready to admit that certain passages in the N.T. clearly forbid this. The passages are so clear, that they are *forced* to admit this. But the answer to the dilemma is that this teaching is applicable only to that age of the apostles when the position of women was far different from what it is today. What was true then, was true for practical reasons — not for principle reasons. Therefore, because of changing situations today, we need no longer observe the requirements of Scripture on that point.

Such interpretation, of course, is traced back to the CRC decision called "Report 44" treating of the infallibility of Scripture and setting forth principles of Biblical interpretation which allows for this presentation.

Also, though many of our CRC brethren would deny it, much of this whole problem is traceable to 1924 and the adoption of Common Grace as church dogma. On the basis of the third point of Common Grace, the Spirit of God graciously works in the reprobate wicked so that they can produce works which are good and pleasing to God — though not a "saving" good. The women's lib movement in our land ultimately must be regarded by some in the light of the "gracious" operation of the Spirit. It is reasoned that not all of this can be bad. Some is good: the fruit of common grace. There is reason, then, to join in such movement — and follow its principles within the church. The battle was lost in 1924 — though the skirmishes continue even til today.

I can join President Van Harn in predicting that shortly the office of teaching and ruling elder must



be opened to the women as well. But I would go further. I can predict that these same arguments used to gain admittance of women to the office in church, can and will be used in future years to admit the practicing homosexual to these same offices. Some mainline denominations already are doing this. The condemnation of homosexuality in Scripture can also then be said to be a "time-conditioned" command. And if God gives gifts and desire for the ministry to practicing homosexuals, it is His own indication that He would have them serve within His church. Why limit or restrict God-given gifts?

In the meantime, one wonders what the "conservative" will now do. Their entire reaction to date resembles nothing so much as the action of the small boy to the neighborhood bully. As the bully approaches, the young boy draws a chalk mark on the sidewalk, declaring, "If you cross this line, I'll knock your block off!" Then, as the bully crosses the line, the little boy backs up several feet and draws another line. He states the same warning — and observes the same response. Then: another line — and another response. The question is: which line is going to be the last one?

## IN HIS FEAR

# Servants of the Lord in our Daily Occupation

*Pastor Arie den Hartog*

We are the servants of the Lord. We believe that God is the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth. He is our Lord for He is our creator and redeemer, and it follows from this that we must be His servants. We have been made the servants of the Lord by His wonderful grace. We were by nature the servants of the devil and of sin. But through His wonderful grace in Christ Jesus we have been redeemed in order that we might serve Him all the days of our life. It is indeed a great blessing and wonderful privilege that we are the servants of the Lord. We have a most glorious and blessed master. He has given us all things. We have nothing of ourselves. All that we have belongs to the Lord first of all. Even our very soul and body and all that we are belong to Him. We must therefore serve Him in love and gratitude. We must consecrate our whole life to Him. To do anything less is a great sin. We must present our bodies a living sacrifice unto the Lord, for this is our reasonable service. To serve Him means that we seek to do His will. It means that we seek to promote the cause of His kingdom in this world. It means that we seek in all our life to bring glory unto His name. To serve Him means that in every area of our life we live in righteousness and truth according to our Lord's commandments. God is our supreme Lord and Master.

Though we may serve earthly masters, our real and only Lord is our God.

Even as we must serve the Lord in all areas of our life so also we must serve Him in our daily occupations. In fact, of course, for most of us our daily occupation takes up most of the time and energies of our life. We must not imagine that we need to serve the Lord only in church. Our service in the church is of supreme importance. Without serving the Lord in church we cannot serve Him in any other area of our life. That we are servants of the Lord must have a tremendous effect on how we conduct ourselves in our daily occupation. The apostle Paul speaks of this most beautifully in Ephesians 6:5-10.

Servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye service as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing that any man doeth, the same shall receive of the Lord whether he be bond or free. And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your master also is in heaven; neither is respect of persons with Him.

In our daily occupation most of us are servants



and some of us are masters. We believe that the employee-employer relationship of our modern day parallels in almost all essentials the relationship of master-servant of which the Bible has so much to say. The only real difference is that as employees we are free, whereas a servant was usually bonded to his master.

In order to understand what it means that we are the servants of the Lord we must first of all be profoundly conscious of the fact that also in this area of our life all that we are and all that we have is the Lord's. He created us. All our members are written in His book. He determined all our talents and abilities. He gave us our life, our strength and health. He gave us opportunities to get a certain amount of study and training in preparation for our occupation. In His wonderful providence He provided an occupation for us. If we are in business and our business has prospered, that is only because of the Lord. God the Lord of heaven and earth and of all men did not make us all equal. He gave varying powers of intellect and ability to men. He gave different opportunities. One can become a doctor or a lawyer or a company executive or hold some other occupation that has great esteem among men. Another can advance no further than a common laborer. The business of one may so prosper that it develops into a great and wealthy corporation where millions of dollars are turned over every year. The business of another might continue small and struggling. If we are Reformed Christians who believe in the absolute sovereignty of God over all things then we believe that all these things are of the Lord.

As long as we are on this earth we have a calling to labor in an earthly occupation. Our Lord despises the sluggard and the man who refuses to work. It is through laboring with our hands the thing that is good that the Lord blesses us with material things. Through these things we are enabled of the Lord to raise up a Christian family and to provide a home and provisions for such a family. But our earthly occupation is secondary. It is only temporary. Above this we are called to be the servants of the Lord in His everlasting kingdom which is manifest here already on this earth. We must use our earthly occupation even for the purpose of seeking the kingdom of our God and the glory and righteousness of that kingdom. We must in our earthly occupation live righteously and holily before the Lord, for this is our highest calling.

If we consider the ungodly man of the world we can see so much evidence of how he refuses to serve the Lord in his daily occupation. Therefore the world is filled with violence and corruption. Wicked men are filled with greed and materialism.

Their only concern is to aggrandize themselves and amass to themselves greater and greater fortunes. They care not about the law of God. They care not about the God-ordained order for society and the servant-master relationship. Therefore laborers rise up in rebellion against their employers. They use violence and the united power of unions to accomplish their ends. There is no limit to their greed and lust. They care not that in that violence and greed they destroy the property and even the life of their fellow man. In their lust for material gain and earthly glory and power they care not if they lie and steal and cheat in order to deprive their fellow man. They are ready to impoverish their fellow man only that they themselves might have great wealth. The masters or bosses of this world are no better than the servants or employees. They will build bigger and bigger kingdoms for themselves on this earth. In order to do this they will engage themselves in all sorts of corrupt practices. The larger and more sophisticated the modern corporations become the greater becomes their potential to practice fraud and corruption. The bosses of this world will use their employees only for their own advantage. They refuse to pay them their just wages. They care not if their employees languish in poverty. They consider their employees but ignorant and lowly servants who are unworthy of any more than mere subsistence and minimal wages. Both the servants and the masters of this world are evil. They are both an abomination in the sight of God. Though they accuse and excuse one another, both stand condemned under the judgment of God. It is not true that one evil justifies another. It is not true as the world reasons that when a master refuses to pay a just and equitable wage to his employee that this gives the right to the employees to band together in wicked and rebellious unions to destroy the property and even the life of their employees. Neither does the employer have the right to take advantage of the weakness and situation of their employees to pay them absolutely the smallest wage that he can get by with. Who can measure the violence and wickedness that there is today on the part of both evil masters and wicked rebellious servants!

The Christian lives in the midst of this evil world of violence. He surely may not have any part in that wickedness at all. It is for this reason that our churches have always insisted that a Christian may not be a member of the wicked labor unions of this world. This position is clearly based on Scripture. Though it is increasingly difficult for the Christian to maintain this position in this ungodly world, as a servant of the Lord he must maintain it.

Because the Christian is the servant of the Lord he submits himself to the ordinances of the Lord. These ordinances are absolute for him. God has



stated clearly in His word that servants must be in subjection to their masters. Employees must be obedient in all things to their masters. Though the Christian employee is free to change his place of employment, as long as he is in a given company he must submit to his employer. He must do this not only to the good and gentle but also to the forward (see I Peter 2:18). Christian servants are subject to their masters for the Lord's sake. In doing this they honor the Lord.

The Christian employee who is the servant of the Lord does his work heartily. Paul tells servants in Colossians 3:24, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men." The faithful Christian servant does his work well. He uses all of his abilities and energies in the employment of his master. He does his work willingly and cheerfully and not grudgingly. Very practically that means the Christian puts in a good day of hard and faithful work. His work shines with excellence according to his abilities.

The Christian servant performs his work in righteousness and truth. He is honest in all things and above reproach. He labors in the thing which is good. Constantly he is faced with the wicked corruption and deceit of this world. He may even see the evil men of this world advancing in material prosperity and position through corruption and violence. He may find that his very working colleagues advance above him through wickedness. Though he may be tempted in his sinful nature to follow corruption for material gain he remembers that he is a servant of the Lord and therefore he resists this temptation. Though the Christian servant may properly seek for material gain upon the labors of his hands, he never pursues material gain at the expense of righteousness and truth.

The faithful employee brings honor unto his Lord. It is not his desire to be a men pleaser but rather to please his true Lord and Master. Indeed, when the Christian labors faithfully as before his Lord he bears a good testimony. The lazy and slothful servant brings great shame to his lord. Though the world often accuses the Christian and mocks him for his adherence to righteousness and truth, he faithfully labors to please his Lord in heaven. The world often persecutes the Christian, but when the Christian labors faithfully in his occupation he puts to silence the accusations of wicked men. We have many examples of this in Scripture. Consider the examples of Joseph and Daniel and Nehemiah. Though they worked in heathen courts they were a great testimony through their diligent and faithful labors as servants. History has repeatedly proven that though the world may make all kinds of accusations against Christians, they re-

main to be the best and most faithful workers.

Because the Christian in his daily occupation realizes that he does all things unto the Lord, he can find joy and satisfaction in even the most tedious and laborious of tasks. His great joy and satisfaction is in doing all of his work faithfully and righteously before the Lord.

The servant of the Lord does not make materialism his idol. It is not the great concern of his life only to get richer and richer. He knows that it is harder for a rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. He is aware of the great danger that the love of riches will lead him away from his Lord. The Christian servant is thankful when the Lord prospers him. He sees that whatever the Lord gives to him is also required of him. He stands under the solemn obligation to be a faithful steward of all which the Lord has given to him. To whom much is given much is required.

The servant of the Lord works with his hands also in order that he might have material possession to give for the support of the cause of the church and kingdom of God and for the relief of the poor. Because he knows that he is the servant of the Lord and all of his possessions are first of all the Lord's, he gives liberally and cheerfully as the Lord has prospered him.

If we are Christian masters we also have a great calling before the Lord. Though we are masters over our employees we must never imagine that we are supreme and sovereign lords who can do as they please. Christian masters are also servants of the Lord. To be a master involves a greater responsibility than a servant. Men have been entrusted to your care and oversight. This is very serious. The Christian master must show himself to be an imitator of his Lord in heaven. The servant of the Lord who is a master of men gives to them their just dessert. He pays to them a fair and just wage. He forebears threatening. He is good and kind and gentle with his servants. He is deeply sympathetic to their needs and situations in life. He honors his employees for the service they have rendered to him and never despises them. He knows that his Lord in heaven is not a respecter of persons. He realizes that before the Lord there is neither bond nor free. All God's people are brothers in Christ Jesus. God does not regard the master of this world more highly than the servant. He does not regard the great and glorious, the wealthy and the mighty of this world. For the most part His people are found among the lowly and despised of the earth. The master of this world will often find that his very servants are greater in godliness than himself, and this is occasion for humility on his part and



reason for dealing in deepest respect and love with his servants.

Whether we be servants or masters in this world we must all give an account for what we do unto our Lord in heaven. He will judge us all. Both the faithful servant and the faithful and godly master

looks unto the reward of his Lord in heaven. This motivates both employer and employee to labor with fear and trembling, doing that which is good, that they might be found pleasing in the sight of the Lord of heaven, and bringing glory to His name.

## Book Review

**COMMENTARY ON JAMES**, by Peter H. Davids; Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982; 226 pages, (cloth) \$14.95. (Reviewed by Prof. R.D. Decker)

This commentary is part of the New International Greek Testament Commentary, edited by I Howard Marshall and W. Ward Gasque. Peter Davids, Associate Professor of New Testament at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, Ambridge, Pennsylvania, is rapidly acquiring a reputation as one of the leading New Testament scholars among evangelicals. He is deserving of this in the opinion of this reviewer. This book contains an extensive bibliography and indexes as well as several charts. Obviously a great deal of research has gone into its writing.

Davids applies the hermeneutical method of Redaction Criticism to the interpretation of James. Redaction Criticism, a relatively recent school of thought, arose in connection with studies of the synoptics. More recently it has been applied to other of the books of the New Testament. This school has all but replaced Form Criticism. Redaction critics regard the writers of the New Testament as editors who gathered the materials for their particular books from various Gospel sources. The writers then wrote their books with their own specific purposes. Thus one can discern distinctive themes, messages, and emphases in the various books of the New Testament. Redaction critics, for example, speak of the "Theology of Matthew" or of "Pauline Eschatology." The various New Testament writers are considered to be independent theologians. Some redaction critics believe in some form of the doctrine of the Inspiration of Scripture by the Holy Spirit. Few believe the doctrine of plenary inspiration and an infallible Scripture as we do. Writing from this perspective Davids, in an introduction of some sixty pages, discusses the following subjects: Authorship and Date, Form and Structure, A Possible *Sitz Im Leben* (this refers to the historical circumstances, culture, etc., in which James wrote), Theology, Language and Style and Text. The rest of the book is an expository commentary on the text of James. The style is lucid. One will not always agree with

Davids' exegesis, but one will gain some fresh insights into this book of the New Testament. The book is useful for pastors, professors, seminary students, and anyone who has a working knowledge of the Greek language. Because the commentary is directly from the Greek, a knowledge of the original is a must for anyone using this commentary.

*Remember the sick  
and shut-in with a  
gift of the  
Standard Bearer.*

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Hope Protestant Reformed Congregation of Redlands, California, expresses its sympathy to our fellow Office-Bearer, Mr. Otto Gaastra, to the widow, Mrs. Sue Gaastra, and to the Gaastra family in the death of their father, grandfather, and husband, MR. MEINDERT GAASTRA, who was taken by his Lord on June 16, 1984.

"But now they desire a better country, that is, a Heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be their God, for He hath prepared for them a city." (Hebrews 11:16)

Rev. V. Koole, Pres.  
Larry Huisken, Vice-All

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 11, 1984, the Lord willing, our beloved parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, OTTO AND CORNELIA VANDER WOUDE will celebrate their 66th 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.

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

Their children  
William and Florence Corson  
Eugene and Margaret Byker  
John and Arlene Vander Woude

1 son-in-law  
Tom and Angie Redder  
13 grandchildren  
13 great grandchildren



**NOTICE!!!**

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet on September 5, 1984 in Doon, Iowa, at 8:30 A.M. Delegate in need of lodging or of transportation from the airport should notify the Clerk of the Doon Consistory.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

On September 10, 1984, the Lord willing, our parents, MR. & MRS. HENRY W. KUIPER will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. We have been greatly blessed through the years by their Godly rearing and instruction. We pray that they will experience God's nearness and guidance as they continue on this earthly journey together.

"O continue Thy lovingkindness unto them that know Thee; and Thy righteousness to the upright in heart." (Psalm 36:10)

Henry and Teresa Kuiper  
Keith and Wanda Bruinsma  
Brian, Greg and Sheila  
Barbara Kuiper  
Daniel Kuiper

Henry Buiter and Judith Kuiper  
Christine Kuiper  
Karla Kuiper  
Dolores Kuiper  
Mary Kuiper

**IN MEMORIUM**

Priscilla Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, mourns the sudden loss of a loved, faithful and active member, MRS. GERALDINE MEYER, whom the Lord took to her Heavenly Home on August 3, 1984. Her presence will be sorely missed by us all.

We extend our sincere Christian sympathy to her family and pray that the Lord will sustain them in their time of sorrow.

"I have the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope." (Psalm 16:8, 9)

Mrs. Ryven Ezinga, President  
Miss Elaine Rietema, Secretary

**OPEN HOUSE**

September 7, 1984, marks the 50th anniversary of Rev. George Lubbers' work both as minister of the gospel in our Protestant Reformed Churches and as our domestic missionary in the States and in Jamaica.

The Council of First Church (Grand Rapids, MI) hereby expresses our thanks to God for His gift to our Protestant Reformed Churches in the faithful labors of Rev. Lubbers and his wife. We express our congratulations and best wishes to both of them for their unselfish devotion to the service of our God as represented in our Protestant Reformed Churches. Their lives have testified of the truth found in I Cor. 9:14: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

The afternoon of Saturday, September 15, from 2 to 5 P.M., has been set aside at First Church as an Open House for Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers. Come and reminisce with the Lubbers over the eventful 50 years of their labors.

The Consistory of First Church  
of Grand Rapids, MI

**RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Congregation and Council of SouthEast Protestant Reformed Church extends its Christian sympathy to our brother and fellow office-bearer, Deacon Marvin Mastbergen and his family, in the death of his father, MR. JOHN MASTBERGEN, age 80, on July 14, 1984.

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

Rev. Carl Haak, Pres.  
Marlow Kuiper, Clerk

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

On August 26, 1984, our dear parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. ROBERT PASTOOR, celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to them and to our faithful heavenly Father for the years of dedicated instruction, guidance and love which they have given and continue to give us. We pray that the Lord may richly bless them in the years which lie ahead.

Doug and Joanne Pastoor  
Nicole  
Jim and Jane Pastoor  
David

Dan and Lori Pastoor  
Bradley, Nathan  
Larry and Pam Van Putten  
Steve Pastoor  
Tom Pastoor

**NOTICE!!!**

The Consistory of the Lynden Protestant Church hereby announces that Rev. D. Kuiper is eligible for a call in our churches. We recommend the brother to be considered for service in our denomination.

The Consistory of the Lynden  
Protestant Reformed Church  
D. Scheele, Clerk

**RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Men's Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church extends its Christian sympathy to Mr. Hilbert Kuiper on account of the death of his brother, MR. JOHN KUIPER.

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

Henry A. Bergman, Sec'y.

**NOTICE!!!****NOW AVAILABLE!!!**

A new pamphlet entitled *WOMEN IN CHURCH OFFICE*, by Rev. Ron Cammenga, is now available. These pamphlets are free of charge and can be obtained by writing to: Hull Protestant Reformed Church, 1204 - 3rd Street, Hull, Iowa 51239.

**NOTICE!!!****ATTENTION ALL THOSE WHO RECEIVE AND ARE INTERESTED IN THE STANDARD BEARER**

This is the 60th year that the Lord has given us as Protestant Reformed Churches the blessed privilege to sound forth His glorious truth in THE STANDARD BEARER. We would like to commemorate this occasion with a special night of praise to our Covenant God and Father. Prof. H.C. Hoeksema will be giving a speech entitled — "150 YEARS AND 60" in the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church on the evening of September 27, 1984, at 8 P.M. After the program there will be refreshments. Be sure to reserve this night!

James Koole  
R.F.P.A. Board Sec'y.

**NOTICE!!!****ATTENTION ALL R.F.P.A. SOCIETY MEMBERS!!!**

The Annual Meeting of THE STANDARD BEARER PUBLISHING SOCIETY will be held, the Lord willing, on September 20, 1984, at the SouthWest Protestant Reformed Church at 8 P.M. Our speaker will be Prof. Robert Decker. We urge all those who are members and all who would like to become members to be there.

The following men are up for nomination: John Cleveland, Jonathan Engelsma, Peter Faber, John De Vries, Henry Kamps and John Kalsbeek, Jr. From these six men three are to be chosen.

James Koole  
R.F.P.A. Board Sec'y.



## News From Our Churches

August 14, 1984

Candidate Ken Hanko has accepted the call as missionary to Blue Bell, Pennsylvania. We thank God that He has verified the calling of Candidate Hanko to be a minister in our Protestant Reformed Churches. Rev. Ron Hanko has declined the call to Loveland Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. David Engelsma has also declined the call to Faith Protestant Reformed Church and to Lynden Protestant Reformed Church. I would think that Candidate Hanko will be examined by Classis East, September 12, at Holland P.R. Church. His new address is: 17 Miami Rd., Norristown, PA 19046.

Rev. and Mrs. Ronald Van Overloop and family have moved from Birmingham, Alabama to the Chicago, Illinois area. Their new address is: 1047 Florida Lane, Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007. Telephone number 312-529-4676.

Rev. Bruinsma is waiting on the processing of papers for a work permit. A house has been found, and leasing arrangements are being worked out. The house is located on the Coast Rd. between Ferris Cross and Cave, in excellent proximity to our churches. Rev. Bruinsma will be teaching the students and ministers at his home which is set on eight acres of land. The Bruinsmas are planning to educate their children at home. A vehicle will be shipped to Jamaica for Rev. Bruinsma's use. While he waits, Rev. Bruinsma and also Rev. Joostens will be preparing educational materials for use in Jamaica.

Rev. Arie and Sherry den Hartog wrote in a June 26 letter, "We are quite anxious about beginning our second congregation at Blair Road. The actual worship services there however will not start till at least the end of the year. We expect that it will take quite some time to get authorization from the government to hold worship services there. Before that, we cannot do any of the renovation work either because the way the place is renovated will depend on what we can get approved. We expect all of this will take to the end of the year.

"The church here is still a young church in a pagan society and there are just so many issues that arise which must be answered on the basis of the Word of God through careful study and discussion, (e.g.), how to deal with students that go abroad to study . . . proper procedure of discipline in the church . . . separation stand in the church and our

relationship with other churches in Singapore . . . and admissions to the Lord's Supper."

In September, 1983, an association of Presbyterians in Northern Ireland (Association for Christian Education in Ireland — ACEI) began the first parental Christian School in Northern Ireland — Covenant Christian School of Newtownabbey. Since then, Deane Wassink has agreed to teach one year at this school, teaching six or seven grades with the help of another teacher provided by ACEI. There are opportunities to spread the witness concerning Christian schools among Reformed and Presbyterian people who do not yet see the need for Christian schools in Northern Ireland. Deane and his family will leave today, D.V. So far, half of the amount needed to send Mr. and Mrs. Wassink and their family to Northern Ireland has been collected. If this cause of God's covenant commends itself to you and you are willing to give, make your check payable to South Holland Protestant Reformed Church (Fund for Reformed Education in Ulster) and send it to Mr. Jack Lenting, 17014 Wausau Ave., South Holland, IL 60473.

The congregation of First Church in Grand Rapids will probably be staying at Fuller and Franklin at least until the end of August and probably longer. They are hoping to break ground around the middle of September.

The Convocation of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches, will convene at Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, Hudsonville, Michigan, Wednesday, September 5, at 8:00 P.M. Prof. H. Hanko is to deliver the convocation address.

Rev. Kortering's address in the Acts and Yearbook of Synod is incorrect in three places. Make the following correction on pages 125, 129, and 136: change 3112 Calvin Ct. to 3212 Calvin Ct. If you use the wrong address the mail will probably be sent back to you. If there are any more corrections to be made please notify me.

The Reformed Witness Hour has caught up in the mailing of its sermon booklets. The Radio Committee still covets your prayers and support. The new Church Order book can be purchased from the Seminary Bookstore, 4949 Ivanrest Ave., S.W., Grandville, MI 49418. The cost for the book plus charges for shipping and handling is \$6.50. DH