

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

. . . there is an entire discretionary area in which elders and their minister may labor together in a spirit of brotherly love toward the improvement of the preaching of the Word. Elders who fail to do this are not faithful to their calling. The pastor who cannot accept the counsel of his elders is both insubordinate and foolish.

See "The Elder and the Preaching"

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MEDITATION

Our Assurance of the Crown of Righteousness

Rev. H. Veldman

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."
2 Timothy 4:8

Henceforth

What now remaineth, what now must yet happen.

My course is finished; the battle has been fought;

what now lies before me, the obtaining of the crown, must yet occur.

January 1, 1985. What shall we say?

Henceforth, now there remaineth — what? The

world, too, lives in the future. Of course! The present always disappoints. Hence, the world always reaches out to what lies ahead. But, it always reaches out to the things that are earthly, the things that are below. And what shall we say as we look to the future? Shall we, too, build upon sand, set our hearts upon the earthly?

Let us take this scripture upon our lips. Let us look to the crown of righteousness, given also to all them who love His appearing.

* * * * *

A crown of righteousness.

The original Greek knows two words for "crown": a royal, kingly crown and, more frequently used in Holy Writ, a victor's crown, given to the victorious contestant. The latter word is used here by the apostle Paul. This choice need not surprise us. It is the crown which is about to be given to the apostle who had fought the good fight, had finished his course and had kept the faith.

Many interpretations are offered of the expression: crown of righteousness. Is this a crown *according to* righteousness, or a crown *consisting of* righteousness (i.e., righteousness *is* this crown)? Must this righteousness be viewed as legal? The meaning, then, is that the Judge of all the earth will declare us righteous, will publicly vindicate, exonerate us in that day, declare us free from all guilt and punishment and heirs of everlasting life. Or, is this righteousness spiritual? Then we ourselves are righteous, in perfect harmony with the will of the living God. Then we are holy, spiritually in harmony with the living God.

We prefer the interpretation that this is a crown demanded by and which will be bestowed according to righteousness. The context, we believe, demands this interpretation. We read in verse 7: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Here we have the figure of a contestant. And then we read in our text: "which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." Hence, a crown of righteousness, bestowed by the righteous Judge, is surely a crown which this contestant will receive as the reward of righteousness, righteously bestowed, and although the text itself does not identify this crown we need not doubt its content; it is surely the crown of glory and of everlasting life.

Glorious assurance, indeed!

First, we read of a crown. This implies a struggle or battle. Indeed, there is no victory without a struggle. The one can follow only upon the other.

Secondly, we shall receive it "at that day." This, of course, is the day when the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall appear and give us this crown, this

prize, the victor's prize; it is the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a day that shall be! That will be the last day of this dispensation, the end, the Omega of all things. That will be the day when all history shall have been recorded, when all struggle, as well as all tears and sorrow, shall forever be a thing of the past, the end of the old and the beginning of the new. It will be the day of our Lord, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He, as the righteous Judge, shall appear upon the clouds of heaven, together with all the angels, to open the Book and distribute, as in a moment, to every man even as his work shall be.

Thirdly, for me is laid up a crown of righteousness. Indeed, our course is finished (verse 7). And now it is laid up. Having finished the course, and about to be sacrificed upon the command of Nero, the apostle says of his crown that it is reserved, laid away, safely reserved, to be given him at that last day. And, what a crown! The text does not identify it. However, it is as if the old warrior and campaigner means to say: "I need not tell you what it is. Anyone acquainted with Holy Writ ought to know that the Word of God is very explicit about it." Besides, we do not read of a crown but of *the* crown of righteousness. Hence, it is the crown of righteousness, the crown which according to the righteousness of God, the Judge of all the earth, belongs to me, is righteously mine.

What is this crown? It is surely the crown of life and glory. It means that we will enter fully into the liberty of the children of God, are forever free from all sin and death, are forever clothed with the garment of victory, of life and glory, of the heavenly renewal of all things. O, can we somewhat understand the joyful anticipation of this veteran soldier of the cross as he utters these tremendous words, as he is about to exchange his sword for a crown? Do we share this keen anticipation?

* * * * *

Wonderful assurance!

Wonderful assurance, first of all, because of our position in the midst of the world. Does not the apostle's position in the midst of the world appear utterly hopeless? That he has reached the end of his course is plain. Does it not appear incredible that this old veteran of the cross, bound with chains, having fought a good fight, is about to receive a victor's crown? And this surely applies to the church of God throughout the ages. Does it not appear inconceivably foolish that the hated, despised, ridiculed church of the people of God should confess this in the midst of the world: now there is laid up for me a righteous crown of life and glory?

Wonderful, secondly, because this is a crown of righteousness. Let us understand correctly: this

righteousness is the righteousness of God. God Himself is righteous. God *is* righteousness — righteousness is His being. For God to cease being righteous would imply that He would deny Himself, would cease being God. God's righteousness is God as He eternally wills Himself, is as He wills to be, is therefore in complete harmony with Himself, and that according to His own infinite and unchangeable standard. Hence, God is righteous in all His dealings with the children of men. He alone is the Standard of all good. We will be judged solely in the light of God, of His law and holiness. Him we must love and serve with all that we are and possess, always. And this God maintains Himself, never relents, never lowers His standard (as the theory of Common Grace would have us believe). A crown of righteousness is therefore a crown completely in conformity with the righteousness of God.

Consequently, how wonderful is this assurance! How can Paul claim this confidence? How can we? Is not sin always with us? Is it not true of us that the evil we hate we do and the good we would we practice not? Is it not wonderful for us sinners, or rather imperfect saints, to claim a crown of righteousness, which the holy and unchangeable righteousness of God declares to belong to us? Indeed, how can this be?

Wonderful, in the third place, is this assurance because we read here of the Righteous Judge. This Righteous Judge is the Lord Jesus Christ. This hardly needs any comment. It is also verified by the concluding words of our text: "but unto all them also that love *His* appearing." This refers, of course, to the Lord Jesus Christ Who will appear upon the clouds of heaven. And, He is the righteous Judge. Unto Him has been given all the judgment of God which He will exercise and declare in the Name of the alone living God. And He will not deviate from the righteousness of God. Fact is, He will come with the judgment of God; besides, He is Immanuel, God with us, God Himself revealed in the Person of the Son, but in our human nature, only in our human nature as glorified.

Hence, is it not a truly amazing thing to look forward to a crown, which is a crown of righteousness and will be bestowed by the righteous Judge, the living God in Jesus Christ, our Lord?

* * * * *

A certain assurance.

Indeed, the certainty of this assurance characterizes the entire passage here. Whatever we read here in the verses 7-8 emphasizes this certainty, reaching its climax in the words: "which He *will* give me at that day."

Is verse 7a a ground for the crown, or a ground

of my assurance of it? Am I assured of it because I have fought a good fight, etc.? This would be contrary to all the teachings of Holy Writ. Nothing we do can ever be a ground for the crown of life and glory and is therefore never a ground for the assurance of it! Neither can what we read in verse 8 be a ground. My loving of Christ's appearance a ground for the crown? This is impossible. There is certainly nothing meritorious in my loving of Christ's appearance. That I love His appearance must itself have a ground. Why do I love His appearing?

Assured of the crown! Why is this? Upon what does this assurance rest?

O, the text speaks of the righteous Judge. And this Judge is our Lord Jesus Christ, Who was born in our flesh and blood, suffered and died upon the cross of Calvary, was raised and is risen from the dead and exalted at the right hand of God, in the highest heavens.

What does this mean? Indeed, not what I do is the ground for the crown, but what Jesus did. My fighting of the good fight, etc., is not the ground for the crown, but the proof that Christ is in me, that He suffered and died for me, that therefore not my righteousness but His righteousness is the ground for this crown of life and glory. And this also explains why we love His appearing. We long for Him to appear, not because He will show the world what we have done, but that it may appear and become evident what He has done. It was because of Christ in me that I, in principle, was privileged to fight the good fight, finish the course and keep the faith. I long for Him to appear that it may become evident what He has done for me upon the cross. Indeed, also as far as my sins are concerned, they too will be revealed in that day as completely blotted out through the blood of Christ, and it shall be revealed that I am completely covered by the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. And I look forward to His appearing because then He will clothe me with everlasting glory, as the fruit of His perfect work and righteousness.

New Year's Day, 1985.

Looking ahead, to the future — to what?

Expecting the crown of righteousness, the crown of life and glory.

Because I earned it? No, it is the crown which the righteous Judge shall *give* me at that day. Indeed, it is all of grace, never of man, lest any flesh should boast. God alone must receive all the glory.

Give The Standard Bearer!

EDITORIAL

The Elder and the Preaching

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

This is the time of the year when, at least in most of our congregations, newly elected elders are ordained. It is not amiss, therefore, to reflect on this aspect of the office of elder. Elders are bishops, or overseers; and to their calling to be overseers belongs the calling to exercise oversight with respect to the preacher and the preaching.

What belongs to this oversight? Does it imply only the calling to guard against false doctrine? Or does it include more?

There is much that can be said about this subject. In fact, entire books have been written about it. Perhaps in the future we could devote one of our special issues either to the general subject of the office of elder or to the specific subject we are now discussing briefly. In this short essay we shall approach the subject from the point of view of what our official Reformed literature has to say about it.

First of all, we call attention to our Confession of Faith, Art. 30, where we find the following: ". . . namely, that there must be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God, and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons, who, together with the pastors, form the council of the Church: that by these means the true religion may be preserved, and the true doctrine everywhere propagated, likewise transgressors punished and restrained by spiritual means . . ."

Secondly, we call attention to Article 23 of our Church Order, which states in part: "The office of the Elders, in addition to what was stated in Article 16 to be their duty in common with the Minister of the Word, is to take heed that the Ministers, together with their fellow-Elders and the Deacons, faithfully discharge their office . . ." And when we turn to the Form of Ordination of the Ministers of God's Word, we find mentioned first among the duties of the minister the following: "That they faithfully explain to their flock the Word of the Lord, revealed by the writings of the prophets and the apostles; and apply the same as well in general as in particular, to the edification of the hearers; in-

structing, admonishing, comforting and reproofing, according to every one's need; preaching repentance towards God, and reconciliation with him through faith in Christ; and refuting with the Holy Scriptures, all schisms and heresies which are repugnant to the pure doctrine." This paragraph of the Form then goes on to substantiate this by referring to various Scripture passages. According to Article 23 of the Church Order, therefore, it is the duty of the elders to "take heed that the Ministers . . . faithfully discharge" this task.

In the third place, we may notice that the prescribed questions for church visitation directed to the elders and deacons in the absence of the minister are in harmony with the preceding. Question 1 reads: "Does the minister in the preaching and in the administration of the sacraments do his work faithfully according to the Word of God, the Forms of Unity, and the Church Order?" Question 2 inquires: "Does the minister faithfully explain God's Word so that the congregation is built up through his preaching?" And Question 5 inquires concerning the diligence of the minister: "Is he devoted as much as possible to the exercise of his office?" These are rather pointed questions; and they certainly imply a specific task of oversight, both negative and positive, on the part of the elders.

Finally, we call attention to the Formula of Subscription which all officebearers must sign. In it you find the following pledge, first of all: "We promise therefore diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine, without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same, by our public preaching or writing." The "aforesaid doctrine" here refers to the Confession and Catechism and the Canons of Dordrecht. But there is more. In this Formula of Subscription the officebearers pledge: "We declare, moreover, that we not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine and particularly those which were condemned by the above mentioned Synod, but that we are disposed to refute and contradict these, and to exert our-

selves in keeping the church free from such errors." (emphasis added) It is plain, therefore, that the preaching of the Word in our churches must be specific and antithetical.

From all of these quotations it is plain that the elders have a duty with respect to the oversight of the preaching and the preacher which goes beyond guarding against false doctrine. The latter task, of course, is strictly mandatory. If false doctrine is preached, the elder has no choice but to oppose it and, eventually, make his objections pending with the consistory. But there is obviously another aspect of the preaching which also falls in the province of the elders' supervision. There is that area which is involved in such questions as: 1) Are there things which are *not* said in the preaching which *ought* to be said? 2) Is the preaching of the Word specific? And by specific I mean positively Reformed, Protestant Reformed? 3) Is the preaching of the Word antithetical? 4) Does the preaching posi-

tively address the needs of the congregation in the times in which we live? 5) Is the preaching of the Word vital and pertinent? And even questions whether the preaching is lively and interesting and well-delivered, rather than dull and dry, are not beyond the province of the elders.

All of this does not mean that it is the calling of the elders to engage in carping criticism of the kind which can make life miserable for a pastor. And it certainly does not mean that it belongs to the task of the individual elder to act as a messenger boy in conveying complaints (whether justified or unjustified) from members of the congregation. It does mean that there is an entire discretionary area in which elders and their minister may labor together in a spirit of brotherly love toward the improvement of the preaching of the Word. Elders who fail to do this are not faithful to their calling. The pastor who cannot accept the counsel of his elders is both insubordinate and foolish.

Correspondence

From the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore we received the following letter addressed to "All Protestant Reformed Churches of America," under date of October 24, 1984:

Dearly beloved brethren in the Lord:

Greetings from Singapore in the Glorious Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This letter is written to give all thanks to God our Heavenly Father and to you for your love gifts of US \$6689.22 towards the building fund of ERCS. Our hearts were encouraged in the Lord to see your love, prayers and concern for us and God's Work here in Singapore. God has been good to us in spite of and despite our unworthiness.

By His providence and grace, we were able to purchase a house in Central Singapore at \$190,000.00. Recently the Singapore Government has rejected our application for the change of use of the place for worship. We covet much of your prayers as we send in an appeal. May all things be done for God's glory alone and for the furtherance of His kingdom.

"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible,

the only wise God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen."

Enclosed is our receipt (sent to our Doon Church, HCH) for the love gift.

Yours in Christ,
(w.s.) Johnson See, Treas., ERCS

[Editor's note. According to late word received from Missionary den Hartog, the appeal mentioned in this letter was rejected, and there is no further recourse. For the time being the den Hartog family is going to occupy both floors of the purchased house. HCH]

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

CORRESPONDENCE AND REPLY

About the Binding Character of Classical Decisions

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

From a reader who wishes to have his name withheld comes the following letter:

"Dear Professor:

"Your editorial, 'About Guests at Communion,' (Nov. 1, 1984) was well worth reprinting and reflects careful work of Classis East in yesteryear. With the contents of this article I am in full agreement.

"There is a further question, a formal question then, that is raised by the article, especially by your words '... a very significant and helpful decision was reached, a decision which is, of course, still *binding* in our churches.' (emphasis yours) Since you write 'our churches' without any qualifier such as 'in Classis East,' I assume you mean that this decision of Classis East is binding upon all the congregations of both classes. My question is this: are all classical decisions of a general, far-reaching nature, binding upon all the churches? I understand, of course, that if a classical decision is appealed to Synod, and Synod speaks on it one way or another, the resulting decision is binding upon all the churches. But what if only one classis speaks? Also, is there a procedure in place so that such decisions are communicated to the churches in general, or to the consistories of the churches in general?

"I am aware of significant decisions taken recently by one classis, which are binding upon all the churches of that classis, but which are being 'violated' by the churches of the other classis! Before I go any further, I would appreciate your answers to the questions raised above.

"Thank you.

Cordially in the Lord,"

Reply

My correspondent raises a very interesting question, or series of questions, which more than one individual asked me orally after the editorial in question. In reply, the following:

1. In a strictly legal sense, of course, the answer to this question must be negative. A decision made in Classis East and never appealed to Synod and adjudicated by Synod is technically binding only in and for the congregations of that classis, not for the congregations of Classis West unless and until Classis West would make a similar declaration, or unless and until a concrete case would be carried to Synod by way of protest and appeal and the Synod would adopt a similar position.

2. This, in turn, raises a very interesting further question, because two of the churches which now resort in Classis West were in Classis East at the time this decision was made there. I refer to Randolph and South Holland. And in the case of South Holland, I happen to know from my days as pastor there, that the general principles adopted by Classis East were considered so significant that a copy of them was pasted in the consistory's minute book (undoubtedly in the days of my predecessor as pastor there, the Rev. M. Schipper). My assumption would be that unless these consistories have taken action to the contrary, these decisions are still acknowledged as binding by these two consistories.

3. In a *moral* sense these decisions are surely binding in our churches. I say this on the following grounds: a) The decisions were published in full at the time they were made by Classis East. In fact, if my memory serves me correctly, the classis decided specifically to instruct the Stated Clerk to publish them because of their importance. Since then, of course, I have twice published them in our *Standard Bearer*. They are, therefore, very public. b) No one (individual, consistory, or classis) has protested against these decisions to Classis East. And it would, of course, have been very immoral of anyone to hold that these decisions were principally wrong and yet not to attempt to convince the churches and the classis that they were wrong. c) The decisions are morally binding, too, and in the ultimate sense of the word, because of their intrinsic

sic worth: they are sound principles which cannot be gainsaid. And while I am on the subject, let me emphasize that this latter point, to me, is the most significant. The question is not ultimately whether something is technically settled and binding because it has been adopted by a majority vote: after all the "half-plus-one" has been wrong many, many times in church history. Nor is this the *underlying principle* of Article 31 of the Church Order. But the deepest question is whether something is in harmony with the Word of God and cannot be proved to conflict with the Word of God and the Church Order, as Article 31 puts it.

4. In the light of the above, I am not prepared to make the sweeping and very general statement that "all classical decisions of a general, far-reaching nature" are "binding upon all the churches." I would first want to know, for one thing, what is meant by "a general, far-reaching nature." I would also want to know if a given decision is indeed pertinent for all the churches. And above all, I would want to know if there is a principle involved.

5. As to the final paragraph of my questioner's letter, the following: a) Under our present system, our people and our churches in general can hardly be aware of decisions made by a classis. Few, if any, decisions are published literally. So-called reports of classis are little more than news releases today, and sometimes they are significant for their lack of news. b) In this light it is difficult for me to understand how churches of one classis can "violate" decisions of another classis. One can hardly violate a decision of which he is not aware. c) I do not know what my correspondent means by "before I go any further."

This leads me to make a few editorial remarks.

In the first place, there has been a change in our churches with respect to reports of classical meetings. Some of us can undoubtedly recall that in former years reports of classical meetings were published separately as "supplements" in our *Standard Bearer*. At that time the reports were rather detailed and extensive, too, although always the stated clerk of classis had to exercise discretion

when it came to publishing matters of a personal nature. Later — I have not checked on the date — these reports were included with the News department of the *Standard Bearer*; and about that same time they began to have more and more the character of news releases and, as I said, sometimes with little real reportorial news of classical decisions. Personally, I do not think this has been a change for the better. My reason, in general, is that the churches — and I mean our people in general, not only delegates to classis and consistories — have a right to know and ought to know what is going on at classical meetings. And sometimes, in fact, it is important that they know *literally*. This knowledge ought not to come by hearsay or by the dangerous and unreliable "grapevine."

In the second place, this leads me to suggest that there could be better communication between our two classes. At present the only communication of an official kind takes place on those few occasions when the work of classis requires the presence of the delegates *ad examina* of the other classis. And technically this is all that is required. But there is much to be said, I believe, in our small denomination and under our arrangement of two classes, in favor of closer correspondence between the classes. Why could not our two classes make one another aware of their decisions, or at least of their significant decisions? We are small, and we need one another. I can remember the time (in the pre-1953 years) when our two classes grew apart, until finally it was one classis versus the other at our Synodical meetings, and until it came to pass that Classis West actually resented the presence of the late Revs. Hoeksema and Ophoff at its meetings, and said so. Now I am not so naive as to think that this came about solely because of lack of communication. Nevertheless, lack of communication was indeed a factor, as some subsequent events also proved. And if some communication can help in creating and maintaining good relationships, then, it seems to me, this is one of the easiest things to accomplish.

Think about it.

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Give the gift of The Standard Bearer!*

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Our Order of Worship

Prof. H. Hanko

Our Heidelberg Catechism discusses in Lord's Day XXXVIII what is implied in the keeping of the fourth commandment. Strikingly, it includes in our observance of the Lord's Day our calling to contribute, through collections, to the causes of Christ's kingdom. It says, "What doth God require in the fourth commandment? First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the sabbath, that is, on the day of rest . . . contribute to the relief of the poor, as becomes a christian . . ."

In our last article we noticed that Scripture very clearly puts collections into the worship service as a necessary part of worship. If all these things are true, therefore, it follows that giving for the collections is also an act of worship. In our giving we *worship*.

How is giving an act of worship? That is the question we face in this article.

Perhaps there is no single element in the worship service which is more a matter of "custom and habit" than the taking of the collections. It is, as often as not, a time to relax a bit from the demands of the worship of God from the heart; it is a time to look around to see who is in church and who is not; it is a time to let one's mind wander here and there because there are no demands apparently placed upon us to concentrate on the worship; it is a time to pay some attention to the children, to see that they are sitting still and have their needs cared for. But little if any thought is given to the fact that this too is a matter of worship.

Along these same lines, giving itself easily becomes something mechanical. There is a certain definite amount which we give for the budget, for the poor, for the various causes of the kingdom for which collections are being taken. We have, prior to the service, made the necessary preparations for taking a definite amount of money along, some for ourselves, and some for the children. Years ago, just before the family left for church, several little

piles were laid out on the table for each child: a couple of nickles and a few peppermints for each child. Now, with inflation making everything more expensive, the nickle has perhaps become a quarter, although the peppermints are usually still there. So all that is required in church is to take from one's pocket what was placed there before the service, separate the coins from the peppermints and put the coins into the collection plate when it comes in front of us.

But all of this does not make our giving an act of worship. How, specifically, ought we to do this?

In the first place, it ought to be remembered, in general, that our worship is always adoration and praise to God for what He has done for us. In His great mercy and grace He has redeemed us through Jesus Christ, formed us into His own people, blessed us with all spiritual blessings, and prepared for us an inheritance in glory which presently we shall receive. He has done this out of grace alone, according to His own sovereign decree of election. It is not that we are better than others. There is nothing in us which makes us worthy of such great benefits. It is all of His free grace in Jesus Christ.

All our worship ought to be in the awareness of these great blessings which God has given. We come together to express our thankfulness to Him and to praise and bless His name for such great blessings. All our worship is an expression of our gratitude — also our giving.

In the second place, and more specifically, our giving is a confession of the truth that all our material possessions are not really ours at all, but belong to God. All that we possess is not really ours, but His. "All that I am I owe to thee . . ." This is true of our life, our health, our strength, but also our earthly goods. He gives all these things to us moment by moment until He takes us to glory. We can never say of even one small thing: "This is mine, to do with as I please." It is not ours; it is God's.

This all implies the principle of Christian stewardship. We are not owners of these earthly gifts; we are stewards over them. Although Jesus surely means more by His command to the citizens of His kingdom to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, He also means that this is our calling with our earthly possessions. We must use all that we have and are to promote His kingdom and His righteousness. If we do any less we are unfaithful stewards and thieves in the midst of God's world.

In the worship of collections, we confess these things. We put our money in the collection plates as a confession of our faith and as an act of worship of our God. We confess that God has dealt graciously with us through Jesus Christ, that He has given us all that we have, that all that we are we owe to Him, that we need not fear but that all our needs will be provided for out of His Fatherly hand, that our calling in gratitude to Him is to seek His kingdom and the kingdom of His dear Son.

That part of the worship service which is devoted to collections is the time to ponder these things, to get our spiritual perspective about these things in harmony with the Scriptures, and to ponder the truths which Scripture makes so abundantly clear concerning our earthly and material possessions. We need this very much. We are of the earth, earthy; and we constantly forget these truths. That we devote a few moments in God's house to ponder these things is important and necessary.

In II Corinthians 9:7, Scripture lays down for us the way this act of worship must be carried out. Paul writes: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

There are several elements here which we ought to notice.

In the first place, every man must give as he purposeth in his own heart. Again, there are several truths implied in this. First of all, this matter of giving is a matter for every man to decide himself. There must be an individual aspect to this: each man must make up his own mind what he will give. No one else may tell him. It is true that we set definite amounts for certain aspects of giving: we set the amount of the budget and expect that everyone will give that amount. But this surely means that even here a certain amount of freedom must be allowed. If a person, for one reason or another, cannot give the full amount, he must not be castigated for this. But if he is able to give more than the required amount, this he is obligated to do. Secondly, this matter of giving must be a conscious and deliberate choice. For every collection a man must

decide what he ought to give to that particular cause. It is well that he discuss this with his family prior to the worship service. (We may note, in parentheses, that the causes for which collections are to be taken ought to be put on the bulletin a week ahead of time so that this is possible. Or, at least, if collections are always taken for the General Fund and Benevolent Fund in the morning, the bulletin ought to designate the particular causes of Christ's kingdom for which collections are being taken in the evening service.) It is well that he discuss this both with his wife and his children, so that they may come to a conclusion concerning what they ought to give. In the third place, he must do this before the face of God. II Corinthians 9:7 says he must do this in his heart. That means that he must do this in the consciousness that he stands before God's face and that God knows and sees what he does and why he does what he does.

Secondly, a man must, according to the apostle, give freely. This is emphasized in all Scripture where this subject is discussed. Especially was this emphasized when Israel was commanded to give for the building of the tabernacle (See Exodus 25:2, 35:4, 36:3-7). It is emphasized that God does not even want the offerings of those who give unwillingly. God does not need our offerings. We do not give them for His benefit. The cattle on a thousand hills are His. We give for our spiritual benefit. And we must, therefore, give freely.

It is for this reason that there can never be laws about giving in the church. The church has always insisted that we are not under the law, but under grace, that, therefore, tithing is no more the law. Nevertheless, the principle remains. And it is not too much to say that a tenth of our possessions is the bare minimum in giving. And this does not include tuition for the education of our children.

In the third place, the apostle says that we ought to give, not grudgingly or out of necessity, but cheerfully. The negative is also important. One gives grudgingly when he gives sorrowfully. We give this way when we give painfully, when it hurts us to give because we would rather keep what we have for ourselves and use our earthly possessions for our own personal enjoyment. We give out of necessity when we are compelled by law to give; when we give because we are watched by our fellow saints or by the deacons who are taking the collection; when we give because we do not want the minister or elder to mention our stingy giving on family visitation.

When, in a positive way, the apostle defines our giving as being *cheerful* giving, he uses a word which really means much more than our English word "cheerful" connotes. We could almost say

that our giving ought to be joyous, gay, an expression of great happiness. There is here the idea of reckless abandon. Jesus too suggests this when He says that we must pay our alms in such a way that our left hand does not know what our right hand is doing. We must give in such a way that, by earthly standards, our giving is foolish. The widow, after all, gave all that she had. We ought not to worry about what we shall eat or what we shall drink or wherewithal we shall be clothed. These are things that the Gentiles seek after. We are citizens of the kingdom of heaven, given the great gift of Jesus Christ through free grace. Therefore we are to seek Christ's kingdom and God's righteousness, and all the rest will be added to us.

Our niggardly giving is often due to the fact that we really do not believe this. We are worried that we will not be able to pay our bills, provide what is necessary for our families, and have enough left

over for our own earthly pleasures. We resent the heavy demands of the kingdom upon our financial resources, and we fail to give cheerfully, joyously, even recklessly — at least, if by that last word is meant, beyond what by earthly standards of reckoning would be appropriate and wise.

When we give in this way, then our giving is truly worship. It is an expression of our gratitude of God for what He has given to us; it is a doxology of praise to Him Who alone is worthy of all praise; it is a confession of our trust in Him Who is our Father to provide for all our needs; it is a testimony to the truth that we know we are pilgrims and strangers in the earth who have here no abiding city, but whose treasures are in heaven; and it is a humble acknowledgement of the fact that God is pleased to promote the cause of His kingdom in this world through the means which He provides for our use.

SPECIAL REPORT

Trip to the British Isles

Prof. H. Hanko

[Editor's note. Here is the first installment of the promised report on the trip by Prof. Hanko and Rev. D. Engelsma to the United Kingdom.]

It is always an exciting adventure to travel to foreign lands. When such traveling is done on behalf of the work of the churches, the excitement is very much greater. Such was the case when Rev. Engelsma and I traveled recently to the British Isles on behalf of the Committee of Contact to visit the saints in that land, and to investigate the possibility of closer contact between churches there and our own Protestant Reformed Churches.

The greater part of our work was performed in Ireland, because the original request for men to come to the British Isles had come from the Session of the Bible Presbyterian Church of which Rev. George Hutton is the pastor. Those in the South Holland and Grand Rapids area will recall that Rev. Hutton visited this country last year and spoke for a number of gatherings, in which he told the people who attended these meetings of his own history

and the work he and his congregation are doing for the cause of the Reformed faith in Ireland.

Ireland is an island, approximately 1/3 the total size of the British Isles, while the British Isles, composed of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland are a bit larger than the state of Michigan. Ireland has been called, "The Emerald Isle," because of its varied green colors. Although quite different from any part of this country which I have seen, it is a very beautiful land with attractive and breathtaking scenery. It is, however, a land torn by strife. The southern 2/3 of the island is an independent country called "The Republic of South Ireland" and is about 95% Roman Catholic. The northern 1/3 is called Ulster and is about 70% Protestant, with the other 30% predominantly Roman Catholic. The Roman Catholics in the north wage guerilla war against the Protestants, because they claim that they are the objects of discrimination; most Protestants, however, are convinced that the ultimate goal of the Roman Catholics is to bring

Roman Catholicism back to Ireland so that Protestantism can be rooted out. The struggle which goes on there, however, is not genuinely religious, but political.

Rev. Hutton's congregation is a small Presbyterian Church in the city of Larne, about 25 miles straight north of Belfast. Rev. Hutton himself was at one time a minister in the Free Presbyterian Church of North Ireland, led and dominated by Rev. Ian Paisley, the titular head of the Protestant resistance to Roman Catholic rule. Rev. Hutton parted ways with Ian Paisley because of the latter's involvement in politics and because of his departure from the Reformed faith as outlined in the Westminster Confessions. Because of this determination on his part, Rev. Hutton suffered considerable persecution, with the result that the determination to stand fast for the Reformed faith on his part and on the part of his congregation has been tempered in fire.

Rev. Hutton's congregation is much alone in North Ireland and seeks fellowship with those who are of like precious faith with them. For this reason, he has turned to the Protestant Reformed Churches to aid him and his congregation in their struggle to maintain the Reformed faith and promote its cause in their homeland.

To accomplish this, Rev. Hutton arranged that Rev. Engelsma and I preach a series of sermons on the truth of the covenant, which series was to begin on the first Sabbath evening we were there and continue every night of the week except Saturday, concluding on the next Sabbath evening. The general topics on which we preached were these: "The Idea of the Covenant," "The Covenant and the Fall," "Christ, the Head of the Covenant," "The Children of the Promise," "The Covenant and the Jews," "Our Calling in the Covenant," and, "The Covenant Family." These were not, however, lectures, but sermons on specific passages of Scripture delivered in regular worship services. These meetings were most enjoyable. Rev. Hutton's congregation was present at every meeting and the visitors who attended nearly doubled the size of the audience. The church auditorium was usually full, although it must be remembered that the auditorium was very small. There were probably from 60-80 present at every meeting.

Rev. Hutton's congregation is composed of about 12 families. We had opportunity to visit in the homes of nearly all the people, and we came to know them as dear brothers and sisters in Christ, who are deeply interested in maintaining the Reformed faith in all its purity and truth. It is amazing how, when we are united with others in a common faith, there are no real barriers to fellowship.

From the very start we were completely at home with the saints there and found no "cultural" barriers which kept us apart. After ten days' stay, it was as if we had known these people for many years.

The congregation is earnestly interested in closer contact with us for a number of reasons: 1) They are concerned about their future if the Lord should suddenly take from them their beloved pastor. What would they do? Where would they turn for help? 2) They are too good Presbyterians to be content with independentism, the dead-end street on which so many congregations find themselves. 3) They want our help to extend the witness of the Reformed faith in their island. Especially would they like to have help in writing articles and pamphlets addressed to the unique problems which confront them.

To accomplish our goals for going to Ireland, we met in a long meeting with the Session of the Bible Presbyterian Church. We were thankful and happy to discover that there is complete agreement between them and our churches on all matters of doctrine and the Christian walk. The only differences were that Rev. Hutton's church holds to "purity of worship:" i.e., exclusive Psalm singing, no instrumental accompaniment of the singing at worship, and no celebration of Christian holidays. But they recognized the fact that this was a matter of Christian liberty.

While we were in Ireland, many other labors kept us occupied. We had opportunity to preach in congregations of two other denominations. One such opportunity was to preach at a morning worship service in the Cregagh Road Reformed Presbyterian Church in Belfast, of which Rev. Tim Donachie is pastor. This denomination is a very old denomination and maintains in Ireland the old covenant tradition of the Scots. It is approximately the size of our own Protestant Reformed Churches. It also holds to purity of worship. We had opportunity to visit the Theological School of this denomination, speak with their professor of Dogmatics, Prof. F. Leahy, and meet in an afternoon session with their Committee of Contact. Our Committee of Contact has had some contact with this denomination over the last few years, and the brethren in this denomination urged upon us the need to explore ways and means to make our contact more significant.

We also had opportunity to preach at two services in the Omagh Evangelical Presbyterian Church, of which Pastor Norman Green is minister. This denomination left the Free Presbyterian Church, as Rev. Hutton did, in the late Forties, under the leadership of the recently deceased W.J.

Grier. It is a small denomination of seven or eight fairly small congregations. It does not hold to purity of worship, and this is a barrier to union with the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Hutton has arranged a ministers' conference which was held on an afternoon while we were in Larne. This ministers' conference was attended by about 30 ministers representing all the Protestant denominations in the north. (Besides the four denominations mentioned earlier, this would include the Presbyterian Church of Ireland and the Church of Ireland, which is Anglican.) There was opportunity at this ministers' conference to speak on the "Reformed Pastor" and to give a brief history of our Protestant Reformed Churches. A rather lengthy question and answer session followed in which we were closely and carefully quizzed on our views with respect to questions of the covenant, the well-meant offer, and common grace. We consider this meeting extremely valuable because, as soon as people hear that we as churches reject the well-meant offer, we are immediately branded as hyper-Calvinists. We had opportunity to explain our position, make clear why we are not hyper-Calvinists, and show that our churches are busy in the positive development of the truth of particular grace and God's everlasting covenant of grace. To have cleared up many misunderstandings concerning these points made this meeting more than worth while.

As all our people know by now, Mr. Deane Wassink is teaching in Covenant Christian School in Newtonabbey. This school is the only parental Christian school in the whole of Ireland, and is a

completely new venture on the part of the people there. The school is supported by parents of the Bible Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. We had opportunity to visit the school on an afternoon, and the 21 children, who constitute the student body, presented us with a very beautiful program. Rev. Engelsma also spoke at an evening meeting arranged on behalf of the school. The largest crowd, numbering over 80, that had ever gathered at such a meeting gave Rev. Engelsma opportunity to point out the meaning of, need for, and covenant calling to parents to give their children covenantal and Reformed education. The meeting was very profitable, and, under God's blessing, served to promote the cause of Reformed education in Ulster.

It will interest our people to know that Deane and Donna and their family are doing well in Ireland. Deane is doing excellent work in the school, and the people are very pleased with the instruction which he is giving. We must remember Deane and Donna and the work they are doing before the face of God in our prayers.

We spent about twelve days in Ireland, and the time went by altogether too swiftly. The congregation assembled for a brief meeting on the last night we were there. At this meeting our wives were presented with a beautiful china vase and we with a gift of appreciation for our labors. Opportunity was given to say farewell to people we had learned to love. The bonds which had grown between us during this short stay made parting difficult.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Believing All the Prophetic Scriptures

Rev. G. Lubbers

Chapter XVI "The Church-Age" in Premillennialism (continued)

It is the burden of these articles to demonstrate clearly and beyond any doubt that it is contrary to the plain teaching of the prophetic Scriptures to propagate the "doctrine" that it is proper to speak of a "church-age" rather than of confessing that the

church is from the beginning to the end of the world, one and the same church, in two different dispensations!

This ought to become very clear when we study the Biblical teaching in the Old Testament concerning the "church" which we confess in the Twelve Articles of Faith: "I believe an holy catholic church."

The names for the church in the Old Testament are written in Hebrew. They are such names which indicate that the church is much more and also qualitatively different from a mere assembly of individuals; they are the believers, the men of faith and the women of faith as we read of in the well-known chapter of Hebrews 11. Of these worthies we read that they pleased God (Heb. 11:6), they obtained a good report from God in all the Scriptures (Heb. 11:11), they had faith which was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. And even as did the believing patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so the multitude, which forms a "cloud of witnesses," die too in faith. And these all died not having received the promises. Why? Because God had "provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:39). These were the suffering saints in the world all through the Old Testament dispensation, of "whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. 11:38).

If words have meaning we learn from Hebrews 11 that the saints both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament are the same church, the same people of God. The saints of the Old Testament are help up before us as examples of the walk of faith and godliness in the New Testament. There are not two different kinds of rules for each, a rule for earthly kingdom citizens, and a rule for saints in the "church-age." Both must walk by faith, walk in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham, which he had before he was circumcised. Even as Abraham and Isaac and Jacob sought a better country, that is an heavenly, so do the saints which are risen with Christ from the dead; both set their affections upon the things in heaven; both cling to Christ their head (Heb. 11:8-16; Col. 3:1, 2). They are one church, one people, spiritual children of Abraham and belong to Christ, the Seed (Gal. 3:29). In the Old Testament they were the heirs which were non-age, while in the New Testament they are such that they can now receive an inheritance, the promises as they are all fulfilled in the Son of God in the flesh (Gal. 4:1-7).

One people, one promise, one covenant, one Lord, one God, all in one church by the operation of the Holy Spirit! (Eph. 4:4-10). Both have the Spirit of Christ as Peter teaches in I Peter 1:11. The Old Testament church had the Spirit of Christ in the shadows and types as symbolized in the golden candlesticks in the tabernacle, and the New Testament church has the Spirit as predicted in the Prophets (Ez. 36:21-28; Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17; Ez. 11:19, 20; Zach. 12:10; John 7:38). Does not Christ say in John 7:38 what the Scripture (*He graphee*) says? In these passages we have what all the prophetic "Scripture" says. It still "says" what Jesus

interprets the Scripture to say as being fulfilled in Him. This was when He ascended to heaven and received the promise of the Spirit from the Father!

We all drink out of one Spirit!

It is the Scripture which speaks of the church in Psalm 22:22 as "my brethren." These are Jesus' brethren, whom He is not ashamed to "call brethren" (Heb. 2:11, 12). He is not ashamed to call these "brethren" for such they are. It is by His redemptive sufferings and death that he brings these brethren, who are "many sons" of the living God, to glory (Heb. 2:10). It behooved God, by Whom all things are and through Whom all things are, to bring many sons, Christ's "brethren," by Christ's suffering to His glory. Christ is the chief Captain of their salvation on the Cross and in His resurrection and ascension. He cried out, "my God, my God why hast thou forsaken me." And the answer was: that it behooved God thus through His suffering to bring the entire church, both of the Old- and New Testament to glory, so that Christ might be the Firstborn among many brethren. And who are these brethren? Are they the brethren according to the flesh. We have the answer clear and distinct given to us by Christ Himself in Matthew 12:46-50: "... Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister and mother."

Such are the living members of Christ's Church who have received the spiritual sonship, who have received the Spirit of adoption by which they cry to God, "Abba, Father."

This is the *great* congregation!

It is not simply Israel, historic Israel, as it was encamped about the Old Testament tabernacle, three tribes on each side of the tabernacle, east, west, north, south, each under a different standard (Numbers 2); nor does this great congregation refer to a certain historical gathering of the people to conduct a service or a feast day, but it refers to the numberless throng which shall be in the New Jerusalem; it refers to the elect church, Jew and Greek, out of every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. Yet, withal it refers to the church as she is the instituted church in the world under the ordinances and statutes of the most Holy Place. It is the church in the world known by the threefold earmarks: pure preaching of the Gospel, proper administration of the holy sacraments, and the exercise of Christian discipline!

It was not simply a great multitude of people, a mass of individuals who have congregated *themselves* in the wilderness, but they were a "congregation." The term congregation means that they were

a *gathered* flock. The Latin word for flock is "grex." They were gathered unto the LORD in the wilderness by having been redeemed by the blood of the passover Lamb, whose blood was put on the doorpost in the night in which Israel walked triumphantly out of Egypt (Ex. 12:51). And it was the "congregation" of Israel (Ex. 12:3, 6, 47) which was brought out of Egypt under blood. The phrase "congregation of Israel" refers to Israel, the Israel of God, as His peculiar people, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, called out of the darkness of Egypt's bondage into God's marvelous light (Ex. 19:5, 6; I Peter 2:5, 9). It is congregated in the night of the passover under its tribes and elders as organized "church" in the Old Testament; it is not a church because it is assembled. For the church is more than and different from a mere aggregate of many individuals. She is God's elect people, also in the Old Testament dispensation, a holy church, separated from the nations of the world. When Moses is a mediator between God and Israel he mediates to the needs of the church from off Sinai's heights — he with the "church in the wilderness." For, notice well that his being in the wilderness with the church in the wilderness is connected with mount Sinai, and with the fathers who received the lively oracles (Acts 3:38; Rom. 3:2). To this church was committed the sacred trust of being keepers of the Scriptures! And these Scriptures were written "aforetime" for our learning, as New Testament adult church, that we through patience and comfort of these Scriptures might have hope in God (Rom. 15:4).

Indeed this is a far cry from speaking of the New Testament as a "church-age" in distinction from the Old Testament which would not have a "church," as teach the Premillennial Dispensationalists.

Let us take a close look at Psalm 22:22, 25. Here we read, in verse 22, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee."

It should be noticed that the one speaking is none other than the suffering Servant of Jehovah, Jesus. In the verses 1-21 we hear the agony of Christ prophetically as this was endured at Calvary in the outer darkness on the Cross (Matt. 27:44; Mk. 15:34). This brings us so near to Calvary, the place outside of the gate of Jerusalem, that we feel that we are standing there viewing that awful suffering. We hear Christ's own interpretation of it here — hundreds of years before. But is He not the Lamb slain before the foundations of the world (Rev. 13:8)? And did He not give His life at Calvary for those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, for the entire church from Abel until the last

elect to be brought to repentance and glory, namely, for all those given Him by the Father (Rev. 21:27; John 6:9, 40; 17:24)? Such is the prophetic perspective of Psalm 22 where Christ envisions the great congregation.

We should notice that Psalm 22 has three great parts in it. Although no mention is made of Christ's resurrection it is the implied meaning and sense of the Spirit! For in Hebrews 2:9-12 we see that this suffering servant of Jehovah is the one through Whose suffering and death God brings many sons, the *great* congregation, to glory. We see that the one Who "declares God's Name to the brethren is Jesus, crowned with glory and honor at God's right hand: He is Christ; prophet, priest and king. He is the one Who received the Spirit at Pentecost and poured out of His Spirit upon all flesh. Thus He declares mightily, by the apostles and prophets, the Name of God. He is the blessed one Who cometh in the Name of the LORD. Of Him the Old Testament church song and prayed fervently; Save now, Lord. That is the meaning of the well-known "Hosanna." O what a plaintive cry we have in Psalm 118:24, 25. And this is the Christ Who has come to save both the believers of the Old Testament and New Testament in His blood, the blood which speaketh better things than Abel (Gen. 4:10; Heb. 12:24).

Do not forget that Hebrew poetry had what is known as parallelism. The second member in the parallel more clearly states what was mentioned in the first member. In this case the "Great congregation" is designated to be "my brethren." Among these Christ is the first born among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). And these brethren are all those who do the will of the Father in heaven, with works of redemptive thankfulness.

Surely the church-age spans the ages, as the elect are saved out of the whole human race, from the beginning of the world to the end, by the Son of God in our flesh. One Lord, one church, one hope, one baptism, one promise, one God above all, through all and in all! (Eph. 2:12-22; 4:3-16 etc).

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ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

What Next?

"Faith in Focus," the monthly magazine of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, quotes a letter from J.M. Batteau, professor of systematic theology at Korea Seminary, Pusan, Korea. The letter was addressed to all the members of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod which met last summer in Chicago. The letter dealt with his concern about the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken). He quotes from the Liberated Reformed Churches' newspaper from the Netherlands a report about a woman minister in the (Synodical) Reformed Churches in the Netherlands — yet hardly the kind of situation which one might expect within a Reformed church. The report went as follows:

In the monthly bulletin of the Amsterdam combination congregation (Reformed: Nassau church; Dutch Reformed: Prinsesse church), the "Ichtus Woord en Wijk," which we read in the "Waarheidsvriend" (weekly of the conservative Reformed Union within the Dutch Reformed Church, J.M.B.):

"The stimulus to this interview is the happy news that Paula is expecting a baby in September. She is glad to talk about it and, since she is following a life-style that is somewhat different than might be expected, we wanted to ask her a few questions.

Question: What are your plans for the future?

Paula: My boyfriend Hans and I are going to start living together in July; we've found an apartment on Watteaustraat.

Question: You two are not getting married. Why not?

Paula: In my circle of friends there are many who are not officially married, and if we were to be officially married I get the feeling that I would alienate them. It is a matter of personal feeling. The church can be terribly stern with people who choose a life-style other than marriage. I'm hoping for a church which has more room for people who want to live differently, such as lesbians who live together, or those who want to live alone.

Question: How can you bless a marriage if you yourself don't want to be married?

Paula: It's a part of my job. I enjoy it tremendously,

and I'm not at all against church marriages. It's fine if people want to celebrate their covenant with each other in church, with their joy and pain. I'm only very sad that a church marriage is made exclusive, and other life-styles are condemned. The joy of homosexual relations, for example; I would like to have them also celebrated in church. But often it's simply not possible.

Question: Paula, don't you think that the minister ought to be a good example for the congregation? What about the teenagers?

Paula: The real question is: are we following the path of the Messiah? Does our path have anything to do with the path that Jesus followed? *There's* where I feel my responsibility. The minister does not have a position *above* the congregation, but rather is together with the congregation. How do we live as Christians in our mutual life together? To be a "shepherd and teacher" means this: as a shepherd one follows the path which the Good Shepherd has taken; as a teacher one takes part in opening the Scripture with one another. The congregation has no right to criticize me concerning the form of my relationship, though it certainly can do so regarding the content of my relationship. And as far as that is concerned, it is going well, I have full confidence in it. Parents of teenagers might be shocked; I can well imagine it. Thinking: I certainly hope my child doesn't . . . But let the children choose freely the life-style which suits them best. Are they happy? Do they treat each other well? Children are not extensions of ourselves, but rather they are entrusted to our care. In our congregation we're happy that we don't exclude anyone. There is room for different opinions, and readiness to talk about them.

Question: What kind of person is Hans? Many of us don't know him. And he doesn't go to Church. What should we think about it?

Paula: We met each other shortly after I came to work in the Prinsesse church. Wonderful things all came together at the same time. Hans has studied political science and he's working as a researcher for the Bureau of Economics in The Hague. He travels back and forth every day by train, and in September he's going to be working three days a week. Just like Hans Mos and Rev. Hibma we're choosing to take care of the child *together*, and we're both going to be

working. When Hans was 17 he left the Dutch Reformed Church, after much thought. I see a lot of Calvinism in him. We have good talks about my work and my faith — he supports me completely in the way I do it. He listens critically to my sermons, especially the development of the theme. We have good discussions about the discoveries I make in a Bible text. He doesn't go to church, because he doesn't want to give the impression that he belongs to a community which he actually has no part of. If Hans had been a church member I would have loved to celebrate my commitment and joy in church. But Hans thinks it simply hypocritical to go through religious motions which he doesn't believe in.

No one should get the impression that I'm opposed to marriage. I'm only opposed to using norms and values *against* people. Do people have the chance to receive their genuine rights? *That's* what concerns me. I'm only asking for the room to live in this way. We're really happy together.

We thank Paula for her honest answers, which we've compressed because of lack of space. We wish her and Hans all the best." (End of the excerpt from *Netherlands Dagblad*).

So: Rev. Paula Irik is a minister in good standing in the Dutch Reformed Church who is serving a

church in Amsterdam. She is expecting a baby out of wedlock and does not plan to marry her non-believing boyfriend. She does not condemn Christian marriages, but insists on the option of other life-styles.

One hears strange things coming out of the Netherlands. From the denial of the infallibility of Scripture, to the denial of the atonement of Christ on the cross, to a walk and life-style contrary to all that the Bible teaches — all this is tolerated and even approved. One wonders how all this can be. Two of the ministers from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands have recently been visiting the Christian Reformed Church in Canada. In some of the reports of these visits, it appears that these ministers try to explain how all this comes to be. Still, such deviation both in doctrine and in life can not be explained — but can only be condemned. This action is neither Reformed nor Scriptural. If there is no repentance, there is assuredly condemnation in hell.

One might wonder, incidentally, what the situation will be for this woman minister five years from now. Surely the bitter fruits of her action will be experienced in her life.

Government Support = Government Control

Some of the Canadian provinces provide government support for private school students. The Christian schools in British Columbia receive \$900 *per student* per year. We might look rather enviously at such a gold-mine. What would this do to our tuition payments? Were we to receive something on a similar scale, it would reduce our tuition payments to a few hundreds of dollars. We could pay teachers more. We could provide more subjects for our students to study. If . . .

But the Christian schools of B.C. are facing a dilemma. To receive continued support, the students must take government tests or the government support is reduced to \$300 per student (not a small amount either). But to take government tests, one must be prepared to study government-prescribed courses. One writer in *Calvinist Contact*, Sept. 28, 1984, presents the following:

Van Brummelen believes the imposition of these examinations to be a turning point for BC's Christian schools. He points out that Christian schools have never opposed government testing of basic skills and general knowledge, and have welcomed government evaluation teams. Now, he says, a new element has been added in that schools must carefully follow government-prescribed courses. Rather than teaching and continuing to develop an integrally Christian program of studies at these levels, the schools now can only add Christian interpretations to material that is often based on a non-Christian view of life.

Parents face a real dilemma in making decisions about the examinations. Students from schools not writing examinations will not be able to enter public universities directly, and their diplomas will be viewed second-rank by the public-at-large.

BC's schools have always made a strong argument for government funding of Christian schools on the

basis of justice in a pluralistic society. The examination issue has underscored, however, that receipt of funding also makes the schools subject to undesirable government control.

The above is a sobering reminder of the control a government obtains by way of providing financial support. We can tell ourselves that we just get back our "taxes," but the fact remains, that the government regards our taxes as their own monies. What

we get back, has strings attached — strings which make such support suspect. Let us too beware that allure of such governmental support. The government seeks to control the Christian schools already now — but finance gives them apparent justification for the attempt to control.

And make no mistake — support once given, but then withdrawn, is more difficult to face than never having received the support in the first place.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

Missionary Methods (25)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

In the previous three articles of this series we have examined some of the views of Rufus Anderson. Because it has been some time since this column has appeared we shall give a brief review of what we have discovered thus far in our study of Anderson. Anderson, like Henry Venn and John Nevius, was firmly convinced that the mission church should become self supporting, self governing, and self propagating as soon as possible. In this connection Anderson stressed that the sole aim of missions must be evangelization and not civilization. By the latter he meant the church must not expect the heathen among whom it works on the foreign field to conform to the culture and life style of the country and peoples of the sending church. The missionary must not work for this either. By evangelization Anderson emphasized that the sole task of the missionary is to preach and teach the blessed Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On a more practical note Anderson strongly asserted that it is not only possible but desirable that the missionary be married and have children with him on the foreign field. The missionary needs the support a godly wife can give. In his marriage and family life the missionary provides an example to those with whom he works of what the Christian marriage and family ought to be.

In spite of the hardships, difficulties, and problems which the missionary and his family must needs face we certainly agree with these conclusions of Anderson. We also believe that the God

Who calls His servants to this great work will provide for the needs of those servants and their families. Scripture everywhere emphasizes that the work of the missionary preacher is difficult, even burdensome. But Scripture also assures God's servants that Christ will never leave nor forsake them. Christ will be with His servants to provide for their need, to comfort, strengthen, and encourage them in their trials and persecutions.

Another point which Anderson goes to great lengths to establish is that missionaries are to be evangelists and not settled pastors. The work of missionaries and pastors of established congregations is essentially the same from the point of view of the fact that both are chiefly engaged in the preaching of the gospel. Nevertheless their work is to be distinguished. Basing his point on the record of the work of the Apostles, especially Paul, found in the Book of Acts, Anderson had this to say: "Their (the Apostles') commission embraced only the proclamation of the gospel and planting its institutions. As soon as the gospel by their means had gained a footing in any one district or country, they left the work in charge to others, called elders and also bishops or overseers of the flock and church of God, whom they ordained for this purpose. Sometimes they did not remain even long enough to provide spiritual guides for the churches they had planted. 'For this cause,' says Paul to Titus, 'left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every

city, as I had appointed thee.' The elders were the pastors of the new churches It enters into the nature of the pastor's relation, that he remain or be intended to remain long the spiritual instructor of one people. It is indeed as really his business to call sinners to repentance, as it is that of the missionary; but, owing to his more permanent relations, and to the fact that he is constituted the religious guide and instructor of his converts during the whole period of their earthly pilgrimage, his range of duty in respect to them is more comprehensive than that of the missionary in respect to his converts. The pastor is charged, in common with the missionary, with reconciling men to God; and he has also an additional charge, arising from the peculiar circumstances of his relation, with respect to their growth in grace and sanctification. But the missionary's *great* business in his personal labors, is with the unconverted. His embassy is to the rebellious, to beseech them, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. His vocation, as a soldier of the cross, is to make conquests, and to go on, in the name of his divine Master, 'conquering and to conquer,' committing the security and permanency of his conquests to another class of men created expressly for the purpose. The idea of *continued conquest* is fundamental in missions to the heathen, and is vital to their spiritual life and efficiency. It will doubtless be found on inquiry, that missions among the heathen have always ceased to be healthful and efficient, have ceased to evince the true missionary spirit in its strength, whenever they have ceased to be actively aggressive upon the kingdom of darkness.

"In a word, the missionary prepares new fields for pastors; and when they are thus prepared, and competent pastors are upon the ground, he ought himself to move onward, — the pioneer in effect of a Christian civilization — but in office, work and spirit, an ambassador for Christ, to preach the gospel where it has not been preached." (*To Advance The Gospel*, Rufus Anderson, R. Pierce Beaver, editor. Eerdmans, pp. 75, 76.)

While one may not agree with everything stated in the above quotation from Anderson, one must agree with his main contention, viz., that the work of a missionary differs from that of a pastor. The pastor shepherds a specific "flock of God" for a relatively long period of time. He cares for an established congregation. But the missionary preaches to the unconverted. His task it is to preach the Word with a view to the instituting of a congregation. When a congregation has been established under the care of a qualified pastor and qualified elders and deacons the missionary must move on to another field. His work in that place is finished. He must not at this point assume the place of a pastor

of that congregation. Thus we find in Anderson's writings the same emphasis as in Henry Venn's "Euthanasia of the Mission."

This, however, leaves us with a difficult question: just when or at what point ought the missionary leave a given field of labor for a new one. The answer depends in large measure on the circumstances in a given field. But whatever a missionary does he ought not stay too long after the church has been instituted and is under the care of its own native pastors, elders, and deacons. Addressing himself to this question Anderson said, "It is an unsettled problem how the work of missions may be so finished, that the missionary can safely withdraw, leaving the new Christian community to take care of itself. There are spiritual, intellectual, and social difficulties to be first overcome; and these are often much aggravated by adverse influences from abroad. Out of what depths of moral and social degradation is every heathen convert raised before he is fitted for membership in the Church of Christ! 'And such were some of you,' — 'fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners.' (I Cor. 6:10, 11) But though 'justified in the name of the Lord Jesus,' they are sanctified only in part, 'babes in Christ,' continually needing to be taught 'which be the first principles of the oracles of God.' Who can realize what it is, and what it must be, for an entire community of Christians to have had their home, for a long course of years before conversion, where truth had fallen in the street, and equity could not enter, without rule or protection of law, with no standard of morality, no domestic virtue, no culture of the affections, no correct public sentiment, and almost no conscience? And, who, that has closely observed the weaknesses and imperfections of human nature in its most favored conditions, is not prepared for occasional and violent outbreaks of ingratitude, passion, waywardness, and wickedness, in churches gathered from the lower, and sometimes the lowest, depths of humanity? That such churches should live, thrive, and ever reach the self-sustaining point, is a miracle of grace" (Anderson, p. 93). After pointing out that many of these weaknesses and sins, both in doctrine and in practice, were manifest in the churches established by the Apostle Paul in Asia Minor, Anderson concludes: "The work of the missionary has been performed mainly at central points; and when this work shall have been completed at all these points, and there is no more need of new stations, — when it is possible for gospel institutions to exist, through divine grace, without the longer presence of the missionary, — then the work of the mission in that community is obviously completed.

The missionary, having 'no more place in those parts,' should go and preach the gospel elsewhere. It is a great point to know when to do this. After a native church is formed, it should have, as soon as possible, a native pastor and the needed church officers; and the native pastor should have ample scope for preaching, and for all his ministerial and pastoral abilities and duties. The local church is the divinely appointed illuminating power for its district. It is the great power in missions . . . With a somewhat reserved and discreet superintendence on the part of the nearest missionary, it will thrive best, after a proper organization, by being left to itself. Thus station after station may be finished, and new conquests be continually made, with almost no enlargement in the number of the foreign force, and also without any material increase of expenditure; provided the native pastors have not been rendered too expensive by an injudicious education, doing less to fit them for their work than to make them dissatisfied in it, and provided the duty of self-support has been properly urged upon the native churches" (Anderson, p. 96). We do well

to bear this in mind in our own mission labors. There comes a time when the missionary must leave the field. The mission station must not become a permanent institution alongside native churches. Missions has as its aim the gathering of the elect out of the nations. When that is the fruit of the missionary's preaching and the church is established he must seek new fields of labor.

In this same connection Anderson emphasizes that all this is accomplished only by means of the preaching of the Word. This is the sole task of the missionary. He must preach and only preach! This is what he said over one hundred years ago: "The weapons of our warfare must be spiritual. The enemy will laugh at the shaking of a spear, at diplomatic skill, at commerce, learning, philanthropy, and every scheme of social order and refinement. He stands in fear of nothing but the cross of Christ, and therefore we must rely on nothing else. With that we may boldly pass all his outworks and entrenchments, and assail his very citadel" (Anderson, pp. 84, 85).

. . . to be continued

THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

The Christian and Work (2)

Rev. Ron Cammenga

In our last article we began to discuss the subject of the Christian and the ordinance of labor. We discussed the institution of labor by God and the teaching of the Scripture regarding the necessity of our working. In this article we want especially to consider the purposes of our labor and consider the truth that no matter what our specific calling in life may be, our labor is a divine vocation.

The first purpose of our labor is certainly that we may be able to provide for the needs of ourselves and of our family. God is the One Who cares for us, giving us all the necessities for our earthly life in the world. But God is pleased to do this ordinarily by our working. Our labor is the God-appointed means by which we receive our daily bread. And, ordinarily, apart from our working we have no reason to expect that God will care for our needs.

The money that we need to meet our responsibilities, to pay our bills, to put food on our table, to pay our children's Christian school tuition, to provide housing and clothing for ourselves and our family is money that God gives us by means of our working.

That it is God's purpose to provide for our earthly necessities by our working is plainly the teaching of Scripture. In I Thessalonians 4:11, 12 the Apostle enjoins believers to do their own business and to work with their own hands, walking honestly toward them that are without, so that the believers themselves may have lack of nothing. In II Thessalonians 3:10-12 the Apostle commands that they who will not work ought not to eat, and again he admonishes the believers to work with quietness, that is, not complaining, so that they

may eat their own bread. In I Timothy 5:8 the Apostle teaches, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." On the basis of passages like these, the Marriage Form instructs husbands, "And since it is God's command, 'that the man shall eat his bread in the sweat of his face,' therefore you are to labor diligently and faithfully, in the calling wherein God hath sent you . . ."

The second outstanding purpose of our labor is that, besides providing for ourselves, we also might be able to contribute to the support of the ministry of the gospel. The clear teaching of the Scripture is that this is the duty, as well as the blessed privilege, of every Christian. Already in the Old Testament, God's people provided for the support of the ministry of the tabernacle and temple. They did that in various ways. They did that by the tithes that they brought of the annual increase of their flocks and herds. They did that by the many sacrifices which they brought, a portion of which often went to the priests. They did that by the free-will offerings, the offerings made in fulfillment of various vows, the gift of the firstfruits, and the payment of what was referred to as the temple tax, the payment to the temple ministry of the half-shekel annually.

Also the New Testament binds upon believers the solemn calling to support the ministry of the Word. The Lord Himself ordains this in Matthew 10:9, 10, where, after sending out His disciples to preach, He says to them, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip (i.e., money or currency) for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat." The outstanding passage is I Corinthians 9. There the Apostle teaches that those who sow spiritual things ought to reap the carnal things of God's people (vs. 11). And in verse 14 he says explicitly, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

In harmony with this teaching of Scripture, the Heidelberg Catechism explains that part of our keeping of the Fourth Commandment is ". . . that the ministry of the gospel . . . be maintained . . ." This position is also reflected in the call letter used in our churches: "Convinced that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and to encourage you in the discharge of your duties, and to free you from all worldly cares and avocations while you are dispensing spiritual blessing to us, we . . . do promise and oblige ourselves to pay you . . ." a certain amount.

We work, therefore, so that we may be able to

contribute to the support of the gospel ministry. Included with the ministry, of course, are all those other causes of God's kingdom to which we are also able to contribute.

The third purpose of our labor is that we may be able to help in the relief of the poor. This ought to be an important motivation to us in our work.

This is the will of God. In Ephesians 4:28 the Apostle exhorts, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." To the elders of the church at Ephesus, Paul says in Acts 20:35, "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how that he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." For the support and care of the poor, Christ has instituted the office of deacon. The Form Of Ordination Of Elders And Deacons calls the members of the church to uphold the office of deacon: "Provide the deacons with good means to assist the indigent. Be charitable, ye rich, give liberally, and contribute willingly." The Marriage Form not only enjoins husbands to labor diligently so that they may provide for the needs of their own family, but so that they ". . . likewise have something to give to the poor."

Especially do the young people need to be reminded of their calling to support the ministry and contribute to the relief of the poor. Often, I fear, our young people do not take this responsibility seriously. They may have a good job and earn a good wage, but they contribute little or nothing for the kingdom. The money that they earn is consumed on a car, on pleasure, on a house, on clothing, on an education, on this and on that, so that when the collection plate is passed on Sunday all that's left is a little change in their pocket. This is wrong! Our young people need to be encouraged to give regularly and liberally to the kingdom. And they are in a good position to do so. They do not have all the financial responsibilities that a large family with several children has. God has put them in an ideal position to be of great help in the support of the causes of the kingdom. And if our young people do this, they may be sure that they will be rewarded by God a hundredfold.

The final thing that must be regarded by the believer is that the work and calling which is his in life is a work and calling that he receives from God. Our labor is a divine vocation. We often are inclined to think only of the ministers of the gospel as having a call from God. And although this is true, it is equally true that every believer in the particular position which he occupies and labor which he performs has a call from God.

The fact of the matter is that it is only as we have a proper sense of our labor as a divine vocation, will we also have a proper sense of our responsibility diligently to carry it out. When our work becomes drudgery, when our work involves hardship, when the conditions imposed upon us are oppressive, when we are tempted to individual or organized rebellion against our employer, when we are tempted to recompense evil on the part of our employer with the evil of careless work on our part, then we need to remind ourselves of the words of the Apostle in Colossians 3:23, 24: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."

In Ephesians 6:5-7 the Apostle lays his finger on the cardinal vice of our labor: we do it to please men. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." Men-pleasing takes many forms. Even when the best job is done, if the only purpose is to please men, to receive the compliments and praise of men, we violate the fundamental principle of labor: "with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men."

Each of us must consider his work a calling from the Lord, whether that's mother in the home teacher in the school, worker in the factory, busi-

nessman, farmer, doctor, lawyer, minister of the Word. God assigns to each his or her own position. God is the one Who gives to us the gifts and talents that are ours for the work which we are called to do. Since our work itself is provided us by God, since our strength and ability to do the work comes from God, our work itself ought to be done to the glory of God.

Calvin writes:

It is to be remarked that the Lord commands every one of us, in all the actions of life, to regard his vocation. For he knows with what great inquietude the human mind is inflamed, with what desultory levity it is hurried hither and thither, and how insatiable is its ambition to grasp different things at once. Therefore to prevent universal confusion being produced by our folly and temerity, he has appointed to all their particular duties in different spheres of life. And that no one might rashly transgress the limits prescribed, he has styled such spheres of life vocations, or callings. Every individual's line of life, therefore, is, as it were, a post assigned him by the Lord . . . (*Institutes*, III, x, 6.)

May God give us the grace to regard our work as our calling from the Lord. In our work, may we labor "heartily, as unto the Lord." By means of our labor, may we be provided with the means of support of ourselves and our family, and have wherewith to contribute to the support of the ministry and the relief of the poor.

Book Reviews

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO GENESIS, by Charles C. Cochrane; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984; 88 pp., \$5.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko).

The author was for 40 years a minister in the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Why this book should be the product of his literary efforts is hard to say. It is not a very good book and hardly worth the time spent in reading it.

The author proceeds from the assumption that the call of Abraham is the beginning of God's plan to save all mankind, with the first eleven chapters

serving as prologue. Most of the book is spent on a brief explanation of these first eleven chapters.

That the author is thoroughly Arminian appears already from the statement found in the paragraph above this one: ". . . God's plan to save all mankind." But worse is his higher criticism. He considers the first eleven chapters of Genesis to be parables, i.e., "truth conveyed and expressed in story form." Other examples of his higher criticism can be found throughout the book.

Other weaknesses are: he gives an Arminian interpretation of Romans 4:3; he leaves the whole

question of evolution an open one; he mistakenly claims that only man is called "a living soul" in Scripture.

The material of the book arose out of a course the author taught in Christian education in a high school in Canada. It is, however, highly unsuited to the purpose of teaching young people.

THE CASE FOR CHRISTIANITY, by Colin Chapman; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983; 313 pp., \$12.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko).

This book is really a book on Apologetics, and in many ways it is an excellent one. It starts from the basic questions which are asked concerning religion and human life today and goes on to show that Christianity provides the essential key to the meaning and value of life. It discusses the claims which Christianity makes, compares these with alternatives, and shows that Christianity is able to provide the best answers.

Some of the good features of the book are the inclusion in it of over 1000 quotations from various writers and a rather large section on the views of modern religions and various influential thinkers which have contributed to human thought over the

years. These sections alone form a valuable resource. The book is also lavishly illustrated with all kinds of pictures, although, in this reviewer's opinion, the pictures do not add materially to the value of the book.

Nevertheless, the approach of the book is basically wrong. The author, as we stated above, approaches the question of Apologetics from the viewpoint that Christianity provides the best answer to the questions of life, and his treatment of the historical facts of Scripture is rationalistic in the sense that he seeks to show that belief, e.g., in the miracles of Jesus is a belief based upon good evidence. Ultimately, the case for the Christian faith rests only upon Scripture itself. And only faith will accept Scripture as the Word of God. And faith, it must be remembered, is a gift of God.

*Read and Study
The
Standard Bearer!*

News From Our Churches

December 15, 1984

Three of our churches have recently extended calls. From a trio consisting of the Reverends R. Hanko, Kamps, and Moore, Hull Protestant Reformed Church has called Rev. Kamps. Our church in Houston, Texas has called Prof. Decker, from a trio which included also Rev. Slopsema and Rev. Woudenberg. Lynden's trio was Rev. Haak, Rev. Slopsema, and Rev. VanBaren. Rev. Haak received the call.

Prof. Hoeksema planned to leave for Lynden on the 21st of December, in order to preach in our church there on the 23rd, and take the rest of the services through those of Sunday, January 6.

Rev. Van Overloop writes that the people in the northwest suburb of Chicago who attend the worship services and other meetings are very faithful in attendance. One of the families attending requested baptism for their infant son. The sacrament of baptism was administered at the October 21 afternoon

worship service. Rev. Van Overloop is also on WCFL-AM (1000), a clear channel radio station. The recording of the program takes place in their studios downtown and is broadcasted on Sunday mornings (11:45) for fifteen minutes. Let us remember this brother in our prayers.

Rev. Bruinsma writes that they arrived in Jamaica with Wes and Glenda Koops and appreciated the love and hospitality given to them by the Jamaican people. They are also impressed with the sizable house that is to be their dwelling place. They spent three days cleaning and painting the kitchen and the bathrooms. They are subject to black-outs, which they experienced the first night there. The weather is hot — 85° to 90° with rain every day. Rev. Bruinsma has talked to some of the church people concerning the needs of the churches. He closes with these comments: "There are many burdens and difficulties we must overcome. God is good to us — we experience His tender mer-

cy every day. We pray for contentment and guidance day by day as we are far from home, family, and friends."

In a letter to the congregation at First Church, Rev. Arie and Sherry den Hartog state, "Last Saturday I was asked to speak for a gospel meeting sponsored by the Youth Fellowship of our church. The topic which I was asked to speak on was 'Believing God in the Age of the Computer.'"

"In the last week we greatly enjoyed the visit of Rev. and Mrs. Miersma and their son, Eric . . . The members of ERCS gave them their usual warm Christian welcome and attended to showing them some of the sights of Singapore."

"We also have a visitor with us again from Ghana Africa, Mr. Gabriel Anygba . . . He belongs to an Evangelistic Society in Ghana with which our churches in America have had contact for a number of years."

"All in all, getting a church building here in Singapore is extremely difficult. To buy a proper church building would cost millions . . . We do need your prayers for this whole matter. Some of the small churches in Singapore have resorted to splitting up their congregations and having small meetings in several homes of the members. This is not very good however, as far as the unity of the church and

can make the functioning of the church very difficult . . ."

A special program was held in First Church the night of November 25 to pause and reflect on God's faithfulness to the congregation throughout the years. Rev. C. Hanko, Rev. G. Van Baren, and Rev. Joostens spoke to those present. The new owner of the property, Rev. Vander Beek, also spoke.

The Council of South Holland Protestant Reformed Church asked their pastor to inform the congregation concerning the work that Prof. Hanko and he did in Northern Ireland and England at a public meeting on November 30. Rev. Engelsma showed slides of his trip.

I will end with this quote from newsletter no. 13 of the Randolph Protestant Reformed School Society: "We are also aware that there are many questions and objections that have been raised about having our own school. Is it financially feasible to start and maintain our own school? Will the school we would be able to run provide an adequate education for our children? May we simply pull out of the Randolph Christian School to start our own school? These and other questions have been raised. We intend to discuss some of these in our future newsletters." DH

NOTICE!!!

The newly organized Heritage Christian School of Hudsonville, Michigan is in need of teachers for grades K through 9 for the 1985-86 School Year.

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

Erv Kortering, Sec'y.

IN MEMORIAM

THOMAS HUIZINGA, age 80; died November 22, 1984; 7745 Coachman Lane, Jenison, Michigan. Wife - Henrietta; children - Grace and Ted Boelema, Frank and Laura Huizinga, Don and Ruth Machiela, Tom and Irene Huizinga, Jim and Evelyn Borst, Harold and Kate Huizinga, Roger and Nancy Huizinga. 34 grandchildren and 35 great grandchildren. Two sisters - Edith Boersma and Grace Potter. Two brothers - John and Otto Huizinga.

ATTENTION!!!

It has come to our attention that some of our readers received faulty copies of the December 1 Special Issue on the subject of Prayer. Some pages were repeated and some pages were omitted in a number of copies — we know not how many. Evidently there were gremlins at work at Wobbema Printing! If you received a faulty copy, please write immediately to our Business Office to inform Mr. Vander Wal. Be sure to furnish your name and complete address. Write to: The Standard Bearer, P.O. Box 6064, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. We will send you a new copy as soon as possible.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On December 21, 1984 our parents, MR. & MRS. HENRY J. BLANKESPOOR celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren, thank our heavenly Father Who gave them to us that we might know our God to serve Him, as they led us day by day. We pray that God will continue to be near to them and bless them as they continue to walk together fulfilling their calling given unto them. Truly we confess with them that God is faithful to His covenant always.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them." Psalm 103:17, 18

John Blankespoor
Jim and Wilma Blankespoor
Alvin and Sally Kooiker

Robert and Geraldine Blankespoor
21 grandchildren
3 great grandchildren

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The consistory and congregation of the First Protestant Reformed Church, Edmonton, Alberta, extend their Christian sympathy to our brother officebearer, Deacon Fred Tolsma and his family, in the loss of their daughter, NICOLE, aged 1 year, 7 months, on December 9, 1984.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Psalm 55:22

Rev. T. Miersma, President
H. Nieuwenkamp, Clerk