

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

... For unto us a Child is born! Unto us a Son  
is given! His Name is Wonderful Counsellor!  
The Mighty God! The Everlasting Father!  
The Prince of Peace!

Let Zion now rejoice, and all her children  
sing!

For He has come! And He will surely  
come again before very long!

To our salvation!

See "The Birth of the Man-Child"

— page 122

## CONTENTS

Meditation —	
The Birth of the Man-Child . . . . .	122
Editor's Notes . . . . .	125
Correspondence and Reply —	
About Partaking of the Lord's Supper . . . . .	125
The Spirit's Prayer for the Saints . . . . .	126
Book Review —	
The Reformation of 1834 . . . . .	128
The Day of Shadows —	
An Initial Victory . . . . .	129
All Around Us —	
"How Shall We Disagree?" . . . . .	131
Creation and Geology . . . . .	133
Bible Study Guide —	
III John — Christian Hospitality . . . . .	134
Faith of Our Fathers —	
The Nicene Creed . . . . .	135
Guided Into All Truth —	
The Legacy of Wyclif: A Trail of Martyrdom . . . . .	138
The Strength of Youth —	
The Christian and Work . . . . .	140
Book Reviews . . . . .	142
News From Our Churches . . . . .	143

## THE STANDARD BEARER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## MEDITATION

## The Birth of the Man-Child

Rev. C. Hanko

*A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompence to His enemies.*

*Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child.*

*Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.*

Isaiah 66:6-8



A voice!

A voice from the Holy City, proceeding from the temple!

The voice of Jehovah declaring glad tidings, as a call to worship, even while it struck fear in the hearts of God's enemies, like rumblings of thunder!

Hear the word of the Lord!

All ye who tremble in reverence at His word!

In prophetic vision Isaiah hears the voice, and sees people streaming from all directions toward Jerusalem and the temple to discover the occasion for this amazing voice.

What they see exceeds their fondest imagination.

A woman, whose name is Zion, sits in the temple, and there, suddenly, unexpectedly gives birth to a Man-child. A Baby Boy!

Before anyone can comprehend the wonder of this amazing birth, another child is born, and another, and still another, until a whole nation is born, the land is covered with them!

Before the wondering eyes of the onlookers one wonder follows upon another in rapid succession!

Who has ever heard or seen the like of it?!

Wonder of wonders! A Man-child is born!

This Man-child is brought to birth by Zion, the church of the old dispensation!

God has chosen Zion as His people, His peculiar possession. He took up residence among them in the most holy place, the House of God. There He bestowed His blessing. There He proclaimed the glad tidings of His promise: A virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, Whose name shall be called Immanuel, God with us!

The true, spiritual Israel embraced that promise as their only comfort in life and death, for body and soul. At their altars they confessed their sins and prayed for forgiveness, even for a right to eternal life obtained only by the perfect sacrifice still to come. As they worshipped in the temple their hopes reached out for the day of the Messiah still to come. They died, not having obtained the promise, but having seen it afar off.

Although carnal Israel had taken possession of God's heritage and mocked at the cherished hope of the believers, though the weary night seemed to drag on endlessly, the true people of God still clung tenaciously to God's Word, which could never fail. Their prayers continued to ascend to heaven: "O! that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down to us!" "Rise, help and redeem us, Thy mercy we trust."

And now it came to pass, as in a moment of time,

before the eager gaze of the prophet.

He saw it afar off. But he saw it! It would surely come to pass! And it did! In the fulness of time our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary!

We can never fathom the wonder of the virgin birth!

Before she travailed, she brought forth. Before her pain came, she was delivered of a Man-child!

Not as if Mary experienced a painless delivery. The emphasis falls on the wonder of Jesus' birth. We were not co-workers with God in bringing forth the promised Seed. We added nothing. God sent His only begotten Son into the world, born of a virgin. Honesty requires that we confess that if this birth in any way depended on us, it would never have happened. We did all we could to prevent it. Jesus was born out of the dead root of David, as life from the dead. He was the Holy One, by a wonder of grace brought forth from an unholy, sinful ancestry.

Zion, the true spiritual Israel according to the election of grace brought forth the Savior.

God remembered His covenant. Suddenly, unexpectedly, in spite of all the powers of darkness to prevent it, the Savior was born.

The wonders only increase!

This Man-child is Himself the Voice of Jehovah!

The Son of God, Who calls the things that are not as though they were, formed His human nature in the womb of Mary and came into this world as truly God and completely man. The God of our salvation took on the form of a servant and humbled Himself under His own wrath unto the accursed death of the cross. Powerfully He proclaimed Himself to be the promised Messiah, both by preaching with divine authority and performing miracles which only God could perform. He took upon Himself our sickness and diseases, along with the wrath of evil men, fulfilling His earthly ministry by His complete self-surrender to the anguish of hellish torments, to atone for our sins and to merit for us eternal life. He conquered over sin, death, hell, and the grave, and marched triumphantly through death into highest glory and power at the Father's right hand in the heavens.

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself!

Who has ever heard the like of this?

Yet the wonders never cease!

To his utter amazement the prophet Isaiah sees another baby born, and another, and still another, until a nation is born, the earth is filled, even to its utmost bounds. A new day has dawned. The ful-



ness of time has come. In a moment, in a comparatively short time the Savior has come, has accomplished His earthly task, and is gone into glory, to pour out His Spirit into the church. In a single day, on the day of Pentecost, the church of one hundred and twenty souls was increased by three thousand. Soon another two thousand are added, and then still more, ever increasing, as the church of the new dispensation spreads to the ends of the earth and to the islands of the sea. There is no stopping this voice of Jehovah! He Who has begun a good work will surely finish it, even until the last elect is gathered in. Christ is the Firstfruits of an abundant harvest of redeemed saints!

Let the nations tremble!

The voice of Jehovah, the Lord of all glory, rolls over the waters, the thunders awake!

There were those in the days of Isaiah, and especially afterward, who mocked, saying, Where is the day of Messiah's coming? All things remain as they have been from the beginning. Besides, who is so foolish as to believe that God will send a Savior? Why should we need a Savior? For the people of the Lord are we; our salvation is secure in ourselves. No, these were no foreigners among Israel. These were people who professed to be extremely pious, outstanding saints! At the time when this prophecy reached its fulfillment they were the proud, aristocratic Sadducees and the self-sufficient, self-righteous Pharisees, who were willing instruments of Satan to prevent the coming of the Savior, even as we have so many in our day.

They regarded with scorn those ignorant souls who still clung to the vain dream of former generations. They mocked with those who spoke of the glorious day of the revelation of the God of our salvation, when the Savior would come to make all things new.

Sneeringly they said, Let God be glorified! It cannot, it will never happen!

They also hear the voice of Jehovah proceeding from the temple, rumbling through Jerusalem, like the thundering roar of the judgment to come. They cannot escape it. Although they refused to believe the reports of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, they soon met Him in person in the Holy City. They tried to silence His voice with their violent opposition, even to the extent that they condemned Him to death as accursed of God and of men. Yet the reports continued. The voice of Jehovah spoke as the Son of man arose from the dead. This voice continued to speak through Jesus' apostles. It continues still, in spite of every effort to deny the authority of the Scriptures, in spite of all the wicked efforts to deny the wonders of salvation wrought by Jehovah, our faithful covenant God!

It is the voice of God's righteous judgment!

It is the voice of Jehovah, majestic and mighty!

It will continue until time shall be no more!

Hear the Word of the Lord! All ye that tremble at His word!

They that feared the Lord and trusted in His word had waited long for its fulfillment.

They had spoken of it repeatedly one with another. They encouraged one another to continue in the faith, never to give up their hopes and prayers for the birth of the Savior. They taught their children to live in that hope. They still testified of it on their deathbeds.

And the Lord heard. He kept before Him a book of remembrance, in which their names were written as His precious jewels. With them He kept covenant! (Malachi 3:16, 17)

Among them were the pious Zacharias and his God-fearing wife Elisabeth, Joseph and Mary from despised Nazareth, Simeon and Anna, who longed to be delivered from this vale of tears, yet could not until the promise was fulfilled. There were the humble shepherds, who never ceased speaking of their hope as they watched their flocks throughout the long, weary night. And there were the wise men, our gentile representatives, in whom had been aroused the desire to see the promised King.

They heard the voice! The voice of Jehovah speaking within them.

They saw the fulfillment of God's promises!

With them we also rejoice today! For unto us a Child is born! Unto us a Son is given! His Name is Wonderful Counsellor! The Mighty God! The Everlasting Father! The Prince of Peace!

Let Zion now rejoice, and all her children sing!

For He has come! And He will surely come again before very long!

To our salvation!

*The Standard Bearer  
makes a thoughtful  
gift for the  
sick & shut-ins.*



## Editor's Notes

In the expectation that this issue will reach at least most of our readers before the holidays, we take this opportunity to wish you a joyous Christmas and a blessed New Year.

\* \* \* \* \*

The usual space of the Editorial department in this issue is more than used up by my holdover article from the December 1 special issue, "The Spirit's Prayer For The Saints," and by "Correspondence and Reply."

\* \* \* \* \*

Undoubtedly many of our readers are eager to know something about the visit of Rev. D. Engelsma and Prof. H. Hanko in behalf of our

churches to various churches and individuals in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and England. In our January 1 issue we will be carrying a report. Having heard an oral report from Prof. Hanko at school, I can promise you this will be a very interesting report.

\* \* \* \* \*

Anyone looking for a place to bestow a last-minute worthwhile Christmas gift? Here is an unofficial hint. The seminary is in sore need of a new or good used piano. The ancient instrument we now have in our assembly room is, I'm sure, more out of tune than the voices which are lifted up in joyful song there.

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## CORRESPONDENCE AND REPLY

### About Partaking of the Lord's Supper

*Prof. H.C. Hoeksema*

From a reader in Holland, Michigan I received the following letter, placement of which was delayed somewhat because of our special issue:

"Dear Prof. Hoeksema,

"While not a member of the PRC, I do subscribe to the *Standard Bearer*. I read your magazine from cover to cover with interest, though not always in agreement.

"I would like to comment on your editorial in the Nov. 1 issue. Having traveled considerably in the past, I have been invited and accepted communion with brothers and sisters from a number of denominations. To me these have been times of blessing. I fully expect to commune with these saints in our eternal home.

"My question is? why not now?

"Yours in Christ,

(w.s.) Harv Nyhof"

#### *Reply*

Thank-you for your letter, and for your expressed interest in our magazine.

Your comment on my editorial, "About Guests At Communion," is really not on the subject with which the editorial dealt, but on a related subject. The editorial, or rather, the classical decision which the editorial quoted as a matter of information, really deals with the subject of the consistory's duty with respect to *supervising* the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It deals with so-called close (not closed) communion — sometimes referred to as the "fencing of the table." This practice is, of course, fully in harmony with our Reformed confessions (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 30; Confession of Faith, Art. 35; and Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper). Actually, the decision quoted deals with *defining* this duty of the consistory to supervise participation in the Lord's Supper. Your



comment, on the other hand, deals with the subject of the individual believer's *participation* in the Lord's Supper in churches other than the one in which he is a member. I think the presupposition of your letter is that the two are related; and that is correct.

In reply, therefore, the following comments:

1. If you hold to the Reformed position of close communion, it seems to me that for a Reformed believer it follows that you cannot simply indiscriminately partake of the Lord's Supper wherever and by whomever it is celebrated in denominations other than your own. If you do this, it is tantamount to holding to close communion at home, but open communion away from home. This would hardly be consistent.

2. This, it seems to me, would immediately rule out the possibility of joining in the celebration of the Lord's Supper in churches where there is open, unsupervised communion. I have been in churches — and perhaps you have, too — where the minister simply announces, "All those who love the Lord Jesus Christ are invited to partake of the Lord's Supper."

3. It would also exclude partaking of the Lord's Supper in churches which hold a fundamentally different view of the supper, for example, Roman Catholic transubstantiation or Lutheran consubstantiation.

4. In general, I would say that the very same principles mentioned in my editorial must be adhered to by the individual believer, though now, of course, applied by the individual to the concrete instance at hand.

5. The standard which you suggest when you write, "I fully expect to commune with these saints in our eternal home . . . Why not now?" cannot very well be applied, of course. And the reason, it seems to me, is obvious: in our eternal home all that now separates us will be forever done away, and we shall be perfectly one church in our Lord Jesus Christ. Here and now, however, that is not the case. And therefore, here and now we are called upon to exercise our Christian discernment and discretion with respect to our way and walk as members of Christ's church in the midst of the world, even as the church is called upon to keep the table of the Lord from being profaned.

## The Spirit's Prayer for the Saints

*Prof. H.C. Hoeksema*

This aspect of prayer, related to our prayers, comes to the fore in Romans 8:26, 27: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." What is this intercessory prayer of the Spirit? How and when does it take place? Why is it needed? What is its benefit? These and other questions arise in connection with this mysterious intercession.

We may notice, first of all, that this is the third groan mentioned in Romans 8. The first is the groan, or sigh, of the creature, vss. 19-22. The sec-

ond is that of the children of God themselves, vss. 23-25. The third is the "groanings that cannot be uttered." All three are related to the glory that shall be revealed in us, the manifestation of the sons of God, the adoption, the redemption of our body. For this the whole creation earnestly waits and groans in the bondage of corruption. For it we hope and wait with patience, groaning because of our present bodies. And with a view to it the Spirit prays for us with unutterable sighs.

The word "likewise" joins vss. 26 and 27 to the immediately preceding passage. Hence, if we hope for that we see not, then we wait for it with patience; and then the Spirit helps our infirmity by praying for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. For in waiting we are often weak; we do not



have and we do not exercise the necessary patience. But the Spirit by His intercessory prayer comes to our aid, so that the result of this intercession is that we are strengthened in our patience.

The author and subject of this prayer of which the apostle speaks is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit helpeth our infirmities. The Spirit makes intercession for us, prays, with unutterable groanings. The Spirit makes this intercession for us according to the will of God. But it is the Spirit *as He dwells in the church and in the hearts of believers* Who makes this intercession. That Spirit was given unto our Lord Jesus Christ without measure at His exaltation. He dwells in Christ, first of all, as the Head. That Spirit was poured out in the church on the day of Pentecost, in order to dwell with and in the church, the body of Christ, forever. Hence, He dwells in us as the members of Christ's body. And it is from and in our hearts that He prays and makes the intercession referred to in these verses.

The question is: how?

Is this a prayer of the Spirit which He works in our hearts and which He therefore prays *through* us? Or is it a prayer by the indwelling Spirit Himself and *for* us, but without our being definitely conscious of it? Undoubtedly the text refers to the latter. This is a prayer of the Spirit Himself in our behalf, but without our being definitely aware of it. That this is correct is plain, first of all, from the fact that the text plainly refers to something special. All of *our* true prayers are wrought in us and through us by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore it would not be anything special that this should be mentioned in this connection. However, plainly the apostle is here referring to something special; he makes a point of mentioning it and refers to it as one of the three groans. Secondly, we may note that the text plainly speaks of "intercession." But intercession in the nature of the case cannot very well be something *by* us; in the nature of the case this intercession of the Spirit is *for* us, *in our behalf*. And, in the third place, we must note that the text speaks of "groanings which *cannot be uttered*." These groanings only reveal themselves in our sighing. They are not articulate as far as we are concerned. They are not in the form of a consciously uttered prayer, that is, as far as the *saints* are concerned.

Hence, this intercession of the Spirit is distinct, on the one hand, from Christ's intercessory prayer in our behalf. Scripture also speaks of this. But this intercession is distinct. Christ's intercession is in heaven; this intercession is from our hearts. But, on the other hand, this intercession is also distinct from our own prayers. The latter are by the Spirit *through* us. This is an intercession of the Spirit *for* us

and *without* us.

This intercession of the Spirit is *perfect*. We may note in this connection that He prays *for saints*. In the original we do not read "for the saints," but simply, "for saints." The effect of this is that it impresses us with the fact that the Spirit prays for no one else: only for *saints*. And He prays for them *as saints*, in their capacity of saints. This is significant. It means that in His intercession in their behalf He always looks at them from that spiritual point of view: they are *saints*. And He prays accordingly.

Further, the perfection of His intercession lies in the fact that He always knows. This is evident from the implied contrast: "we know not what we should pray for as we ought, *but* the Spirit maketh intercession . . . ." This means that He is perfectly and in detail acquainted with all our real needs as saints. And He prays accordingly, through Christ, to our Father. And when the Spirit makes intercession, He does so "according to God." The KJV inserts the words "the will of," but these do not occur in the original. This expression, "according to God," certainly implies that He prays according to God's will, which He knows perfectly; but it is richer. The meaning is that the Spirit makes intercession so that God may be glorified in His saints, and prays so that His good pleasure may be realized.

Thus "the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." Not the infirmities and imperfections of our prayers are meant, though it is perfectly true in itself that there are such infirmities. This is not what the apostle has in mind. It is our infirmities with a view to the suffering of this present time (vs. 18) that are meant. This is the connection. We hope for that which we see not. And while we so hope, we suffer with Christ as far as the things that are seen are concerned. And this suffering requires *patience*. But in this we are often weak: weak because of our sinful nature, and weak because we are still earthy and cling to the things that are seen, and weak because of our limited understanding of the ways of God, so that things often appear to us to be all wrong and to go in the wrong direction. In this infirmity the Spirit helps, so that the fruit of this intercession for us is the experience of a greater patience in the midst of the sufferings of this present time. Because of this help, there is on our part a stronger concentration of our heart on the invisible object of our hope. There is a firmer confidence that all things work together for good to them that love God. There is more spiritual power to commit our way unto God. And there is in us a great calm and the peace that passeth all understanding, even in the midst of the sufferings of this present time.

It is in this same connection that the passage



mentions our limited knowledge: "we know not what we should pray for as we ought." We ought to pray always for what tends to the glory of God in Christ. And we ought to pray always for our true good and for the good of God's cause in the world. But we do not do this because we do not know whether the one thing or the other is good. This is not because we do not know in general what is God's counsel. We do, indeed; and we have no difficulty as long as we pray only for and in harmony with the general line of that will of God. But we fail to understand the details of God's counsel. They belong to the secret things which God did not reveal to us. What place am I to occupy in glory? Just how must my way in this present time lead me to that place? And how are my place and my way related to the way and the place of all other things and the way of the church as a whole in this world? And how are all of these related to the sufferings of this present time, the sufferings with Christ and for His sake? These things we know not. And the result is that we could often pray for things that are not good for us: not necessarily for carnal and temporal things, but even for the things of the kingdom of God. Thus, for example, the apostle Paul himself prayed repeatedly to be delivered from his thorn in the flesh. But the Spirit prays for the direct opposite, and He always prays (for He knows!) for that which is good and in harmony with the will of God. He prays for grace that we may be patient when God's way is different from our way and when God's way for us is difficult and difficult to understand. And thus He helps our infirmities.

His prayer is surely heard: for it is a perfect intercession. He makes intercession for us "according to God." We would often pray according to man, according to our own insight, according to the desires of the moment. And then the Spirit from within the depths of our heart prays according to God. Moreover, He prays for saints. Of course, all prayer to God is for the benefit of the saints as such. But when we pray according to man, we do not pray for the real needs of the saints. The Spirit does! He prays for the saints and their true and eternal well-being. And we are conscious of this prayer of the Spirit only by speechless sighing.

It is heard because God distinguishes. He is the One Who searches the hearts, meaning that God from moment to moment knows all that is in our hearts. And He knows the mind of the Spirit. He knows it also in distinction from our mind and our prayers. He knows that mind of the Spirit as the interceding Spirit, the mind of the Spirit with respect to our needs. And this mind and prayer of the spirit He fulfills.

What a comfort to know that God is constantly acquainting Himself with the true needs of His saints — through Christ Who prays for us, and by the Spirit Who dwells within us. And He fulfills all our needs — even when we do not know what we should pray for. We may know that we receive just what is necessary to lead us to eternal glory. And we may wait for it with that patience that is able to say, "Thy grace is sufficient for me!"

## BOOK REVIEW

# The Reformation of 1834

**THE REFORMATION OF 1834**, Faculty of Mid-America Seminary; Mid-America Reformed Seminary Bookstore, Orange City, Iowa; 85 pp. (paper), \$5.00 U.S., \$6.00 Can. [Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema]

This little book is a contribution by several writers (members of the MARS faculty) to fill the lack of English-language materials about the Secession of 1834. It is certainly true, as the Preface

observes, that "all primary and the best secondary sources which tell this story are found only in the Dutch language."

To a degree the book is also a successful attempt. The first two chapters, written by Dr. P.Y. De Jong, are very helpful when it comes to the history of the *Afscheiding*; and they are for the most part accurate.

The remaining chapters of the book are of varying quality and accuracy, in my opinion. Nelson



Kloosterman not only misses the boat as far as the doctrinal significance of the Secession is concerned, but he also appears to me to show a Liberated bias. And he certainly fails to show, p. 40, that Simon Van Velzen taught a general, well-meant offer of grace to all sinners. What Van Velzen teaches in the paragraph quoted is nothing else than the general proclamation of a particular promise. Henry Vander Kam certainly goes far beyond his subject in Chapter 4, "The expanding influence of the Secession." Besides, I greatly question the accuracy of his presentation of the split in the Dutch church-

es which was occasioned by the decisions of the Synod of Sneek-Utrecht, 1942-44.

A fundamental question which the book fails to address is the question where the heritage of the Secession is to be found today. Does their own denomination, the CRC, still possess it? The book appears to put several denominations, including the PRC, on a more or less equal footing today. Such a presentation is, of course, impossible.

In spite of these criticisms, I nevertheless recommend the book, chiefly because of its historical section, provided it be read with discernment.

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

### An Initial Victory

*Rev. John A. Heys*

A most crucial moment had come.

Esther, a Jewess, must come to stand before the Gentile king who had sealed the decree that all the Jews in his vast realm must be put to death. And there she must plead for the lives of her people while placing her own life in the danger of a swifter death. Nominally, indeed, this king was her husband and a man who did not know that she was of that race which he had ordered exterminated. But a mighty poor husband he was. For thirty days he had not found need for her fellowship and companionship. God had made the woman to be an help meet, that is, fit, suitable for man. Yet, even though she was in the same house with him, he had not called for her, and, we may believe, had not spoken to her all that time.

It is true that especially in those days kings had much on their minds. It is also true that in those days as well as today political leaders needed protection, and that they should have been spared trivialities, so that they could concentrate on the more important matters of ruling the nation. And "all the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put to death, except to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live" (Esther

4:11). But must this then include the king's wife? Must the one who as wife has been designed by God to be an help meet for the king be included in this law? Undoubtedly, for the king did hold out the sceptre to her to spare her life. He would not have done this if she were not included. She who should have been closest to him to encourage, comfort, and support him would be put to death, if she entered his presence in the inner court without being called by him. Esther did not have fear for nothing. She knew that she was included; and the king showed that she was no exception. And the distance which he held for the last thirty days gave her reason to fear that the sceptre would not be extended.

Let us not forget — and you may be sure that Esther did not forget — that this king had divorced a most beautiful wife not too many years before this. Do not overlook the fact also that, even if he did hold out the sceptre, she had to reveal to the king her own deception. In faithfulness to Mordecai's command she had not made her people and kindred known to the king. But now she will have to do that. Obtaining the sceptre — and with it life — is only part of the picture. She must not only expose her deception, she must drive a wedge between the king and a man closer to the king than she was, namely, Haman. You may be sure that in the



thirty days wherein he did not call for her, he did call for his right-hand man in the government.

But before we go on, let us not overlook the truth which the rest of Scripture reveals to us. We can at times be poor husbands and poor wives. We have our flesh and with it our failings. But the gospel in the Scriptures is that as the bride of Christ we have such a faithful Husband. We may not have Him in all our thoughts. We may be able to go for thirty days and not step inside His church to fellowship with Him in the preaching of the Word, while on a vacation. To be in His presence in His house on the Sabbath for an hour may be so boring that we keep looking at the clock or our watches to see how soon we can be relieved. We can put everything before meeting Him. The cold we have on the Sabbath, and that keeps us away from meeting Him and joining the other saints in singing His praises, may be worse on Monday. But we will go to work for that precious dollar.

And yet we have an Husband who never has us out of His thoughts. He never slumbers or sleeps, and His great, unchangeable love will not allow Him to forget us for one split-second. And He has no sceptre to frighten us. Constantly He is calling to us, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). He is never too preoccupied. And "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). And, yes, even as Esther had walked in deception before Ahasuerus, we have walked in gross sins before our King and Husband. But He opened a way for us to come to Him. Go to Him by way of His cross. He has extended the sceptre already. It is pointed at all whose names are in His book of life. And He does call to us both externally in the preaching and internally by His Spirit. We need not fear approaching Him in prayer for our lives. And He is never too busy, even though He rules the whole creation from God's right hand. What is more, we have His promise that He will come to us, and come with full salvation and in all His glory to glorify us.

In a sense that never entered into the mind of Mordecai, it is true that enlargement will come from another place, and that deliverance is sure. That place is heaven, and it is heaven in a figurative sense. That place is first of all the cross from whence true enlargement and deliverance comes. When we are burdened with the load of guilt, and the enormity of our sins presses down upon us and takes our breath away, the place to which we look is Golgotha, the altar on which the Lamb of God was sacrificed for our sins. But He is now in heaven, and we look to Him at God's right hand. And when we say "from heaven" we figuratively

speak of Him Who sits at God's right hand in the highest heaven.

Psalm 121:1, 2 makes that so very clear. We read, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." Plainly, enlargement and deliverance come from Him Who sits on those two hills that in Jerusalem were so significant. Christ it is Who symbolically sits on the throne on Mt. Zion; and David was only the type of Christ. Christ it is Who is the Highpriest on Mt. Moriah where the tabernacle, and later the temple stood. In Him as our King, as our Highpriest, and as the Lamb sacrificed on God's altar for all our sins, we have true, lasting enlargement and deliverance. And we do look to those hills, because we look to Him Who works for us from those heavenly heights.

Colossians 3:1, 2 express the same idea. We are to seek the things which are above where Christ sitteth at God's right hand. We are to set our affections on things in that heavenly place. There the storehouse of all of salvation's blessings is. And out of it we get daily our enlargement and deliverance. Therefore also we read in Revelation 21:1, 2 that the holy city, the new Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven. Indeed, enlargement and deliverance come from another place. But then it is another place than the one that Mordecai considered as a possible source of help.

But to return to Esther and her fleshly attempts to effect enlargement and deliverance, she came not to the king in love. It was not that she missed him so much these thirty days that she just had to go and see him. It was not loneliness, for she opposed Mordecai's suggestion. Loneliness, love for the king would have been set on fire by Mordecai's suggestion and given her added excuse for rushing into his presence. Besides, she never married him for love. And there is no suggestion that she missed him. Her revelation that he had not called for her in thirty days was only to let Mordecai know how dangerous it was to go to see the king when not called by him to do so.

It is also interesting to note how deliberate Esther was, and how clever she was to take little steps and do all that she could to insure success. Men were in that day far more deliberate than we are today. They were not slaves of time, and they lived at a much slower pace than we do today. There can be no doubt about it that she had help within the palace itself. For note that she comes before the king wearing the *royal* apparel. Now this was not merely to harmonize fully with the fact that "the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house." She surely did blend in beautifully with the sur-



roundings. She fit perfectly into the picture.

But there is more behind her clever approach. Remember that when the king wanted Vashti to appear before him and his princes, he ordered his seven chamberlains to bring her out with the royal crown. This identified her as his wife, his prize possession. This tickled his vanity and fed his pride. And Esther came thus, either in remembrance of this fact, or more likely as informed of it by Hegai, keeper of the women in whose eyes "she obtained kindness" (Esther 2:8, 9). She was "preferred" by him unto the best place of the house of the women. And now that she had been chosen and was the queen his admiration of her did not diminish.

O she was clever, devilishly clever, and during the three days between her words of fatalism to Mordecai and the day she appeared before the king, she had done some serious thinking and planning. When then I say that she was devilishly clever I do not mean that Satan was using her and suggesting to her this crafty way. There is nothing he wanted less than the sparing of the Jews. He is no fool, and he knew and did not forget God's promises to Abraham's seed, or that mother promise of a seed of the woman — now narrowed down to Abraham's seed — that would some day crush his head. Do not forget that we have a clever, crafty enemy who remembers a whole lot more than we do and listens sometimes far more carefully to what God says than we do. He is not swayed by gold and silver and earthly treasures and pleasures the way we are. His

goal is to destroy the church and keep that seed of the woman from being born. He worked in Haman to get the death sentence. He would not now work to have it undone.

No, when I say that she was devilishly clever I mean that, being under Satan's power because she too was fallen in Adam, her wicked flesh became clever in sin. She employs the same cleverness that the devil used to get Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit in paradise. She behaves as he does, and in that sense exercises a devilishly clever approach to the problem. She does not go to God. She follows Satan.

We must not try to escape our guilt by blaming the devil for the specific sin which we committed at the moment. It is true that all of our sins stem forth from his victory over Adam, so that we all get a corrupt nature the moment of our conception. We are, as the Confession states it, infected with an hereditary spiritual disease at conception. But we must not blame the devil for our sins. So often we sin when he and his cohorts are miles away. It is not always a case of sinning because of a temptation or devilish pressure upon us.

But Esther succeeds. She has initial success and victory. Not, however, because she is so clever. She has this initial victory and complete success, as we will see, the Lord willing, in subsequent contributions to these pages, because enlargement and deliverance come out of heaven, the last place where she and Mordecai would look for it.

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## ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

# "How Shall We Disagree?"

The *Banner*, November 19, 1984, contains two letters in "Voices" which express grave reservations about the decision of the Reformed Fellowship in Northwest Iowa to withhold financial support from Calvin College and Seminary in response to the Synod's decision last summer to allow for the ordination of women as deacons in the Christian Reformed Church. This raises the question, "How shall one disagree?" One of the letters, written by

Rev. George Vander Weit, points out that this is nothing less than the "tactics of the world . . . infiltrating the church." That's strong language. The letter states:

The actions of the Reformed Fellowship at its September 14 meeting in Sioux Center, Iowa, were most disturbing.

I am a minister in Classis Lake Erie, a classis labeled by many in the denomination as "liberal."



Some of us "liberals" do not agree with some of the decisions of our Synods, regarding those as violations of the Word of God. However, we have not asked Synod for permission to disobey. We have always regarded Synodical decisions as "settled and binding."

We have always proclaimed that authority should be respected even when we disagree. Disobedience must not be rapid or flagrant, and surely others ought not to be encouraged to disobey.

Now the "conservatives" are displeased with a Synodical decision, a decision made after years of study, including study by recognized "conservative" ministers and professors. Those who normally call for decency and good order have requested and received a special dispensation from Synod to disobey. Those who usually respect authority have responded to the authority of Synod not with obedience or humble submission but with a defiant declaration that they will not regard this decision as "settled and binding." Like hijackers who seize airplanes, the Reformed Fellowship has held a financial gun to the heads of institutions loved and supported by the denomination. All of this it has done while proclaiming love for the church and respect for the Word.

It is certainly true that the spirit and tactics of the world are infiltrating the church. It's too bad that many cannot see just how true that is because of the logs in their own eyes.

It is strong language indeed! A self-professed "liberal" takes the "conservatives" to task for refusing to abide by the decisions of their Synod but rather holds a "financial gun to the heads of institutions loved and supported by the denomination." The same man insists, "We have always regarded Synodical decisions as 'settled and binding.'"

Now, however one might judge the action of the Reformed Fellowship, still it ill-behooves the "liberal" to bring these kinds of charges against the "conservative" — especially with the added claim, "We have always regarded Synodical decisions as settled and binding," (even when these are "violations of the Word of God").

The hypocrisy of the claim is exposed when one reads another report concerning "Women serving the Church" in Calvin College *Chimes*, November 16, 1984. There is, in that article, no evidence of a willingness to "abide by Synodical decisions," but, on the contrary, open admission that churches deliberately violated the position of the Synod, allowing women not only to serve as deacons before Synod took its decision last summer, but even allowing women to serve as elders. If the report is accurate, even the president of the Synod of 1984, Rev. Roger Van Harn, admits to violating earlier rulings of Synod on this matter — in fact, he appears to encourage the churches to continue to

violate Synod's rulings as these apply to women serving in the office of elder. The article states in part,

... The women who have occupied these offices have been on the forefront of change within the CRC. Their experience has been a unique one for themselves and the churches in which they served, particularly within the office of elder, which has not been formally approved by Synod. Each church has handled this situation in its own individual way, creating adjunct and associate positions in order to allow women's gifts to be utilized as fully as possible. Most women in office performed all of the duties of their male counterparts, with the exception of voting in council or consistory meetings. . . .

... For Mary Swierenga of the Washington, D.C. CRC, holding offices of elder associate and elder was unique as she was elected to be her church's clerk. . . .

... The seven churches interviewed were alike in their reluctance to disobey Synod's rulings on the matter. Rev. Roger Van Harn of Grace CRC said that, "Although we were 100 percent behind women in office, it was a long struggle to decide whether it was right to go against Synod."

In another article in this same issue of *Chimes*, the following is stated:

Rev. Van Harn summarized further the decisions of Synod by declaring "that the heart of what the church said is that women may be deacons." Van Harn said the church has been in chaos since 1969 over the women-in-office issue and "only the unique power and grace of the Holy Spirit — not strategies — are going to bring order out of chaos."

Van Harn argued that the Gospel is clearer to us now that the question of women in office has been addressed. "Firstly, the CRC church has come to a better understanding of gender. We are all saved by grace; there is no gender distinction in this regard. Men and women were meant to work together in all aspects of the church's work." Secondly, Van Harn advocated that "ordination is clearer now. It is an authorization to serve, not an endowment of power; therefore, it can be applied to all offices."

... In the meantime, Van Harn urged that women should do the work of elders now, if they are so called, even if Synod will not grant them the official title. "The day is surely coming when women will not be barred from any office, but there is no reason to wait and squander gifts for such an ideal situation to arrive."

So this is what the "liberal" C.R.C. would claim to be "abiding by the decisions of Synod???" It would seem that the "liberal" is not really so offended that the Reformed Fellowship has adopted "the tactics of the world," as it is offended that the Reformed Fellowship had begun using the very tactics of the "liberal." Will all such tactics create a split in the C.R.C.? Rev. Louis Roossien in the



*Chimes* claims, "The CRC is not (sic) ecumenical — we are beyond splitting. I am convinced that

despite the tensions and disagreements, the Holy Spirit is working and we are going to stay together."

## Creation and Geology

In an interview, recorded in the *Banner*, November 12, 1984, Dr. Clarence Menninga, geology department chairman at Calvin College, gives his views on creation, including the creation of Adam. His views are not, of course, new or original — though diametrically opposed to views taught at Calvin College only a few decades ago. It is disturbing that views, forthrightly condemned by such men as Prof. L. Berkhof in his *Systematic Theology*, are now presented as the proper views for children of God to hold. Concerning himself, Menninga states:

... They call us theistic evolutionists.

Q. And that means?

A. That's a label for people who believe that God works through the processes of nature to bring about the changes and the sequences that have taken place.

Q. You can live with that label?

A. I really don't like it. I can live with it because some people call me that. If I were to label myself, I would call myself a creationist because I believe that God created this universe. I also believe that God upholds and sustains and controls it — all good, Calvinistic affirmations. But I think that just as God heals disease through processes, and just as He manages the planets in the solar system through momentum and gravity, so He also has done His creative work over a long period of time through natural processes . . .

Menninga continues by answering some questions concerning his view of the first man:

Q. Have people also developed over a long period of time by such processes as genetic change, mutation, and so forth?

A. That's a question a lot of church groups ask me. My response is usually that man is a very special, unique creature, made in God's image, who has fellowship with his creator and moral responsibility for his moral choices. But what does this mean with regard to the physical nature of man — his skeleton, the size of his brain, the fact that he uses tools? Well, the Bible doesn't say anything about these kinds of things. Christian Reformed theology has generally avoided dealing with how these two perspectives — the moral and the physical nature of humankind — fit together . . .

... Was Adam, perhaps, one of the Neanderthals, who are much closer to modern man than, say, Lucy?

Maybe. How God initiated this image of God in man I don't know, of course.

Q. Do you think God created Adam as a fully grown man?

A. I find it interesting to note that when God decided to come into the world as our Redeemer, He didn't enter it as a full-grown man. Mary's neighbors would not have known Jesus' birth was by anything other than natural processes. Now, maybe Adam's neighbors didn't either . . .

Menninga places those who believe in a 24-hour, six-day creation some 6,000 years ago in the category of such as believed in the flat-earth theory. He claims that "we'd be doing children a terrible disservice if we taught them that the earth is young, that creation was by fiat in twenty-four-hour days, that geology was by catastrophism."

The objections to the above views have been stated many times in many magazines and theological treatises. These views were debated years ago in some liberal Presbyterian circles. Later, these were debated in Reformed churches — especially those along the East Coast. Now they are presented openly and publicly in the *Banner*. One expects, by this time, hardly any reaction to the views of the C.R.C.

Yet, what does this do to the infallible Scriptures? What does this do to the truth of the headship of Adam — and Christ — as taught in Romans 5? Were there "a-moral" men before Adam? Was there even a single man called "Adam?" What does this view do to the doctrine of total depravity?

All of the objections to Menninga's teachings concerning theistic evolution as well as his views of the creation of man are presented in Prof. L. Berkhof's *Systematic Theology*, in the chapters concerning the creation of the material world, and the origin of man. It would be well for serious students of Scripture to read Berkhof again on this. The Protestant Reformed Churches object to Menninga's teachings not because we are some sort of offspring of Neanderthal man (with all of his intellectual limitations), but because it is our desire to maintain the historic Reformed positions which were held so firmly only a few decades ago also in the Christian Reformed Church.



## BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

# III John — Christian Hospitality

*Rev. J. Kortering*

The one outstanding feature of this short letter is that the author draws a contrast between Gaius and Diotrephes concerning their hospitality or lack of it in their dealings with the brothers who brought the gospel in their midst.

### AUTHOR AND DATE

We can state briefly and with conviction that the Apostle John was the author of this letter.

We see the similarity between the first, second, and third epistles. Here in the third, he identifies himself as he does in the second as "The elder" (1:1). The common subject material points in the direction of one author. In the first epistle, John emphasized the fellowship in love. In the second he deals with a specific area of this fellowship, that is, the need to walk in the truth. Here in the third, he deals with yet another aspect, how we are to receive in our homes and churches pastors and missionaries who bring the gospel. Finally, there is similarity of grammar, vocabulary, style of writing that indicates that one author wrote all three. John's authorship was accepted from early history to the present.

Since we view the second and third epistles as further development of the first, it would seem likely that the third was written after the others. Though this cannot be accurately established, it is generally accepted. This would once again place it sometime within A.D. 90-100.

### THE SPECIAL MESSAGE

The letter is addressed to a certain Gaius, "the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth" (1:1). Efforts have been put forth to identify him. The concordance indicates three other references — a native of Macedonia and companion of Paul (Acts 19:29); a man of Derbe in Lycaonia, also a companion of Paul (Acts 20:4); and a Corinthian whom Paul baptized (I Cor. 1:14). There is also a reference in Romans 16:23 to Gaius with whom Paul was staying at the time he wrote the Roman epistle. It is impossible to establish which one, if in fact he had

in mind any of these. Fact is he was a spiritual brother in one of the churches of Asia Minor.

The purpose of John in writing him seems to be twofold. First, it was to commend him for his Christian hospitality, and to do that publicly before the whole church so as to set a good example. Second, John sought his help in dealing with a certain Diotrephes, who was a self-seeking member of the church, a beligerent character, proud, seeking his own honor and dividing the church against John. Whether he taught heresy or not cannot be determined, for lack of evidence.

In dealing with this special need, John extols the virtues of those who are faithful, both Gaius and Demetrius (who probably was the person carrying this letter to them). He mentions that his joy as apostle is that he sees his spiritual children walking in truth. Christian hospitality is proof of that. He encourages them to care for the brothers and strangers who bring the Word to them. It is important that they receive such and be fellow helpers to the truth.

These itinerant preachers needed a place to stay, and when a home was opened to them, they were refreshed physically and spiritually. One can well imagine the demands placed upon a person who had to travel under adverse circumstances. If he was refused a place to stay and was openly opposed, this would discourage him and the work would suffer. Diotrephes was certainly an enemy of the truth as he sought to spread his evil influence. John saw the need to condemn it without reservation. By contrast, an open house with Christian love and encouragement such as was given by Gaius would go a long way in the furtherance of the gospel.

### A BRIEF OUTLINE

1. Introduction (vss. 1-4). The author identifies himself as the elder and designates his recipient as Gaius (vs. 1). He expresses the desire that he may be in good health, along with spiritual prosperity



(vs. 2). He informs him of his joy when he heard from the brethren the report that he was faithful to the truth in both doctrine and life (vs. 3). He generalizes by saying he has no greater joy than that his spiritual children walk in truth (vs. 4).

2. He encourages hospitality (vss. 5-8). He tells Gaius that he is faithful in his dealing with strangers who bring the gospel (vs. 5) and have testified before the church of his goodness in them (vs. 6). He adds that in doing this he does well, so that they do not have to depend upon the Gentiles (the unbelievers) for their livelihood, but can receive it from the church in the name of Christ. Thus Christ is extolled (vss 7, 8).

3. He reproves those who oppose the truth (vss. 9-11). He refers to a previous letter to the church, one that Diotrephes evidently did not heed, for he refuses to receive John and the apostles (vs. 10). He also tells Gaius that when he comes, he will deal personally with Diotrephes. He gives detail as to the evil of this man: he wants the preeminence; he uses malicious talk against John; he refuses to have anything to do with the brethren or with those who associate with them, even gaining support to censure them by casting them out (vs. 10). He warns Gaius and the church not to follow such evil, for those who do that have not seen God. Rather, they are to follow good, as proof that their life is from God (vs. 11).

4. He commends the witness of the truth (vs. 12). In contrast to Diotrephes, he acknowledges Demetrius as a faithful servant who loves the truth, as testified by other saints as well as by John himself (vs. 12).

5. Conclusion (vss. 13, 14). He tells them he has many things to write, but he will not do so at this time, trusting that he will soon see them face to

face. He pronounces the blessing of peace upon them. He extends the greetings of those who are with him, as well as asking Gaius to greet his friends by name (vss. 13, 14).

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Consider how the three epistles of John compliment each other as far as subject matter is concerned.

2. Reflect upon the virtues of Gaius and make a list of adjectives that you think would best describe him. Look up other passages of Scripture that deal with these same qualities of Christian character to see what the Bible says about them.

3. Evaluate yourself and your fellow saints to determine whether the blessings of hospitality are present. Consider whether there are areas in which they could be improved. John deals with hospitality shown to itinerant preachers. The same principles apply, do they not, to any stranger or even to a member of the church that seems to be a loner?

4. By contrast, make a list of the adjectives that would best describe the evil of Diotrephes. Consult a concordance to learn what the Bible says about such things.

5. Examine yourself and see if any of these evils of Diotrephes are in yourself. Make a list of ways you believe God would have you deal with them and prayerfully begin to practice this.

6. Do you believe there are others in the church who act like Diotrephes. Are there some who try to set members of the congregation against certain of our preachers, missionaries, or professors? In light of John's instruction here, which is instruction from God, how should you deal with such members?

7. Prove from this letter that Christian hospitality has its spiritual roots in God Himself.

## FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

### The Nicene Creed

*Rev. James Slopsema*

Article 9: *And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic church.*

We find in this particular article of the Nicene Creed the four attributes of the church. It speaks of her unity or oneness, her holiness, her catholicity,

and her apostolicity.

What the early church understood by these four attributes of the church is somewhat different from our understanding of them. This particular article of the Nicene Creed was composed by the Council



of Constantinople in 381. By this time the episcopal form of church government, that is, rule by the bishops, was firmly entrenched in the early church. This later gave way to the papacy, that is, rule by the pope. This episcopal structure of the church significantly altered the early church's understanding of these four attributes of the church.

In our treatment of this article, therefore, we intend first to discover what the early church understood by this confession. Then we wish to examine how these four attributes of the church ought to be understood in the light of Scripture. For these four attributes — the church's unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity — are all Biblical concepts. And, therefore, regardless of the early church's understanding of this article, this particular confession can still be used by us as a very beautiful confession of our faith, provided we understand it in the true Biblical sense.

To discover the early church's understanding of this article we must first gain an understanding of the episcopal form of church government that arose in the early church.

The episcopal form of church government had its beginnings with a distinction between the clergy and the laity in the church. By the clergy was meant those who hold office in the church. The laity was the rest of the church membership. This distinction as it arose in the church was a bad one because it was used to attribute a special priesthood to the clergy, much like the priesthood of the Old Testament. The idea was that the laity could not approach God directly but only through the medium of the clergy. Furthermore, the laity also needed the clergy to interpret the Scriptures for them. This was a denial of the office of believer.

In the second place, within the ranks of the clergy there was also the rise of the office of bishop.

The New Testament Scriptures speak of the *episkopoi* (from which we get our word "episcopal"), the *presbuteroi* (from which we get our word "presbyter"), and the *diakono*i (from which we get our word "deacon"). These are translated in the KJV as Bishop, Elder, and Deacon respectively, suggesting that these are three separate offices in the church. The fact is, however, that there are only two offices, the office of elder and deacon. The New Testament *episkopoi* and *presbuteroi* are two terms for the office of elder. The first term means "overseer" and views the office of elder from the viewpoint of its duties. The elder is the overseer who is to rule and exercise supervision in the church. The second term means "elder" and emphasizes the dignity of the office. Furthermore the Scriptures acknowledge two kinds of elders, the teaching elder (which we call the minister or

pastor) and the ruling elder. This distinction is made in I Timothy 5:17: "Let the elders that rule will be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine."

Over the course of time, however, the early church made a separation between the *episkopoi* and the *presbuteroi*. The *episkopoi* were called the bishops and the *presbuteroi* the presbyters. Both were considered to occupy an office of rule in the church. The office of bishop, however, was higher than the office of presbyter.

In the course of time there also arose a hierarchy among the bishops of the church. Originally each local congregation had its own bishop with a number of presbyters functioning beneath him. And among the bishops of the various congregations there was generally an equality. However, eventually the bishops in the cities were given a place of supremacy over the bishops in charge of the rural or country congregations. This was due to the fact that quite frequently the rural congregations were established by the city congregations. Furthermore, the bishops in the larger cities, usually the provincial capitals, and the bishops in the cities where the apostles had labored and established churches were, in turn, considered to be more important than the bishops who labored in the smaller cities. The bishops in the provincial cities were called Metropolitan bishops in the east and Archbishops in the west. The bishops in the apostolic cities were called Patriarchs. Problems arising in other churches were often sent to these bishops for adjudication. Eventually the bishops of Rome, Alexander, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Constantinople became the most prominent in the church, with the bishop of Rome being the foremost.

The final element in the episcopal form of church government that arose in the early church was the erroneous idea that the bishops were the personal successors of the apostles. The early church taught that the 12 apostles were the personal successors of Christ and that through the rite of ordination each bishop became a personal successor of the apostles. This meant that from Christ through the apostles and to the bishops came all the gifts of the Spirit necessary to rule the church in all matters of doctrine and life. Whatever the bishops decided therefore was the will of Christ for the church. To submit to the hierarchical rule of the bishops was to submit to Christ. To oppose the bishops was to oppose Christ.

Within this framework the church was defined.

First of all, the early church identified the church with an institution. We must understand that the early church did not clearly distinguish as we do



between the church as organism and the church as institute. The Bible teaches that the church is a living organism. It is the body of Christ. Within this body Christ is the head. The members of the church in turn are connected by faith to Christ so that they are ruled by Christ and live out of Him. This living organism of the church is also manifest in institutional form through the threefold office of minister, elder, and deacon. The institution of the church therefore is found wherever there is the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of Christian discipline. However, the early church made no clear distinction between the organism and the institute of the church. The result was that she identified the body of Christ with an institution.

Furthermore, the early church identified the body of Christ with that institution ruled by the hierarchy of bishops. To belong to the institution ruled by the bishops was to belong to the body of Christ. To be outside that institution was to be outside the body of Christ and thus without the possibility of salvation. Other organizations called themselves the church. There were the Donatists and the Montanists, who confessed the principles of the Christian faith but disagreed on matters of Christian discipline and the efficacy of baptism administered by those who had temporarily fallen away in times of persecution. There were other groups that had been cast out as heretical and which continued to exist in the form of churches. But these were not the church; nor was their membership to be considered a part of the body of Christ. For the church could be found only with the bishops who were the personal successors of the apostles.

The church father Cyprian, who lived in the third century, put it this way, "No one can have God for his father, who has not the church for his mother." The same church father also wrote, "The bishop is in the church, and the church is in the bishop, and if anyone is not with the bishop he is not in the church."

In this light we are now ready to understand the confession of the early church, "And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church."

In this confession the early church acknowledged, first of all, the existence of one church. There are not many churches, but only one church. And this church was to be identified with a particular institution. There are not many institutions that comprise the church. There is only one institution that may be called the church.

This one church, in turn, is catholic. We use the term "catholic" today in the sense of "general" or "universal." This was not the meaning attached to

this term by the early church. The word "catholic" comes from two Greek words: *kata* which means "concerning" and *holos* which means "whole." Its primary meaning therefore is wholeness, completeness. And this is how the early church used this word in this article. The one institution which is the church is catholic in that it is the whole, complete church. Therein you will find the whole and complete body of Christ. Outside this institution you can not find the church.

This one catholic church is, in turn, apostolic. By this was meant that the complete church of Christ is to be found in that institution that is ruled by and loyal to the personal successors of the apostles. Many institutions may claim to be the church or part of the church. But the only institution that can be called the church is that institution ruled by the bishops, the personal successors to the apostles. And, being the personal successors to the apostles, the bishops have been led by the Spirit to preserve within the church the teachings and traditions of the apostles.

Therefore the church is also holy. That the church is holy does not mean that she is perfect. That she is holy means that she is consecrated to God, serves the honor and glory of God. This is true of the church exactly because she is apostolic, that is, faithful to the teachings and traditions of the apostles.

Finally, the early church confessed her faith *in* this one holy catholic and apostolic church. Later the Western church altered this by confessing, "I believe one holy catholic and apostolic church." Notice that the preposition "in" is dropped. And this is the way we have received the Nicene Creed. However, originally the early church confessed, "I believe *in* one holy catholic and apostolic church." Even as she believed in God the Father, in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, so also she believed in the one holy catholic and apostolic church. That means that she put her trust in the church even as she put her trust in the triune God. She did this because of her concept of the church. The church is to be the object of trust because it is the one institution ruled by the personal successors of the apostles and where the teachings and traditions of the apostles are faithfully preserved.

According to Article 9 of the Belgic Confession we have received the creed of Nicea. We have not however received the early church's interpretation of this article. In our next article we intend to show how this article ought to be understood in the light of Scripture so that it becomes a very beautiful confession for the church today.

*Read the Standard Bearer!*



## GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH

# The Legacy of Wyclif: A Trail of Martyrdom

Rev. T. Miersma

John Wyclif died in 1384. He left behind him a translation of the Scriptures from the Latin into the English language. He left behind him, in his numerous writings, a clear exposition of most of the doctrines which would later form the heart of the Reformation. He left behind him, too, a clear description of many of the errors of a church which had departed from the foundation laid in the Word of God. This legacy of Wyclif lived on in England and in Eastern Europe in two separate streams.

In England the power of the church soon began to reassert itself, so that by the early 1400s Wyclif's translation of the Scriptures had been banned. Although Wyclif himself was dead and the church could not personally harm him, nevertheless he was branded as a heretic and in 1429 his bones were dug up, burnt to ashes, and the remains cast into a river.

It was against his followers that the Romish church now directed its attack. Wyclif's writings had created a movement in the English church which taught his doctrines, circulated his translations of the Bible or portions of it, and which laid great stress on preaching. These followers of Wyclif received the name Lollards, and the movement spread across England. The leaders of this movement, those who taught his views at Oxford, and those who labored with him in the English translation of the Bible, were forced to repudiate their work, were imprisoned, or were forced to flee England.

The persecution of the Lollard movement forced it underground, and the elimination of many of its clerical leaders forced it to become primarily a movement among the laity or common people. Their understanding of Wyclif's teachings was not learned but simple, preserving the kernel of the truth. Through the circulation of the Scriptures, by mutual exhortation and teaching, they managed to keep alive what they had received, and to pass it on

to the generations following them, generations who would later enter the Reformation.

The price the Lollards paid for their faithfulness, however, demands our attention. Charged as heretics for possessing copies of the Word of God, for repudiating the idolatry of the mass and the superstition and idolatry of the worship of images, they were systematically hunted down, tried as heretics, pressured to recant, and imprisoned. Some indeed sealed their confession with their own blood. In 1401 the English Parliament passed an act decreeing the burning of heretics, and for the next 125 years the Lollards continued to pay the price of their lives, at the stake. The legacy of Wyclif left behind it a trail of martyrdom. The record of their sufferings comes down to us today, sometimes accurately reported, sometimes distorted or embellished, but clear enough to indicate the price that was paid. They were not great reformers, their names are not well known, but they were steadfast in the truth as they had received it. William Sawtree, chaplain, burned to death, 1401. John Badby, a tailor, chained in a cask and burned to death, 1410. The list which is drawn from *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* and which is given in *Schaff's History of the Christian Church*, Volume VI, pp. 353 ff. reads like a catalogue of death. Those burned to death included "two London merchants, Richard Turming and John Claydon at Smithfield, 1415; William Taylor, a priest, in 1423 at Smithfield; William White at Norwich, 1428; Richard Hovedon, a London citizen, 1430; Thomas Bagley, a priest, in the following year; and in 1440, Richard Wyche, who had corresponded with Huss . . . According to Foxe there were, 1424-1430, 100 prosecutions for heresy in Norwich alone." Lord Cobham, hanged and burned, 1417. In Scotland as well, we read of " . . . James Resby, one of Wyclif's poor priests, being burnt at Perth, 1407, and another at Glasgow, 1422. In 1433 a Bohemian stu-



dent at St. Andrews, Paul Craw, suffered the same penalty for heresy."

The effect of this persecution was to drive the Lollard movement into the countryside and away from the larger cities. But still the list continues.

At Amersham, one of its centres, four were tried in 1462, and some suffered death, as William Barlowe in 1466, and John Goose a few years later. In 1507, three were burnt there, including William Tyllsworth, the leading man of the congregation . . . The first woman to suffer martyrdom in England, Joan Broughton, was burnt at Smithfield, 1494, as was also her daughter, Lady Young. Nine Lollards made public penance at Coventry, 1486, but, as late as 1519, six men and one woman suffered death there.

There were others as well whose names and sufferings are not known, forerunners of the Reformation and of the sufferings that would follow at the hands of an apostate and false church.

That same trail of suffering and martyrdom was also found on the Continent of eastern Europe. In the days of Wyclif an alliance had been formed between the royal houses of England and Bohemia through marriage. The result was close contact between the universities of England and the University of Prague, in what is now Czechoslovakia. Wyclif's views and writings made their impact there as well as in England. In particular they were appropriated and ably defended by John Huss who became a lecturer at the University of Prague in 1398. Huss not only taught in the university but was a powerful and popular preacher as well. With him labored Jerome of Prague who had studied for a time at Oxford. Under their influence the views of Wyclif were widely disseminated and took deep root.

The result was religious turmoil which brought down upon it the wrath of the church. Huss was charged with heresy, and when he would not submit to the dictates of the church, excommunicated. The nobles of Bohemia protected Huss for a time, but finally, at the insistence of the church and with a safe conduct from the king, Huss was summoned before the general council of the church at Constance. To this council Huss went willingly, hoping for a fair hearing, relying in part on the assurances and promises of safety from the king, but ready also, if need be, to seal his confession with his life.

The fair hearing for which he had hoped he did not receive. The promises and oaths of the king were not kept. He was mistreated and imprisoned, denied access to a Bible, and kept in squalid conditions for seven months. Finally, unjustly condemned to death, he was led out to be burned at the

stake, suffering the same fire as the lowly Lollards of England. Though pressed to retract his views he refused unless convinced by Scripture, taking the same stand Luther was later to take. A year later Jerome of Prague suffered the same death. It was through Huss that the later reformers would come into contact with the views of Wyclif, though they were to reach similar conclusions on their own.

Religious civil war and bloodshed followed in Bohemia. From its ruins a remnant of the truth was preserved at the coming of the Reformation. Wyclif and Huss, the Lollards and the movements in England and Bohemia came a century before the time which God had appointed to reform His church. They were the forerunners of a return to Scripture and many among them were called to be faithful even unto death. When one considers their history and the price they paid one is struck by the contrast between them and our own indifferent and unfaithful generation.

The false church of Rome, which ascribes to itself and its ordinances more authority than the Word of God is stained with all the blood of the martyrs of the Reformation from Wyclif until now. Its idol, the pope, travels the world, performing the blasphemy of the mass, and is hailed in every land as a great spiritual leader, receiving the worship and praise of men which is due to God alone. The leaders of many so-called Protestant churches applaud his coming as a spiritual renewal. Again and again today we see the Word of God and its authority set aside, as those who claim to be the spiritual heirs of Wyclif and the reformers, move to create a church in their own image. Wolves enter the sheepfold of Christ. The people of God are given stones for bread, and the keys of the kingdom are not exercised. Too often the Word of God for which the church suffered and died, lies closed, unstudied, a matter of indifference.

That Word of God which we have received, and its truth, was sealed with the blood of the martyrs, and it testifies against our apostate generation even as the saints themselves cry before the throne of God, "How long, O Lord?" (Revelation 6:9-11). God has given unto us as their spiritual descendants to possess that Word and its truth and to study it in peace and freedom, and to hear it faithfully preached. Let us treasure it highly, for we know that the day is coming when the man of sin shall be revealed and it shall be taken from us. And with that day shall also come fire and tribulation. That day we need not fear, for the remnant shall be saved and the grace of God which preserved them in faithfulness also keeps us, and shall keep us, unto the day of Jesus Christ.

*Give the Standard Bearer!*



## THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

# The Christian and Work

*Rev. Ron Cammenga*

Labor is an institution of God. Like marriage and government, labor is a creation ordinance. The God Who made man, made man to work. We ought to work. Work is good for us. We should be thankful that we can work. We can be sure that we will work in heaven, in the new creation of God.

God's institution of labor is under serious attack today from many quarters. There is the pleasure-madness that has overrun our society with its inevitable disparaging of work. There is the assault of labor by the modern labor unions which violate every Biblical principle concerning labor. There is the fact that increasingly women are forsaking their God-assigned place in the home and are going outside of the home to work and pursue careers, something we hope to discuss in a future article. There is also, of course, the sinful nature within each one of us that is tempted to rebel against the will of God in the area of labor, is tempted to laziness or carelessness in regard to our work.

There is nothing we so need to be reminded of today as the teaching of God's Word regarding labor. We can be sure that a great many of our present physical and economic problems arise from our failure to observe God's weekly day of rest. But we can also be quite sure that a great many of our economic problems arise from our failure to honor the sanctity of six days of labor. God commands us to labor.

That God calls us to work is plain already from the account of man's creation. Making man in His own image, God made man to work. In Genesis 2:15 we read, "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." God gave man work to do in Paradise. He did not permit the man whom He had created to live in the Garden of Eden doing nothing. But He required of Adam that he keep and dress and care for the Garden.

The first mention of the institution of labor after the fall of man is in the curse pronounced upon

Adam. "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:17-19).

The understanding of this text is important. The important thing to notice in this Word of God is that the curse pronounced upon Adam is NOT the curse of labor, as some suppose. The curse is the pain and hardship, the frustration and disappointment that will now be connected to man's labor.

We find this echoed in the words of Lamech, the father of Noah, at the time of Noah's birth, when he said concerning the son whom God had given him, "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed" (Gen. 5:29).

The fourth commandment of God's law stands as the great call of God to the thankful, redeemed Christian to labor. It is often forgotten that the fourth commandment is a command to labor as well as to rest. In fact, the command to rest is grounded in and arises out of the command first to labor. "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work" (Ex. 20:9). The day of rest has no meaning except as rest from labor. We may be quite certain that the man who disobeys the first aspect of this commandment, who is unfaithful in his work, will never enjoy the benefits and blessedness of the day of rest.

The New Testament is equally clear on the gospel's call to work. In the parables of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27) and of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), the Lord calls us to faithful labor in the kingdom. We must not bury our talents or squander our gifts.



The Lord's judgment on the unprofitable servant is severe: "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed . . . cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:26, 30).

The teaching of the Apostle Paul parallels the teaching of Christ. In Ephesians 4:28 he says, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." In I Thessalonians 4:11, 12 he admonishes the Thessalonian Christians: "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing."

One of the clearest passages on the Christian's calling to work is found in II Thessalonians 3. In II Thessalonians 3:6 the Apostle admonishes the believers to ". . . withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." We might at first suppose that the Apostle is talking here about false doctrine, and that he has in mind our calling to separate from heretics. Or we might think that Paul has in view some gross, unrepented of sin like adultery, or idolatry, or theft, or drunkenness. But the disorderliness that the Apostle has in mind here is idleness, laziness. That comes out in verse 11: "For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies." The Apostle's judgment on this disorderliness is severe: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (verse 10). The churches today, of course, have no use for this judgment of the Apostle. They consider it to be uncharitable and unchristian. And so they launch their massive programs to feed the derelicts and vagrants, and consider that they do a good work. Instead they ought to listen to God's Apostle, "if any would not work, neither should he eat." The sluggard must bear the judgment of God. Our government is guilty of the same thing when it provides welfare for those who are simply too lazy to get and to keep a job.

The positive implications of the Apostle's instruction here are plain. It is a mark of faith in Jesus Christ, an evidence of the sincerity of faith itself, that we labor to earn our living and to provide for the needs of our family. The ethic advanced by the New Testament Scriptures is that Christians ought to work with quietness, and eat their own bread, II Thessalonians 3:12. Idleness is sin. And when that

idleness is cloaked in the garb of piety which considers labor somehow incompatible with the requirements of communion with God and devotion to spiritual things, that idleness is only made a more serious sin still.

There are times, of course, when through no fault of our own we are unable to work. Perhaps that's on account of sickness or injury. Or perhaps it is the case that although we are able to work, the work is just not available. There is nothing shameful in this. Then it is God Who prevents us from working. And in that case, God has also provided means for our support, first through the help of relatives (I Tim. 5), and then through the diaconate.

The implication of Scripture's teaching concerning work is also that our work must be good work. The Scripture is not only concerned THAT we work, but its concern extends to HOW we work. In this area of life too, God requires our very best. Our work must not be halfbaked and slipshod. Our work must not be characterized by carelessness and sloppiness, whether this is our work in school, at home, or in the office or factory. The principle that too often governs our work is not how good a job we can do, but how little we can get by with or how quickly we can get finished. If this is the case with us then the great motivation that ought to be in view in all our life is absent in our work: the glory of God.

We ought to work. In our work, every legitimate area of endeavor is open to the believer. Every legitimate form of work is work that the Christian may be engaged in. He may be farmer or factory worker, office worker or plumber, carpenter or garbage collector, policeman or doctor, lawyer or store-owner, teacher or preacher, businessman or mayor. The gospel does not forbid any area of legitimate work.

There are, of course, vocations that for one reason or another are closed to the people of God. It is not permitted the child of God to be a professional ball player, both from the point of view of the wrong of devoting oneself to a career in sports and also from the point of view of the desecration of the Sabbath Day by those who are involved in professional sports. It is not permitted God's people to be dancers or movie stars or to pursue careers in which they deliberately and unnecessarily place their life in jeopardy.

There is also work which although in itself is not wrong becomes wrong for the child of God because of circumstances. Perhaps it's the case that the child of God must join the union, something inconsistent with the principles of the fifth commandment. Or perhaps it's the case that in order to have a certain job he must leave a true church for no



church at all, or for a church that does not preach the truth. In these cases, the Christian is confronted squarely with his calling to seek first the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33). He must not take the job that requires that he join the union or leave the church. It would be wrong for him to do so.

There are also those careers which, although legitimate in themselves, pose certain threats to the child of God. It is permitted the child of God to be a doctor, or a nurse, or a policeman. It is even permitted that, on account of the work required by these careers, the child of God occasionally be absent from the worship services of the church. The work of these careers is to be considered work of present necessity which is permitted on the Sabbath Day. But there are dangers involved in such careers, dangers which our young people ought not to be unaware of. It is wrong for even those who are

engaged in legitimate work on the Sabbath Day on that account always to be absent from the worship services of the church. When such legitimate work becomes a frequent hindrance to worship and the use of the means of grace, the Christian and the consistory of such a Christian must draw the line. It has been said that it is legitimate to pull one's ass out of the ditch on the Sabbath, but it would be wrong to devote one's whole Sabbath to the pulling of asses out of ditches. It's true that from time to time our work may justify our absence from the worship services. But the fact of the matter is that if we're not there, we're not hearing the preaching of the gospel and our faith is not being strengthened.

Next time we want, the Lord willing, to consider our work as a Divine vocation, and we want to discuss the purposes of our labor.

## Book Reviews

**THE GLORY OF THE TRUE TABERNACLE**, by Rev. George C. Lubbers; Grand Rapids, Mich., 1984. (674 pages, paperback, \$11.00) Reviewed by Prof. R.D. Decker.

Rev. Lubbers, who has faithfully served his Lord for some fifty years in the ministry of the Word in the Protestant Reformed Churches, needs no introduction to Protestant Reformed readers. His wide and varied experience as a pastor, preacher, and missionary (both domestic and foreign) is everywhere apparent in this fine commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews. In this book one finds solid exegesis from the Greek text. At the same time, the expositions are clear and understandable to the "person in the pew." This commentary will prove useful for personal Bible study as well as for the preacher. Rev. Lubbers is a student of the Holy Scriptures to whom the Lord has given profound insights into the Word.

I take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague and friend in the Lord on the publication of this commentary. There are few really good commentaries which are of benefit to both preacher and lay person. This is one of the few.

**OUR LORD'S PATTERN FOR PRAYER**, by Adolph Saphir; Kregel Publications, 1984; 430 pp., \$9.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko).

Adolph Saphir was a Presbyterian minister in Scotland who lived from 1831-1891. In his day he was much admired and sought after, and has left his church with a legacy of sermons and other writings.

In the forward, prepared by Warren W. Wiersbe, the following is said of the book:

Originally published as *Lectures on the Lord's Prayer*, this book is one of the best on that very special portion of Scripture. There are many volumes written by various authors on this prayer, but too often they go to one of two extremes: either they are so "devotional" that they are doctrinally shallow, or so "technical" that they never touch the heart. Saphir manages to blend pastoral warmth with good exegesis to produce a book for both the head and the heart. I especially appreciate the insights he gives from Jewish lore and custom.

Best of all, Saphir magnifies the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that the reading of this book is almost an experience of worship. I commend it to you, not only for personal study, but for personal growth in grace.

*Read and Study  
The Standard Bearer.*



These are fairly strong words of recommendation. Nevertheless, the book is good and we recommend it. It will be of use for our ministers who preach on the Lord's Prayer in connection with the Heidelberg Catechism to give them fresh insights and new avenues of thought on this subject; but it will also serve as good devotional reading for God's people.

One must be careful of the author's millennial views in connection with his discussion of the kingdom.

**PASTORAL TEACHING OF PAUL**, by W. Edward Chadwick; Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984; 394 pp., (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. R.D. Decker).

This book treats the following subjects: The Minister of Christ, A Workman; The Pastor and His Pastorate (the minister's conception of himself, the minister's conception of those to whom he ministers); Concepts of Ministry; The Address To The Ephesian Elders At Miletus; The Love of Souls; The Motive Power of Ministry (I Cor. 13); The Prayers of Paul (an excellent chapter which includes an exegesis of five of the recorded prayers of the Apostle); Paul On Preaching (another excellent chapter); Paul On Prophecy; Paul On Wisdom. Included is an index on Scripture passages expounded and cited in the work.

This is good, meaty pastoral theology based on sound exegesis. Strikingly enough the book does not deal with the pastoral epistles, but is based on the ministry of the Apostle as recorded in the Book of Acts and the Epistles.

William Edward Chadwick (1858-1934), a child of the manse, was an Anglican clergyman.

This book ought to be read by every seminary student and candidate for the ministry. It ought to be read and re-read by experienced ministers. It would be helpful, as well, for the ruling elders of the church.

**THE PRIMER ON THE DEITY OF CHRIST**, by John H. Gerstner; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1984; 38 pp., \$1.75. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko).

This is another in John Gerstner's series on the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. It is written in dialogue form and presents the proof for the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The book is excellent and we highly recommend it. It offers some original and unusual proofs of Christ's divinity, emphasizing that many of Jesus' statements make sense only on the basis of His divinity. It offers proof also from Jesus' moral teaching and from the fact that He alone is the power by which His moral precepts can be kept. Gerstner also makes it clear that one can believe in the deity of Christ only when God reveals this to a man; it is a matter of faith and of faith alone. An interesting explanation is given of Jesus' question: "Why callest thou me good?"

The value of the book would have been increased if the author had included Scriptural references.

We recommend this book to our readers as a valuable addition to home libraries and as a succinct summary of the proof for our Lord's divinity.

## News From Our Churches

November 15, 1984

Rev. W. Bekkering has accepted the call to Faith Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. C. Haak has declined the call from Hull Protestant Reformed Church. This means that of this writing three churches in Classis West are vacant: Hull, Lynden, and Trinity in Houston, Texas. Rev. and Mrs. H. Veldman left for Lynden, Washington, where Rev. Veldman will be preaching until December 16.

Rev. R. Hanko gave a series of messages on Family Radio on the program "In His Presence" November 5-9. The theme of his messages was "Knowing

Him Whom We Have Believed," which is a study of the different names of our Savior. Family Radio is on station WFME, 94.7 FM in the New Jersey area.

If you would like a copy of Rev. VanOverloop's Reformation speech, "Reformation and Receiving the Word Preached," then contact either Mr. Bob Moelker (616-452-5753) or Mr. Bob Faber (616-942-7038). Each copy of the tape is \$3.00.

Prof. Hoeksema also gave his speech, "The Significance of the Secession of 1834 for Reformed



Churches Today," to the Mr. & Mrs. League Meeting held in Faith Church, November 13, 1984. Rev. Haak spoke to the Eastern Men's and Ladies' League on "How To Be Effective In Personal Witness," October 16, at Southwest Church.

On Saturday, November 17, the ground-breaking ceremony was held for the new Heritage Protestant Reformed Christian School of Hudsonville. The School will be located on 40th Ave. between Chicago Drive and New Holland Street in Hudsonville. Plans are to have this new school ready by this coming September. The new principal will be announced in the near future.

At the October 17 Council Meeting, the Organ Committee of Hope Church submitted its recommendations for purchasing a new organ. Information regarding these recommendations was made available to the congregation prior to their annual congregational meeting.

The Reformed Witness Committee of Hope Church is presently working on the preliminaries to publishing a new pamphlet written by Rev. R. Harbach. They also continue to send many packets of literature and tapes to Ghana, West Africa. Since they receive many more requests from overseas than they are able to fill, they have been trying to identify organizations or individuals who can function as local distributors of Protestant Reformed material. They are also consolidating their mailing

list so that people in the same area can become aware of each other. They find it difficult to choose who will receive a response since the people who send for requests must do so at a substantial personal expense.

Rev. K. Hanko's new address is 17 Miami Road, Norristown, PA 19403. Telephone number 215-630-0491.

In regards to First Church's building of a new church, Rev. Joostens writes as follows, in "Across the Aisle": "This will be the house where we can faithfully come to be fed with the bread of life, which is broken for us. Here we bring our children, teaching them to sit still and learn to appreciate with us the wonders of God's glory! Here we will teach them to sing with us His praises. We have determined to build a house for the Name of the Lord, and for the furtherance of His kingdom in our midst. We have reason to praise Him for making this possible."

Rev. George Hutton wrote in a letter, "We are still seeking to battle away here in Larne by the grace and help of the Lord. Things are not getting any easier . . ."

"The people of the Lord are an afflicted people wherever their lot is cast but we know that in the midst of all our trials and tribulations we are kept by the power of God through faith . . ."

DH

### NOTICE!!!

In view of Classis East meeting at Southeast Protestant Reformed Church on January 9, 1985, the consistory of Southeast invites all male confessing members to the Officebearer's Conference in our church at 8:00 p.m. on January 8, 1985. Professor H. Hanko will speak on "The Elders' Role in Family Visitation." A period of fellowship will follow in the church basement.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On January 3, 1985, the Lord willing, our parents, MR. AND MRS. WM. HOKSBERGEN of Hull, Iowa will observe their 50th wedding anniversary.

We, their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are thankful to our Heavenly Father for the years He has given them together and for the covenant care and instruction they have given us. It is our prayer that they may continue to experience the blessings of our faithful God.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon that that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children." (Psalm 103:17)

John and Lori Hoksbergen  
Bill and Harriet Jansma  
Henry and Jane Hoksbergen  
Don and Bonnie Hoksbergen

Ken and Doris  
23 grandchildren  
10 great-grandchildren

### NOTICE!!!

The newly organized Heritage Christian School of Hudsonville, Michigan is in need of teachers for grades K through 9 for the 1985-1986 School Year.

Please contact Mr. Ervin Kortering, 253 East 19th St., Holland, Michigan 49423. Phone number is (616) 396-4966.

Erv. Kortering, Sec'y.

### NOTICE!!!

The two books — "FREEBORN SONS OF SARAH" and "THE GLORY OF THE TRUE TABERNACLE" can be obtained by writing to the author, Rev. George C. Lubbers, 2074 Cranbrook Dr., N.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505.

Price per copy is \$5.63 and \$11.86 (postage included) respectively. These books make excellent gifts to give to relatives and friends. The books can also be obtained at the Baker Book House and Kregel's Book Store in Grand Rapids.

### NOTICE!!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on January 9, 1985, at the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. Material to be treated at this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least three weeks prior to the convening of this meeting.

John Huiskens, Stated Clerk