

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

... What we must be convinced of as Christians is that mothers ought not to work outside of their homes, not first of all because of the bad results of this for society or for themselves, but because this is forbidden by the Word of God.

See "Working Mothers" — page 187

CONTENTS

Meditation —	
Go and Tell the Church	170
Editorial —	
One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty	173
Special Report —	
Trip to the British Isles (2)	175
The Day of Shadows —	
Human Craftiness and Divine Faithfulness	177
Taking Heed to the Doctrine —	
Integration and Segregation (1)	180
The Lord Gave the Word —	
Missionary Methods (26)	182
Faith of Our Fathers —	
The Nicene Creed	184
The Strength of Youth —	
Working Mothers	187
In His Fear —	
God Is Sovereign	189
News From Our Churches	191

THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

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

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.

Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

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

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

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

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

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

Reprint Policy: Permission is hereby granted for the reprinting of articles in our magazine by other publications, provided: a) that such reprinted articles are reproduced in full; b) that proper acknowledgement is made; c) that a copy of the periodical in which such reprint appears is sent to our editorial office.

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

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

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

Advertising Policy: The Standard Bearer does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$3.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business Office and should be accompanied by the \$3.00 fee. Deadline for announcements is the 1st or the 15th of the month, previous to publication on the 15th or the 1st respectively.

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

MEDITATION

Go and Tell the Church

Rev. C. Hanko

Ques. 85: How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by christian discipline?

Ans.: Thus; when according to the command of Christ, those who under the name of christians, maintain doctrines, or practices inconsistent therewith, and will not, after having been often brotherly admonished, renounce their errors and wicked course of life, are complained of to the church, or to those, who are thereunto appointed by the church; and if they despise their admonitions, are by them forbidden the use of the sacraments, whereby they are excluded from the christian church, and by God Himself from the kingdom of Christ; and when they promise and show real amendment, are again received as members of Christ and of His church.

Lord's Day 31

Sin brings untold misery into the church.

The sinner is miserable. He knows that he is depriving himself of his peace with God. He suffers untold agonies, especially as he tosses and turns throughout the long, sleepless hours of the night. His prayers choke in his throat. To silence the voice of conscience he continuously argues with himself, justifying the very actions that he would condemn in others. Admit it or not, he is enslaved in the bondage of sin, from which he knows no escape. Those three words: I have sinned, are so difficult to utter. Even more difficult it is for him to forsake his sin and make his peace with God.

The other person (or persons) who knows about this sin is also miserable. He is grieved, yet he bears his grief alone, rather than divulge his knowledge to anyone. He finds his refuge in prayer for the erring brother or sister who has fallen victim to the wiles of Satan. Impelled by the love of Christ, he wrestles in prayer day and night, and then proceeds to carry out the unpleasant, difficult task of one sinner admonishing another. Realizing more than ever the power of sin, he goes to his brother again and again. He knows that the more public this sin becomes, the more difficult becomes the reconciliation. Finally, he seeks out a proper witness, maybe two, in order to confirm that he is right in making the charges, and that he has dealt with the sinner in true humility and Christian love. By the word of two or three witnesses will every word be established.

At this point he may think that he has carried out his duty. Why involve himself in this painful task any longer? But Jesus says, "If he shall neglect to hear *them*, tell it unto the church." Others have become involved. The witness has not merely served as a silent observer, but is also grieved by the sin that persists among the members of the church. Together they tell it to the church, that is, to the representative body of the church, the elders. We may ask, but what if the guilty party is a dear friend, a close relative, or even a member of the family, a wayward son? That question sends us to the Scriptures, to Deuteronomy 21:15-21, which instructs the parents of the old dispensation in regard to their calling over against a rebellious son. True, we live in a different dispensation, but the underlying principle of the duty of the parent determines our calling also today. Even if we are dealing with a member of the family, sin may never be ignored, much less condoned. We may ask, in turn, who is capable of carrying this out? To which the answer is, no one of himself, but we must pray for grace, rather than prove unfaithful to our God!

Our mutual responsibility toward one another as members of God's church never ceases. If anyone

has anything against me, it is my duty to go to him, according to Matthew 5:23, 24. I may never say, let him come to me. If I have anything against a brother, it is my duty to go to him. There is no escape from this duty. Never may we take the Cain attitude, "Am I my brother's keeper?" No excuse may keep me from carrying out my duty. What a grief would be spared to God's church, if the love of Christ always impelled us to hate sin to such a degree that we would oppose it whenever it lifts its vile head among us!

For we do have a communal responsibility toward one another. Jesus warns us of this when He says, "Take heed to *yourselves*; if thy brother trespass against thee . . ." (Luke 17:3). We know about a certain sin of a fellow saint. We ignore it. Or we gossip about it. How much easier it is to tell others than to face the guilty party! We ourselves become guilty. Especially because we ignore our communal responsibility.

We read of this communal responsibility more often in Scripture. One clear evidence of it appears when Israel has entered Canaan and has conquered Jericho. We read, "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan . . . took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel" (Joshua 7:1). Here is an instance where one of the people sinned, even without the knowledge of the others, yet the entire congregation is held responsible. The Lord would not give them the promised land until they had put away the evil by punishing Achan and his family with stoning (vs. 26). Are we possibly inclined to think too lightly of sin in ourselves and in our fellow saints?

This communal responsibility weighed heavily on Daniel, who as a young man was taken captive into Babylon. In the 9th chapter of his prophecy he weeps and makes confession before the face of God for all Israel and Judah. "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments. . . . O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day, to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel" (vss. 5, 7). Does not Jesus teach us to pray, "And forgive *us* our debts, as *we* forgive *our* debtors"?

Sin is transgression of God's law, a violation of His love, an offence against His Most High Majesty. That is what makes sin such a serious matter. But sin also spreads like a contagious disease through the congregation, if it is not nipped in the bud. And who can put his hand in his own bosom and not find it leprous when he takes it out? The church becomes involved. Therefore the church must be

told by reporting an unconfessed, persistent sin to the elders. Personally, we must still continue to storm the throne of grace, seeking mercy for the wandering sheep, if so be that God will still save; which, indeed, he will certainly do, unless this person is not a sheep of His fold. Therefore we always pray in submission to the divine will.

Church discipline differs when it is applied to a baptized member and when it is applied to a confessing member. In both instances the faithful elders never weary of visiting the unfaithful member. In both instances the offender is spared as much publicity as possible. But the various steps of censure which are applied to a confessing member are not used in dealing with a baptized member. After repeated admonitions, in which the sinner becomes the more adamant and resentful, the consistory proceeds, upon the advice of classis, to "erase" him from their membership. The word "erase" leaves one with a bad taste. It gives the impression that the baptized member is only a member of the church in a purely formal sense, and that his removal is nothing more than applying the eraser to his name in the membership books. This is certainly not the case. He has been in the realm of the covenant, has the sign of baptism on his forehead, and will, therefore, receive greater condemnation for having known the way and not having walked in it.

In the case of a confessing member the discipline is much more protracted. There is, first of all, the "silent censure," in which the erring brother is still not exposed, at least not any more than the case requires. At the same time, he is made aware of the consequences of his stubborn resistance to all admonition. He is withdrawing himself from the communion of saints, from God's church, and from God Himself. Unless he repents, the outcome will only be disastrous.

If this person persists in his waywardness, even after repeated admonitions by the elders, a public announcement is made, informing the congregation officially that sin is present among them. But even now the name is withheld, still protecting him from public exposure. The objection has been raised, that if the name of the erring brother is withheld, it proves impossible for the congregation to pray for him. Or, if the name is not known, the wrong person may be brought under suspicion. To those objections must be answered, that the congregation should not busy itself at this point with the party involved, but rather with the sin that remains unconfessed among them; over that sin we grieve and raise our voices to heaven!

At this stage, sometimes earlier, the offender tries to escape further discipline by asking for his

membership papers. Often relatives and friends will encourage him to do so, in order to avoid further disgrace. In this day of spiritual laxity there is some church that will accept him, regardless of the offence. Yet this is so very wrong! At that solemn moment when he made confession of his faith before God and the church he promised, if ever that should prove necessary, to submit to church discipline. Now he breaks that vow! He tries to run away from God, much as Jonah did when he refused to go to Nineveh, but that is impossible. It is Christ who exercises His discipline through the church. To turn against Christ is nothing less than exercising the keys of the kingdom, excommunication on one's self.

After many visits and admonitions by the elders, without obtaining the desired results, the consistory is forced to proceed to the second step of censure. Before this is carried out, the advice of classis is sought, even as is done in the instance of a baptized member. At this point the name of the offender, as well as his offence, is announced to the congregation, for a twofold reason. First, the congregation must be aware of the fact that discipline involves all of us, so that we are urged to pray for the erring member of the church and to admonish him whenever possible. Second, emphasis falls on the fact, that discipline is intended, not to destroy, but to save. Often the guilty party complains of being harassed and takes on a leave-me-alone attitude. He still must be made aware that the church is compelled by the love of Christ to make him realize the seriousness of his sin and its terrible consequences.

Finally, and reluctantly, the consistory proceeds to the "final remedy." The sinner is warned, and the congregation is informed, that, unless there is a sincere repentance even at this late date, the church, in the name of Christ, will proceed to the painful task of excommunication, declaring this person to be as a "heathen and publican," outside of the kingdom. When the Form for excommunication is read there is aroused in the heart of every sincere child of God the consciousness of his own wretchedness and sinfulness, with the prayer for mercy and grace, for "let him who stands beware lest he fall."

We can close on a more pleasant note. There is always the possibility that this person is a lost sheep that has wandered far from the fold, but whom God in mercy brings back with sincere repentance. There is joy in heaven over the lost that was found. Who of us would not welcome the prodigal son back into Father's House?

Give The Standard Bearer!

EDITORIAL

One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

[Editor's note: This is the text of my address delivered Sept. 27, 1984, at our Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church to commemorate the Sixtieth Anniversary of our *Standard Bearer*. This year, 1985, marks the Sixtieth Anniversary of our Protestant Reformed Churches; but the *Standard Bearer*, which played a part in the origin of our churches, is actually older than our denomination.]

We are gathered this evening to commemorate the Sixtieth Anniversary of our *Standard Bearer*. On this evening, the twenty-seventh of September, 1984, we stand not at the beginning of our sixtieth year, but at the end. The final issue of Volume 60 has been published, and with the October 1 issue we begin our sixty-first year. The Lord has privileged us to publish our magazine for sixty years. This is something, I think, which no one would have foreseen at the time of the enthusiastic but humble beginnings of our magazine and which many thought utterly impossible. Even as many predicted (was the wish father to the thought?) that our Protestant Reformed Churches would die an early death, so it was also thought that the *Standard Bearer* would perish and be gone in a short time. But here we are — after sixty years! And this is reason for rejoicing and thanksgiving, not to men, but to our faithful covenant God!

The occasion tonight is a double anniversary, and this accounts for my subject. We are very near to the actual anniversary of the *Afscheiding*, the Secession of 1834, in the Netherlands. That will be one hundred fifty years ago on October 13 and 14. That accounts for the "One Hundred Fifty Years" in my subject. The other, the Sixty Years, as I said, refers to the sixtieth anniversary of our magazine. And the two are related. They are related not only because the sixty years is part of the time-span of the one hundred fifty. But they are related in a very direct way, both historically and as to doctrinal and church political principles.

To this I wish to call your attention.

One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty: Their Meaning

One cannot understand the *Afscheiding* and its significance except against the background of the appalling decline in the Reformed Church in the Netherlands which preceded it. The Synod of Dordt undoubtedly marks the high point in the establishment of the Reformed faith in the Netherlands. But almost from the time of the synod forward, and especially from about 1640 onward, there is an absolutely appalling history of decline. When we compare the church at the time of the Secession with the church at the time of Dordt, it is almost difficult to believe that they are the same Reformed Church.

This decline was first of all of a doctrinal character. It ran all the way from dead orthodoxy and dead confessionalism through pietism and wild examples of false mysticism and a form of dispensationalism to rationalism and its denial first of the authority of the Word of God and then of the most fundamental truths of the Christian faith. We cannot now enter into detail concerning this history. But we call attention especially to the fact that during the eighteenth century Rationalism, which makes sinful human reason the highest court of appeal in all thought, found its way into the Lowlands. Under its influence, especially in the universities, reason claimed the sole right of supremacy in theology: what was not logically and rationally understandable and demonstrable was dismissed as unknowable. The miraculous was laughed out of court, and God out of the universe. The possibility of revelation and the divinity of the Bible were denied. Christ was degraded into a mere man. The faith of the church was vain. And the church succumbed to this influence, chiefly because it made the fundamental mistake of attempting to meet rationalism on its own ground. The result was that the most fundamental truths were denied: truths such as the deity of Christ, His

resurrection, His vicarious atonement, the Trinity. And they were denied, mind you, in the very schools where the future ministers of the churches were being trained! Characteristically Reformed truths, such as sovereign predestination and total depravity, were not even in the picture. The result was that before long there was even a large degree of ignorance concerning these truths among those ministers who could be classified as orthodox. Rev. Hendrik de Cock is an example of this: it was only as pastor of Ulrum, where he was instructed by others, some of them members of his congregation, that he came to a clearly Reformed position. What we would call modernism, or liberalism, today became common in what had been the stronghold of the Reformation. Christ was the ideal man. Salvation was deliverance from wrong ideas. Sanctification meant to be delivered from bad habits. The truth was lost! The church was largely dead!

Imagine! This took place in the churches of Dordt! In the course of some 200 years!

It is necessary to mention this bit of history because sometimes the struggle of the Secession of 1834 has been reduced to one concerning the introduction of so-called evangelical hymns in addition to the psalms. This is not true! The so-called hymn-question was indeed an issue, but not the fundamental one. In some instances it became the occasion of separation, not a leading cause.

Paired with this doctrinal decline was a change and decline from a church political point of view.

Shortly before the time of the Secession the Dutch church had become in the full sense of the term a State Church, so that the State governed and controlled the affairs of the church completely.

Already at the time of the Synod of Dordrecht in 1618-19 there was a considerable degree of such interference by the civil government, as is well known. In fact, there was a considerable degree of such governmental control built into the Church Order of Dordt, though not enough to satisfy the government. It was the latter fact which became the reason why the Church Order of Dordt was never approved by the State and why there was no national synod convened again after Dordt.

But when the Netherlands was liberated from the French domination and King William I took the throne again in 1816, the Dutch church became a State Church in the full sense of that term. The government — ultimately the king — was in full control. Representative assemblies in the government of the church were abolished. Classical boards of directors, provincial boards, and a national synod at the top, all of them ultimately responsible to the royal government took the place

of the well-known representative assemblies of classis, particular synod, and general synod. Hierarchy and collegialism of the worst kind prevailed. And, as might be expected, these hierarchical boards were in the control of the liberal majority in the church, as always happens.

It is not difficult to understand, in the light of the above, that the situation was ripe for the suppression and persecution of the faithful remnant.

There was such a remnant. There always is an ever-abiding remnant: God takes care of that! There were people of God in the towns and villages of the Netherlands who still confessed the truth, who desired to keep their heritage at all costs, and who pined away because of the rampant apostasy.

But when they raised their voices in protest, or when they wrote against the heresies and the heretics of the day, or when they sought baptism for the infants in a congregation where they could honestly answer the questions asked of parents at baptism (particularly the question, "Whether you acknowledge the doctrine . . . which is taught here in this Christian Church to be the true and perfect doctrine of salvation?"), they were persecuted. Such was the case in Ulrum, Province of Groningen, where Hendrick de Cock was pastor. Prior to 1834 he had been suspended for his opposition to the liberalism in the churches, suspended without salary; and he was under sentence of deposition from office. [The story of the Rev. de Cock is interesting all by itself, but to tell it here would take us too far afield.]

That brings us to the Secession proper.

It began with the signing of the Act of Separation by some 260 members of the congregation in a meeting at the home of the Widow Hulshof on the evening of October 14, 1834. It would be interesting to study that entire document in detail: for it embodies the fundamental principles of the *Afscheiding*. But time does not permit such a study now. Let me summarize that "Act of Separation or Return":

1) The document states that this small group was separating with finality from the Netherlands Reformed Church.

2) It speaks clearly of the reason: the cause lay in the corruption of the State Church, in the degenerating of doctrine, the profaning of the sacraments, in the horrible neglect of discipline. In a word: in the departure from the marks of the true church, Art. 29 of the Confession.

3) It rejects the suspension and deposition of Rev. de Cock, and calls that suspension and deposition undogmatically.

4) It declares that recent history makes it plain that the State Church is the false church.

5) It declares that by virtue of the office of believers, Article 28 of the Confession of Faith, they separate from those who are not the church, and want no fellowship with the Netherlands Reformed Church until it returns to the true service of the Lord.

6) It declares a willingness to have communion with all true Reformed members and to unite with every gathering that is based on God's Word, and declares that they hold to God's holy Word and to the Forms of Unity which are in all things based on that Word. [A translation of the Act of Secession or Return was published in the Feb. 15, 1984 issue.]

Such was the beginning of the *Afscheiding* one hundred fifty years ago. (to be continued)

SPECIAL REPORT

Trip to the British Isles (2)

Prof. H. Hanko

[Editor's note: This is the second installment of Professor Hanko's interesting account of a tour by him and Rev. D. Engelsma in behalf of our synodical Contact Committee to the United Kingdom. The previous installment dealt with their visit to Ulster. The scene now changes to England.]

From Ireland we went to England, particularly to visit a small and independent congregation in Barnsley in South Yorkshire. Before travelling to Barnsley, however, we made a hurried trip to Edinburgh in Scotland to visit briefly with Rev. Sinclair Horne, who is Secretary of the Scottish Reformation Society. He is also pastor of a small Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland. While we could not stay long, it became clear that the Scottish Reformation Society is attempting to maintain the Reformed faith in Scotland, but that it is a difficult battle because of the apostasy, worldliness, and spiritual indifference of the people. This is true in Scotland and England as a whole. One could not help but be reminded of the words of Latimer, an English Reformer of the 16th Century, which he spoke while he and his colleague Ridley were being burned at the stake for their faith: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." Apart from a few isolated groups, the candle in England has gone out!

The congregation in Barnsley, with its pastor, Rev. Philip Rawson, has a history quite different

from the congregation in Larne, Ireland. Most of the members and the pastor were originally part of a denomination called The Wesleyan Reform Church, a denomination which has its roots in the Wesleyan Revivals which swept England. This congregation separated from the denomination of which it was a part for especially two reasons: 1) the denomination had become very liberal; 2) the denomination practiced "christening" instead of baptism. To christen is to sprinkle water on a baby, but not as a sign of the covenant; rather it means incorporation into the visible church and is closely associated with baptismal regeneration. Christening is performed for any baby whose parents request it, whether or not such parents attend church regularly, walk a Christian life, and manifest themselves as people of God. Revolting against this ungodly practice, the congregation of Barnsley withdrew from the denomination, but also, as a reaction to christening, abandoned the whole practice of infant baptism.

But the pastor became acquainted with Calvinistic writings in his studies and particularly became acquainted with our own Protestant Reformed publications. Through the reading and study of them he became persuaded that the Reformed faith is Biblical, and he began to teach these truths to his people. Through correspondence with some of our ministers, he also developed close personal ties with some of our Protestant Reformed people. The

result is that his congregation has come a long way towards the Reformed faith since the days they left the Wesleyan Reform Church.

In Barnsley too our time was occupied with many meetings. We preached in Pastor Rawson's congregation on the Saturday night we arrived, on the evening of the Lord's Day, and on the following Tuesday evening, just before our departure on Wednesday. The whole of Monday was taken up by a ministers' conference in which we delivered two speeches: one on "The Christian and the Law" — a burning issue among Reformed Baptists, many of whom were present at the conference, and the other on "Evangelism and the Reformed Faith." Once again there was opportunity to present our own distinctive position with respect to the doctrines of grace as they related to the question of common grace and the well-meant offer. The ladies of Barnsley congregation, which congregation is called the Measbro Dyke Evangelical Church, prepared a delicious lunch, which gave further opportunity for discussion and fellowship. The meeting was extremely profitable because it gave us another opportunity to clear away misunderstandings concerning our churches.

On Monday evening we met with the Board of Deacons (the ruling body of the congregation) to discuss what could be done in the way of closer church relationships. It was an especially enjoyable evening, partly because it gave us opportunity to get to know some of the men of the congregation more intimately, partly because it revealed to us how far the congregation had come in the work of reform in the church, and partly because it gave us opportunity to discuss with them questions of the truth with which they are not as yet completely familiar. The possibilities of closer relationships with this congregation in the future are very real.

We were moved once again by the hospitality and friendship of God's people in Barnsley, by how much we were at home in their fellowship, by the eager reception to our preaching, and by the serious determination of the congregation to be Biblical and Reformed in their confession and walk. It was with heavy hearts that we said farewell to them after the worship service on Tuesday evening.

There was one more rather important and interesting meeting in which we participated. Our readers must understand that there were others in England with whom we would have liked to visit, but could not for lack of time. But we did manage to go to Bristol, a city about 120 miles straight west of London. Here a small group of three couples and two young adults were gathered for a meeting which we held on Thursday evening of our last week in the British Isles. These three couples,

wanting very much to be a part of a Reformed congregation, can find no church in Bristol with which to affiliate, which consistently maintains the Reformed faith. One of the men of this group publishes (I think privately and at his own expense) a paper entitled, *The Presbyterian*, in which a defense is made of the Presbyterian faith and church polity. (Some of our readers might be interested in obtaining this worthwhile paper.) At any rate, we spent a long and good meeting with these people of God discussing again our own Protestant Reformed distinctives and answering many questions concerning our stand on common grace, the restraint of sin, the internal and gracious operation of the Spirit in the hearts of all men, and the well-meant offer of the gospel. There was also opportunity to talk about our covenant views, something which was particularly appealing to these people and something which they discussed avidly. What the Lord has in store for these people we cannot now know.

That brings us almost to the end of the story. There are a few notes of interest which our readers might enjoy hearing about.

One thing about England which struck us very forcibly was that many things are very old, far older than in our relatively young country. There are churches, e.g., which date, at least in part, back to Norman times — the middle of the 11th Century. There are walls still intact in the city of York which were built by the Romans when the Roman Empire was still intact and extended its rule to part of the British Isles. This gives to many in England a sense of history which we lack in this country.

Many of these old buildings and sites are closely connected with the Reformation in England of the 16th and 17th Centuries. It was for us a great thrill to stand where the first Presbyterian Church was built in Ireland in 1610; to explore the castle in Carrickfergus which is called, "Prince Billy's Castle" after King William of Orange from the Netherlands, who briefly ruled in England and Ireland; to explore St. Magdalen's Chapel where John Knox met with other elders and drew up the Scot's Confession of Faith in 1620; to stand on the spot where many martyrs were hanged for their faith; to walk in the Jerusalem room of Westminster Abbey where the Westminster Confessions were composed.

It is also interesting that many of the more conservative denominations and congregations include as part of their ministry a Christian Bookshop, in which they sell books of value for the Reformed faith. Many of the Puritan writers can be purchased in these Bookshops and our own RFPA publications are also sold. We visited four separate such Book-

shops in our stay. It struck us as an effective and important way to distribute Reformed literature.

While our chief reason for going to England was to visit with and work in the congregations of Larne, Ireland and Barnsley, England, an exceptionally important benefit of the trip was that the Lord opened many doors for us to bring the truth of Scripture to others. We had abundant opportunity to clear up, in the minds of many, misunderstandings concerning our churches and to present the truth of God's covenant which is our own unique heritage. These we were thankful for; the Lord gave us opportunities which we had not anticipated to do these things, and it is our earnest prayer that God will make them fruitful.

It became evident in our contacts that our heritage of the everlasting covenant of grace is a very precious truth, a truth which is that which makes us uniquely Reformed, but also a truth which many are attracted to and which they eagerly receive. We must be thankful for this heritage and maintain and develop it.

In these "last days" God has given us the privilege of bringing His truth to others, of coming into contact with other believers throughout the world who have a like precious faith with us, and of enjoying fellowship with them. We live too near the end of time for large numbers to come to the faith; but there are small groups here and there who love the Lord and His truth. They look to us for fellowship and help in their own struggles to maintain the truth.

All this puts upon us heavy responsibilities. One surely is that we appreciate with humble thanksgiving to God what He has so graciously given to us. Another is that we hold fast to this truth with all our hearts in our confession and life. Another is that we help in every way that we can those who look to us in their need.

May God bless our churches and may God bless His saints in the British Isles who struggle so valiantly for the faith and who are the real hope of the Reformed truth in their land.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Human Craftiness and Divine Faithfulness

Rev. John A. Heys

The golden sceptre was extended to Esther, and she began to breathe more freely. She had come before the king uncalled for; and had he not extended that golden rod to her she would have been executed that very day! But her husband-king was pleased to see her in the royal apparel; and to inform the soldiers attending him that she was not to be put to death, he extended that powerful and significant piece of metal to her.

She certainly was greatly cheered also by the king's words, "What is thy request? It shall be even given to thee to the half of the kingdom." Of course this was not to be taken literally. He would not have shared the kingdom with her. It simply meant that he was willing to grant her any reasonable re-

quest, and that she should not be afraid to make such a request. She found him to be in a very pleasant mood. And she found this because God cannot forget His church, and, unknown to both Esther and Ahasuerus, He was directing every step they took. So beautifully we read in Psalm 121:2-8 that He to Whom we look for help made the heaven and the earth, and thus has perfect control over all that is in them. God Himself assures us through the psalmist in this psalm that He neither slumbers nor sleeps. There is never a moment in the daytime or the night that He is not watching over His church and available when we need help. He will preserve us from all evil, for He will preserve our souls. Though none of this was in Esther's thoughts, she

breathed more freely when the rod was extended, and was greatly encouraged by this promise which the king made to her. And although Esther did not see it that way or think of it as she should have, we must hold fast the truth and keep it in our minds also today when the whole world is in turmoil, and we do not know from day to day what the leaders of the nations are going to do. We live in fear of the nuclear bomb button, lest it be pushed and send the world into a war too horrible to describe. I began to say that we today must hold on to Proverbs 21:1, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will." That is our comfort.

Esther must now take another step for the saving of the lives of her people. Her life was momentarily spared, but it is still in danger of death because of that decree which Haman had succeeded in getting the king to seal with his ring. That next step was a touchy matter and not without its dangers. Cautiously Esther makes a request that will lead up to that basic plea for the life of her people. She had carefully planned the whole approach before she appeared before the king. She will ask the king to come to a banquet. But note that she says "the banquet that I have prepared for thee." It was in the process of being prepared right then and there. This is no afterthought that came into her soul as soon as she heard the king promise up to the half of his kingdom.

What time of the day it was when she appeared before the king is not stated. But it would seem as though it was early afternoon. For not only was the banquet prepared, but Haman, who was to be invited, is commanded "to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said."

She has success also in this second step of her strategy. And we should appreciate the importance of this. In itself it was not dangerous to invite her husband to a banquet, or even to ask a king. This might flatter a king to have such a beautiful woman invite him to a banquet. A husband might interpret this as a sure evidence of his wife's love and concern for him. We know better. We know that she did not marry him for love or arrange this banquet in love for him. It was bait so that she could catch him in her trap. It was a pretense of love, and of a longing to be in his presence and to have his fellowship after thirty days of being ignored by him. She is, as I wrote last time, devilishly clever. While he enjoyed a delicious meal, and she had made him as happy as was possible for her, she would ask that basic and all-important question about saving the lives of her people. There is a saying to the effect that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. Whether that saying was used in those days or not, it is plain that Esther intended to do ex-

actly that. She had a tremendous task before her. The unchangeable law of the king must be changed. What his right hand man had convinced him was so necessary for the good of the kingdom, she would have to show the king was not "to the profit" of the king (Esther 3:8).

Consider further that the inclusion of Haman as one to enjoy this banquet with the king was not without its perils. Not only was the king an unpredictable man, and a husband who could divorce his beautiful wife when she refused to do what he requested while he was under the power of wine, but there was that danger of the king becoming impatient and jealous. By adding Haman's name Esther herself rules out the idea that the invitation was due to a great love for the king, and to a painful missing of his fellowship. She was indeed walking on thin ice. But she knew what she was doing, for, as chapter 5:6 reveals, it was a "banquet of wine." After she got past this hurdle of the king accepting the invitation, she will resort to the spirit of alcohol. (The Holy Spirit was not at all in her thoughts.) But now to get the king to agree to such a banquet with Haman took courage, even though he had promised the half of his kingdom.

That promise of half of his kingdom could easily be broken by a man such as her husband was. Even if his initial reaction to the suggestion of Haman's presence was not adverse, she did not know what it would be after he pondered over it and thought it over. In fact even before she got his promise she did not know whether he would snarl at her, "What do you want? Get it over with and do not take my precious time." And now that he had promised half of his kingdom, she still does not know what his reaction will be to have this third party there. Easily the thoughts could come to his mind as to whether these two had been seeing each other lately, and had established some very friendly relationship. After all, Esther was an exceptionally beautiful and attractive wife, and Haman's work brought him to the royal grounds very frequently. Her overall plan demanded Haman's presence, but she had to walk carefully and wait for the right time to present her request to the king.

He Who has the king's heart in His hand, and has perfect control not only over his physical activities but the thoughts and desire of his heart, moved him to agree and to order Haman notified and commanded to make haste. All His promises in Christ must be and in covenant faithfulness will be filled. Haman must not succeed. Satan must not get his way and prevent the birth of Christ. The Seed of the woman will be born. The head of the serpent will be crushed. All of Haman's dice throwing and horoscope will not insure his success. They are

nonsense. It is God Who picked the day and directed Pur, that is the lot, which Haman's friends cast for a favorable month and day (Esther 3:7). And He picked a time that would give time for events to take place that would change the unchangeable, and save the lives of the Jews for the birth of Christ at the favorable time appointed from eternity by God. The heathen rage, but they always imagine a *vain* thing. It looks at times as though they will succeed, but we are *now* more than conquerors, even though we may suffer severely at the hands of the world. And this incident is recorded in Holy Writ to assure us that all is well, even when what the fleshly eye sees is frightening. The eye of faith sees victory even while the enemy is boasting of the damage he has done to the church and cause of Christ.

The banquet is held, but Esther is not ready yet to make that all-important request for her life and for that of her people. Patiently the king, for his heart was in God's hand, agrees to another banquet. This one brought such fleshly pleasure to him; and if he had any doubts about the relationship between Esther and Haman, the wine took care of that, and so did Esther's conduct. She did not need to try to show that she had no friendly relations with Haman. The very opposite was true. So intense was her hatred for this man, so brightly did her anger towards this man burn that she had to fight hard with herself to hide it. She despised him with all her heart. And yet she covered up so perfectly that Haman left the banquet thinking that she thought highly of him (Esther 5:12).

Now it was not in Esther's plans to give the king time to analyze the situation and to wonder what she had in mind. That is not why she asked for another banquet before making her basic request known. But it was in God's counsel, and the time between the two banquets He not only decreed but intended to use for the good of His church. Esther planned the time element. God planned the events that would take place in those twenty-four hours. But this must wait till next time. The point I want to make now is that, although we are not told what Esther's reason was for delaying the making known of her plea for the life of her people, and thus also for her own life, there was a divine purpose.

Nor are we told why she wanted Haman at these banquets. Was it because of that intense hatred, so that she wanted to humiliate him as much as she could? And that before the king? Is she not only devilishly clever but also devilishly cruel? Is she deliberately building him up for a great fall? Is that her reason? In spite of her outward beauty of face does she have a vicious, ugly nature inside of her? In spite of her submissive nature over against her uncle-father does she have a very evil nature when

it comes to those that have no blood ties with her?

We are not told why she wanted Haman at these banquets. But one thing is sure and that is, as I pointed out last time, she must drive a wedge between these two men who agreed that all her people in the empire must be killed. She was aware of the fact that Haman had started this whole business of killing the Jews. She said so at the second banquet. And whereas Haman had persuaded the king to believe that it was "to the profit" of the king to have the Jews killed (Esther 3:8), she had to show the king in the presence of Haman that it was to the profit of the king to save her life together with the lives of her people, and to take Haman's life. And he will be there to defend himself, if he can. Having Haman there — by God's arrangement, and not by Satan's, or merely by Esther's — the king will recall what already was somewhat farther back in his mind. Having Haman there will sharpen his memory. And do not forget that the king himself had not found any Jews as a threat to him and his kingdom. He did not have too much interest in the matter either way. If it was for his profit, fine. Let the dangerous people — accused without any shred of proof as to their threat to him — be killed. And if these thousands died, what was that to him, even if they were innocent of Haman's charge? But Haman's reaction to Esther's charge would reveal to the king his guilt.

Regardless of Esther's reason or motive Haman deserved such an exposition of his evil. And, after all, it was but a minor prelude to his exposure before the judgment seat of Christ. Moses' words in Numbers 32:23 are very fitting here: "Be sure your sin will find you out." Found guilty before man is one thing. How terrible to be found guilty before God! And we must all appear — the Greek has "be exposed" — before the judgment seat of Christ (II Corinthians 5:10). Haman was fighting here against Christ by fighting against His people in the Jewish nation. He who touches the members of the body of which Christ is the Head touches Christ. And he deserves to have his sin exposed before God's face by Christ, and then be cast into everlasting torment.

We, too, will appear and be exposed before that judgment seat of Christ. But He Who exposes us is He Who absolved us by taking upon Himself our guilt and suffering its punishment until it was all fully endured. And whereas Haman's banqueting was turned into execution, our suffering and shame here below at the hands of the world will be changed into heavenly banqueting that knows no end.

Human craftiness may at times succeed in bringing man a few temporary joys. Divine faithfulness always brings everlasting covenant blessedness to His church.

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

Integration and Segregation (1)

Rev. H. Veldman

We hear much of integration and segregation today. We surely hear much of it in the midst of the world. The Word of God, however, also speaks of it. In fact, we see this phenomenon all about us, in all the works of God's hands. A scripture which calls our attention to this truth is recorded for us in 1 Corinthians 12:13, and we quote: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

In the context of this scripture the apostle draws a comparison between the human body and the church which is the body of Christ, calling attention to the fact that this body, although having many members, is nevertheless one body. And this unity of the body of Christ is grounded in the truth that we all have been baptized by the one Spirit into one body and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

This wonderful unity of the church of God is already set forth by the apostle in the beginning of this twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians. In verse 4 the apostle speaks of the diversities of gifts but of the same Spirit. Then, in the verses that follow, attention is called to this diversity of gifts: the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, the working of miracles, of prophecy, diverse kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues. And concerning all these gifts we read in verse 11 that all these gifts are worked by that one and the selfsame Spirit, Who divides to every man severally as He wills. And now all this culminates in verse 12. Paul, in verse 12, is speaking of the human body. That body is one. It has many members, and all these members, being many, are one body. So also, we read, is Christ. The reference here, we understand, is to the church. That the church is called Christ here is because the church is Christ's body. After all, my body is part of me, belongs to me; my body and I are identical.

That the church is Christ's body is because He is the Head and by His Spirit and grace governs, directs, and completely controls it. This unity of the body, of the church of Christ, is now explained in this scripture of 1 Corinthians 12:13.

1 Corinthians 12:13 is a very beautiful and striking passage. Two expressions appear upon the foreground here in connection with the wonderful unity of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ: the expressions "we all" and "one body." These two thoughts are emphasized throughout this chapter. The church of Christ is characterized by two things: integration and segregation. We hear much today of integration and segregation. The inspired writer of 1 Corinthians speaks of both as characterizing the church of God and of Christ. However, there is a vast difference between these concepts as in the world and in the midst of the church of Christ. In the world it is integration *or* segregation; the world does not maintain both — it is either-or. In the church, however, it is integration *and* segregation — both are maintained. And this is due to the fact that we have all been baptized into one body and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

* * * * *

The apostle calls attention throughout this chapter to the symbol of the human body. The human body, we understand, is a divinely willed and created symbol. Is it not amazingly strange that the world, in the throes of its conflict between integration and segregation, is so blind, does not learn a lesson from that which is so clearly set forth before them, everywhere displayed in all the works of God's hands? The Lord has created the heavens and the earth and all the things that are therein contained as a mighty symbol of the things heavenly and spiritual. However, apart from their symbolic significance, the things themselves speak a language that cannot be denied. Oneness and diversity, integration and segregation are everywhere

displayed, on a magnificent scale, very plainly so that all men can see and read it, in all the creation the Lord has made, as in the world of vegetation and plants, in the world of flowers, colors, and animals, and in the human body. Think of all the magnificent rainbows, from the day of the flood, and no two rainbows are alike; of all the snowflakes and no two alike. Think of all the gorgeous colors in the season of autumn, a riot of color and yet blending together in beautiful and unfathomable harmony. Think of all the different flowers, plants, and animals, as brought forth by the almighty Creator. What a segregation, what a separation and difference, and yet what an amazing integration, oneness, harmony!

All this is true also of the human body. The body has many members, and they are not all equally beautiful and honorable. How different are the eye and the toe, and so we could go on. The apostle speaks of this difference in this chapter of 1 Corinthians 12, in the verses 15 and 16: "If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?" In other words, if the foot and the ear are dissatisfied because they are not the hand and the eye respectively, are they therefore not of the body? But the body, although many members, is one, and these members, although all different and retaining their own peculiar place and functions, nevertheless do not act and function individually and separately from the body, but they all serve the body, each in its own place and way. They all serve the same purpose and function for the body, although many and different. In this, the body is a beautiful symbol of the church of God and of Christ. Indeed, the church of Christ is one, characterized by a wonderful unity. At the same time, however, it is also constituted of many members.

How wonderful is the unity of the church of God and of Christ! The world today strives after unity. This is generally true. This is true ecclesiastically, in the church world. The church world today is characterized by ecumenicity, by the integration of churches; today we witness the merging of churches into one church, one denomination. And this effort will succeed until the harlot of the book of Revelation is finally realized. But this is also true, socially and economically: the poor seek equality with the rich, the black with the white, the students with their professors, the employees with their employers, the ones with no power with those who have power, the have-nots with those who have. And, specifically, notice this world's striving for unity. The world's conception of unity is based upon equality. Socialism is the world's solution in

this striving for unity. "The right to this or that," is the slogan of the world. The constitution of our country declares that all men have been endowed by their Creator with the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The slogan of the anti-abortion campaign is: the right to live. The poor have the right to the riches of the rich, the student has the right to rule and govern with the professor, the black has the right to the same status as the white. All men have equally the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Socialism is the world's solution to its problems. The world will be one only when the blacks are equal with the whites, when the poor have attained unto equality with the rich, when the working man may dictate the policies of his employer with the employer, when the students may regulate and control colleges and universities with their professors and boards of trustees, when all inequalities have been wiped out and erased. The distinction between the poor and the rich, between the slave and his master is being viewed by the nominal church, that which is called church, as antichristian more and more. And more and more that nominal church is causing its voice to be heard on the side of integration, claiming that segregation is contrary to the will of God and His Word.

And the result of all this? It is chaos! Of course! First of all, this striving of the world is in flat contradiction with all of life around us, symbolized everywhere, also in the human body. How absurd and ridiculous it would be if the toe were to claim equal honor and beauty with the eye! How absurd it would be if the roots of a fruit tree were to claim equal beauty and recognition with the fruit of the tree, if an ordinary, obnoxious weed were to claim equal honor and beauty with the rose! Secondly, this striving of the world is in direct violation of the very ordinances of the Lord Who is directly responsible for the distinction between the poor and the rich, the black and the white, etc. The Lord simply did not create all men equal. O, it is true that all men stand in the same servile relation to the living God, that all men are equally under divine condemnation. However, all men are not equal as far as their natural gifts and talents are concerned. All children do not have equally the talents and gifts of the mind. This wide distinction between all creatures is directly of the Lord. Socialism is anti-God, anti-Christ. It is rooted in man's lust and pleasure for the things that are of time and that are below.

* * * * *

How different it is in the church of the living God and of Christ!

Notice what we read in this scripture of 1 Corin-

thians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." The body is one, whether we be Jew or Gentile (Greek), whether we be bond (slaves) or free.

Let us understand this. What a difference there was between Jews and Gentiles! How the one looked down upon the other! And what a difference between the bond and free. These bondmen were slaves, were viewed as mere cattle, had absolutely nothing to say. And the point is that in the church of God they remain as they are! The Greek does not become a Jew, and the slave does not become a free man. The scriptures do not care whether one is black or white, slave or free, employer or employee, rich or poor, of high or low degree. There is nothing antisciptural about slavery as such. In his epistle to Philemon, the apostle in-

structs that the slave, Onesimus, be returned to his master. O, yes, they love to quote the scripture that in Christ one is neither male nor female, bond nor free. And imagine, then, the absurdities to which they expose themselves! If one be neither male nor female in Christ, what is he or she? One is surely male or female. If one be neither bond nor free in Christ, what is he or she? One is surely bond or free. Indeed, in the church males and females, bond and free remain as and what they are. What this scripture means is that we are viewed, we are treated, and we have fellowship with each other, not as rich or poor, not as employer or employee, not as white or black, but as the body in Jesus Christ, as united with the living Christ through the living bond of faith.

The Lord willing, we will continue with this subject, Integration and Segregation, in our following article.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

Missionary Methods (26)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

The point made in our last article is that the work of the missionary is to be distinguished from that of a pastor of an established congregation. The latter cares for a specific, settled congregation. He does so chiefly by the preaching of the Word. The missionary also preaches. This is his calling. But the missionary preaches to the unconverted. By this means Christ gathers His elect out of the nations. The aim or purpose of the missionary is that a congregation with its own officebearers, including a native pastor, may be established. This congregation, according to Rufus Anderson, must be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. When this is accomplished in a given field the missionary must move on to a new field of labor.

Throughout his writings Anderson emphasizes that whatever the missionary does he must preach the Word. Preaching is his chief task. The missionary must do this from the very beginning of his

labors in a given field. At the very beginning he ought to begin formal worship services on the Lord's Day. In addition there ought to be less formal services of preaching and teaching during the week. This is what Anderson had to say in a lecture given in 1861: "The native Christians have also needed regular, well-studied exhibitions of the plan of salvation, and of their duty as Christians. They could not be adequately informed and elevated to the self-governing, self-sustaining basis by means of mere conversational (informal, Bible study groups) preaching. They required the benefit, indeed, of every one of the auxiliary means of grace, but could never reach their full stature as Christians without the regular, stated, formal preaching of the Word. The heathen then saw the missionary in his true place and dignity. If they did not often go to hear him, they knew there was a day which he regarded as specially set apart by the God of heaven for

declaring and for hearing the truths of the Christian religion; and also a time when the missionary assumed authority to speak, and when it was the sole business of all others to hear." (Rufus Anderson, *To Advance The Gospel*, R. Pierce Beaver, ed., p. 90.)

With this we are in hearty agreement. All the work of a missionary, whether foreign or domestic, ought to center in the formal preaching of the Word of God. As the mission grows and bears fruit in the establishment of a congregation or congregations, other needs will become manifest. In foreign lands the Scriptures will have to be translated into the native tongue so that the people may have Bibles to read and study. God's people must be instructed in their calling to provide covenant, Christian education for their children. Native pastors and elders and deacons must be instructed in their duties and respective callings. Native pastors, or those men who aspire to the ministry of the Word in the mission church, must be educated. They must learn how to preach, how to expound Holy Scripture, how to shepherd the flock of God. They must learn the principles of Reformed, Biblical Church Polity. Initially this may be done on a rather small scale. The missionary or missionaries may instruct one or two young men. If the churches on the field grow they would in time establish their own theological school. It is also possible, and this is being done with the young men from Singapore, that young men from the foreign field receive their theological education at the Seminary of the sending church.

All of this, however, must be in strict subordination to the preaching of the gospel. The church's task through its missionary is not to build schools, administer hospitals, or provide a variety of social or other services. The church's task is to preach the gospel by which means alone the Son of God gathers out of the whole human race those chosen to everlasting life (cf. Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. XXI). These other institutions must come as a fruit of the preaching of the Word in the hearts of the converts.

The purpose of the missionary must be the establishing or instituting of local manifestations of the church of Jesus Christ. Wrote Anderson, "Prominent, then, among the visible agencies in foreign missions, if we follow the great apostle (Paul, R.D.D.), are LOCAL CHURCHES. I call them by no denominational name. They may be churches governed by popular vote, or by elders they have themselves chosen for the purpose. They are local bodies of associated Christians. The first duty of a missionary is to gather such a church. That will serve as a nucleus — and it is the only possible nucleus, a school not being one — of a permanent congregation. A missionary, by means of properly

located, well organized, well trained churches, may extend his influence over a large territory. In such a country as India, or China, his direct influence may reach even scores of thousands" (Anderson, pp. 97, 98). With the essence of this we agree. Those churches, however, must be Confessionally Reformed churches under the rule and care of the King of the church through the officebearers, a polity required by Scripture itself.

In response to the question, what should be the nature of the mission church? Anderson said, "It should be composed only of hopeful converts; and should have, as soon as possible, a native pastor, and of the same race, who has been trained cheerfully to take the oversight of what will generally be a small, poor, ignorant people, and mingle with them familiarly and sympathetically. And by a native pastor, I mean one recognized as having the pastoral care of a local church, with the right to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper" (Anderson, p. 98).

In addition to this, Anderson emphasizes, "As soon as the mission church has a native pastor, the responsibilities of self-government should be devolved upon it. Mistakes, perplexities, and sometimes scandals, there will be; but it is often thus that useful experience is gained, even in churches here at home. The salary of the native pastor should be based on the Christianized ideas of living acquired by his people; and the church should become self-supporting at the earliest possible day. It should also be self-propagating (he means it should engage in mission work, R.D.D.) from the very first. Such churches, and only such, are the life, strength, and glory of missions" (Anderson, pp. 98, 99). This is good, Biblical methodology in missions. Laboring this way is certainly following the pattern of the Apostles, especially Paul.

Anderson goes on to stress again: "A foreign missionary should not be the pastor of a native church. His business is to plant churches, in well-chosen parts of his field, committing them as soon as possible to the care of native pastors; himself sustaining a common relation to all, as their ecclesiastical father and adviser; having, in some sense, like the apostle, the daily care of the churches. He might stand thus related to a score of churches and even more, however they were related to each other; and when he is old, might be able to say, through the abounding grace of God, 'Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you all through the gospel.' I Cor. 4:15" (Anderson, p. 99).

This certainly is the great aim in missions. In sum, what Anderson said is this: 1) The aim of missions is the gathering of the elect out of the nations.

These converts must be organized into local manifestations of the institute of the church of Jesus Christ. 2) The means by which this is to be accomplished is the preaching of the Word. By this means God is pleased to "save them that believe." We ought to add to this that the preaching of the Word has another effect, viz., it hardens the reprobate in their unbelief and sin and, thus, renders them without excuse before God. And, let us not forget the words of Jesus: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto the nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

Anderson concluded his lecture with these remarks concerning those to whom the missionary preaches and the Gospel which he preaches to them: "The gospel is applicable equally to all false religions. Generically considered, there can be but two religions: the one looking for salvation by *grace*; and the other, by *works* (emphasis, Anderson's). The principle of evil in all unbelieving men, is the same. The refuge of lies in Popery, in Judaism, in Mohammedanism, in Brahminism, Buddhism, and every form of paganism, are wonderfully alike. There is one disease, and one remedy. Before the gospel, the unbelieving world stands an undistinguished mass of rebellious sinners; unwilling that God should reign over them, unwilling to be saved except by their own works, and averse to all real holiness of heart and life.

There is power in the doctrine of the cross, through grace, to overcome this. The doctrine of the cross — as will more clearly appear when we come to the evidences of success in missions — is the grand instrument of conquest. Not one of the great superstitions of the world could hold a governing place in the human soul, after the conviction has once been thoroughly produced, that there is salvation only in Christ. Be it what it may, the man, thus convinced, would flee from it, as he would from a falling building in the rocking of an earthquake" (Anderson, p. 102).

How true! Man by nature, no matter to what "ism" he may be committed, is dead in trespasses and sins. He is spiritually dead! This means he cannot, though he always foolishly persists in trying, save himself. Only God's grace, by the working of the Holy Spirit of Christ, can make a dead sinner alive. That God surely does in the hearts of His elect, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Let us never forget this! Let us use the only means God has given, the preaching of the Word, in the confidence that God will work His work of grace in the hearts of His chosen ones and His work of wrath and condemnation in the hearts of the reprobate. Let us be on with the task as faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this way God is pleased to cause His glory to shine in His church.

(to be continued)

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

The Nicene Creed

Rev. James Slopsema

Article 9 (cont'd.)

In Article 9 of the Nicene Creed the early church confessed, "And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic church."

We find in this article the four attributes of the church — her unity or oneness, her holiness, her catholicity, and her apostolicity. We have seen however that the early church had a much different understanding of these concepts than we do today.

The early church correctly acknowledged the existence of only one church. There are not several bodies of Christ, but only one. However, the early church made the mistake of trying to identify the one church of God with a particular institution.

The early church in turn confessed that this particular institution of the church is catholic. By this was meant that the one institution of the church is the whole or complete church. Within this institu-

tion of the church is to be found the whole body of Christ. Outside of this institution, membership in the body of Christ is not possible.

The early church also confessed that the church is apostolic. By this she meant that the bishops of the church were the personal successors of the apostles and therefore received from Christ via the apostles all the gifts of the Spirit necessary to lead and guide the church into all the truth. This implied that that institution loyal to and subservient to these apostolic bishops was the one true church of Christ.

For that reason the church is also holy. That the church is holy means that she is devoted and consecrated to God. And she is that exactly because she is apostolic — loyal to the personal successors of the apostles who alone have preserved the true tradition of the apostles.

With this conception of the church the early church was led originally in this 9th article of her creed to confess her faith *in* the church. She confessed that even as she believed in God the Father and in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, so also she believed in the one holy catholic and apostolic church. By this she meant that the trust of the saints was in the institution of the church. And again this was because the church was apostolic — led by the personal successors to the apostles who were gifted by the Holy Spirit.

This in brief summarizes what we saw in our last article to be the understanding of the early church by this confession of the Nicene Creed.

What we wish to do now is to examine these various attributes of the church in the light of Scripture to ascertain their true meaning. In so doing we will find that this confession of the early church concerning the church is indeed a beautiful one, provided we understand it in the true, Biblical sense.

First of all, the Scriptures teach the unity or oneness of the church. This attribute of the church is set forth in a passage such as Romans 12:5: "So, we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." We find the idea of the unity of the church also in Ephesians 4:4-6: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

By the unity or oneness of the church is meant first that there is only one church. The church is designated in the Scriptures by various names. It is called the body of Christ, the temple of God, the household of God, the New Jerusalem, and Mount Zion. But regardless of how the church is desig-

nated, there is only one church. There is only one body of Christ, one temple of God, one Mount Zion, not several.

Nor must we make the mistake of identifying this one church with any one institution or ecclesiastical organization. The body of Christ is not to be identified with the Roman Catholic Church or the Protestant Reformed Churches of America or with any other church. The body of Christ is broader than any one ecclesiastical organization. The members of Christ's body are to be found in many different churches and denominations. In fact we may say that wherever the gospel is proclaimed, the sacraments administered, and Christian discipline exercised, the one body of Christ is both represented and manifest. And no church or group is able to claim that to herself exclusively.

By the unity of oneness of the church is also meant that there is an essential unity among the members of Christ's body. All the members of Christ are given the same gift of faith whereby they come into possession of the one salvation of God. Consequently, they all possess the same hope, the hope of life eternal. They all live the same life, the life of thankful service to God. They all are of one mind, which is the mind of Christ.

It is true, of course, that this unity is not always so apparent. For the church world today is badly fragmented. There are many different denominations, each with its own confession and belief. One confesses this about Christ, and another will contradict that confession with something else. Nevertheless, in principle there is an essential unity among the saints which finds its source in the common salvation they all have in Jesus Christ. And whereas that unity is not made perfect in this present age, it will be made complete in the age to come. For that we look forward.

The church is also catholic.

By this is meant that the church is universal. The church is not to be limited to any one nationality or social status. The church of Christ is not comprised merely of the Dutch or the English, the blacks or the whites. The body of Christ is made up of all nationalities and races; and none are excluded. Neither is the church limited to any social status. Not just the male but also the female, not just the rich but also the poor, not just the bond but also the free are found in the body of Christ. Besides this, the church of Jesus Christ is not limited to any one age or generation. The church did not have its beginning at Pentecost, as is the claim of some. The church finds its beginnings at the very dawn of history in Adam. And that church has continued to exist down through the centuries and will continue to exist on the earth until the very end of time.

This catholic character of the church is certainly attested to by such Scripture passages as Romans 10:12, 13: "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich to all that call upon him"; Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"; Revelation 7:9: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."

According to the Scriptures, the church of Christ is also apostolic.

By this is not meant that there are those in the church who can lay hold to the claim to be the personal successors to the apostles, who also in this way have special gifts of the Spirit, which are given to no one else, to lead the church.

The apostolicity of the church is rather to be understood in the light of Ephesians 2:20, where the church is said to be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." That the church is built on the apostles and prophets means that she is built on the doctrine of the apostles and prophets. Both the apostles of the New Testament and the prophets of the Old Testament were vehicles of divine revelation. It was through them that Jesus Christ, our chief prophet, spoke and revealed the full counsel of God concerning our redemption. That revelation of God given through the apostles and prophets has been infallibly preserved for us in the Scriptures through the wonder of inspiration. And it is upon the basis of that revelation that the church is built. Through the proclamation of that revelation the church is not only gathered but she also grows spiritually. And it's in that sense, and that sense alone, that the church is apostolic. She is apostolic in the sense that she is built on the teachings of the apostles and that therefore she also confesses the doctrines of the apostles.

Again this is true of the church only in principle for the present age. For there are many churches and many members of the body of Christ that do not confess the doctrines of the prophets and apostles in all their purity but have in one way or another corrupted those beautiful doctrines with the philosophies of man. Yet in the age to come the apostolic character of the church will be fully and perfectly realized as all the saints in glory sing the praises of God in perfect truth.

Finally, the church is holy.

This is clearly taught in such passages as I Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal

priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"; I Corinthians 1:2: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord."

By the holiness of the church is meant that the church has been consecrated to God by the work of salvation in Jesus Christ. Negatively, she has been separated from the world so that she lives anti-thetically opposed to the world with all its sin and corruption. Positively, this holiness means that she has been brought by the power of grace in Christ into the service of the living God, whose salvation she enjoys.

Again this holiness is only a principle reality for the church for this present age. Witness all the spiritual corruption of the world that still clings to the church. Witness the failure of the church and her members time and again to serve the cause of God with that zeal that they ought. Nevertheless, in Christ the church is principally holy. And in the age to come this holiness shall be perfected.

Finally, in this article we as a church confess all this as the object of our faith. No, we do not confess, as the early church originally did, faith *in* this holy catholic and apostolic church. We confess our faith *in* the triune God and *in* His great work of salvation alone. In that alone we put our trust. In the church we do not put our trust. That, according to LD 34 Q 95 of our Heidelberg Catechism, would be idolatry. Rather we believe *an* holy catholic and apostolic church. That means that we believe that there is such a church. And even though it may not always appear to be the case with the church, we also believe that she is one and holy and catholic and apostolic. And it means too that we pray and work for the unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of that church.

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

THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

Working Mothers

Rev. Ron Cammenga

In the past couple of articles we have been dealing with the whole subject of the Christian and work. We want yet to consider the question of working mothers.

By "working mothers," of course, we mean mothers who work outside of their homes. Every mother who takes seriously her motherly calling within her home is a working, hard-working mother. But we want to talk about those mothers who work outside of the home. Even then, our main concern is not with all mothers who work outside of the home, but especially with those who have small and school-age children.

It's obvious to anyone the least bit observant that the numbers of working women generally, and working mothers specifically, are constantly increasing. Nor is this phenomenon limited to the world at large, but it is something that is found within the church, and within our own churches. Many of our own mothers become full- or part-time working mothers.

The drastic rise in the numbers of working women has had very obvious effects upon our society. Road signs no longer read "Men At Work," but "People Working." Heads of committees are no longer "chairmen" but "chairpersons." That sometimes annoying, sometimes helpful person we used to refer to as a "salesman" is now a "salesperson." Every occupation recorded this past year by the Census Bureau lists women as well as men.

The statistics are staggering. Forty-four percent, nearly half, of all employed Americans are women. And the percentage continues to rise steadily. So rapidly have the women swelled the ranks of the work force that substantial numbers of men are losing their jobs to women. The advances of modern technology and the introduction of specialized equipment have made it possible for women to enter jobs that in the past were exclusively held by men.

One of the consequences of the rise in the number of working mothers has been the phenomenon of "latch-key kids." "Latch-key kids" are children whose parents both work, or children of working single parents, usually mothers. After a day at school, they must come home to an empty house and must take care of themselves, because Dad and Mom are both working.

Exact figures are difficult to find, but estimates that I have seen place the number of American school-children coming home to an empty house or apartment from 2 million to 6.5 million, with one figure even set at nearly 10 million. The Department of Labor indicates that 32 million children of all ages (infant through high school) have mothers who work outside the home. Thirteen million of those children are under age 14. Every year an additional 4 percent of the nation's mothers take jobs outside their homes. The Newark, New Jersey fire department reports that one out of six calls that they handle involves children left alone at home.

Experts agree that the telephone and television have made possible the latch-key arrangement. One researcher has said, "The television is the baby sitter, and the telephone is the lifeline to Mom and Dad," (quoted in *Christianity Today*, Aug. 10, 1984, in an article by Dean Merrill entitled "After-School Orphans").

In our own churches, it's plain to see, the number of working mothers has increased quite substantially in the last couple of years. Various reasons are given to justify the mother's doing this. The chief reason is that this is simply necessary in order for the family to make ends meet. It is an economic necessity. The bills must be paid (house payment, car payment, medical bills, utility bills, etc.); the Christian school tuition, which always seems to go up, must be paid; the church budget and other financial obligations must be met. Although in the world too mothers often give finan-

cial necessity as the reason for working, it's interesting that statistics show that the majority of mothers, sixty-seven percent, work outside the home not because they must, but because they want to.

Serious ill effects of the rise of working mothers are increasingly in evidence. We may be certain that many of the economic woes that our country and other countries are experiencing today, especially the high rate of unemployment, are due to women forsaking their God-assigned labors in the home for work outside of the home in the marketplace. Certainly the rise of working mothers has contributed a great deal to the breakdown of the family, something that even the government becomes alarmed about today. Working wives and mothers have introduced strained relationships in many marriages. There is the increased contact that working women have with men other than their own husbands, and which accounts to no little degree for the rise in extra-marital affairs and the increase in divorce. The husband's inability to earn enough to be the family's principal source of support, and in many cases the wife's outstripping the husband as "breadwinner" for the family, is a major cause of marital breakup. God is not mocked. Society will pay its dues for disobedience to the ordinances of God.

What we must be convinced of as Christians is that mothers ought not to work outside of their homes, not first of all because of the bad results of this for society or for themselves, but because this is forbidden by the Word of God. We are Reformed Christians. The Word of God is the sole standard for our faith and for our life. The teaching of the Word of God, not our financial situation, not our personal feeling that housework and motherhood are unfulfilling, must be decisive as regards the proper sphere of labor for mothers.

The Word of God is clear in its prohibition of working mothers. The word of the Apostle in Titus 2:5 to young mothers is that they are "to be discreet, chaste, *keepers at home*, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." Not only does the Apostle describe the nature of the work of the mothers here, but he describes the sphere of their labor. They are to be "keepers at home." This is God's will for young mothers. An incentive to their obedience to the will of God on this score is "that the Word of God be not blasphemed." The Word of God is blasphemed by the world when we Christians speak so much about the covenant of God with us and with our children, talk so much about the blessedness of children, that our children are gifts to us from God, but then allow our mothers to forsake their calling

with regard to these precious, covenant children by working outside of the home.

In I Timothy 5:14 the instruction of the Apostle is similar: "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." The will of God's Apostle, and therefore of God Himself Who sends the Apostle, is that the younger women marry, bring forth children (notice: "children," in the plural), and guide their houses. They are not to be off working outside of their home, but in their home, guiding those homes. Again, the incentive is that by doing this they "give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

The last part of Proverbs 31 gives a very beautiful description of the "virtuous woman" (verse 10). Oh, she is a woman who works, who works hard. But she is a woman who works hard at home, whose whole labor is consumed in the needs of her home and family. All her work is directed towards them and on their behalf. The reward that she receives from God, already in this life, is that "her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (vs. 28). The women can be sure that if they forsake the example of the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, they will also forfeit this great blessedness that comes to her.

This is simply the plain teaching of the Bible: The place of the young mother is in her home, with her children. This is as much the teaching of the Bible as the truth of total depravity, the virgin birth, the antithesis, and any other doctrine of the faith. As much as we are called to believe and confess these other truths, are we to honor the Bible's teaching concerning the place of the mother in the home.

But are there no exceptions? Are there not times when it is permissible that the mother work outside of the home? Isn't it permitted when the mother needs to work to help provide a Christian education for the children? When the husband's paycheck alone won't cover the family's expenses?

No, mothers ought not to work in order to provide the Christian education that their children need. Christian education is important; Christian education is required by the Word of God, but never at the cost of the loss of the mother to the home. What is more basic, the home or the school? If the day ever comes that our ability to provide Christian education depends on mothers working outside of the home, that must be the day that we close the doors to our Christian schools. That will be the day when God's blessing leaves our Christian school movement.

But that day has not come. Oh, I don't mean to

minimize the financial difficulty that many of our families, especially our young families, are having. But the answer is not to send the mother out of the home. The answer is to seek help in the way which the Scriptures themselves clearly outline in a place like I Timothy 5. First, families who are in financial trouble ought seriously to examine their life-style. Are they living above, or within, their means. Secondly, if they are honestly living within their means as best they can, but are still unable to meet their obligations, they must seek first the help of their close relatives. This is nothing shameful. This is the Word of God. And relatives, parents, brothers and sisters, even uncles and aunts, should be sensitive to the needs of such families and stand willing to help them. Other wealthier members of the church ought also to help those families of the

church who are struggling. Thirdly, those who experience financial hardship have recourse to the office of Christ in the deacons. Christ has instituted this office exactly for them, with their needs in mind. They ought not neglect, but ought to avail themselves of the help of this office. If they do, they themselves and the whole congregation will reap the fruits of the exercise in the church of this office.

Recently two young mothers, who had in the past worked outside of their homes, acknowledged to me how wrong and how detrimental to their home and family life their working had been. Because they had come to see this, they quit their jobs. I pray that the other working mothers among us may be brought to the same realization.

IN HIS FEAR

God Is Sovereign

Rev. Ronald Hanko

In our study of the Ten Commandments, we have come to the Fifth Commandment, and thus also to the second table of the law, which teaches us our duties toward our neighbor, just as the first table taught our duties toward God. We may not forget, however, that this second table of the law is not to be divorced from the first. In the final analysis, this second table of the law, though it speaks of our relationships to our fellow men, has also to do with our duty toward God Himself.

This close connection between the two tables of the law is reflected in the words of Jesus in Matthew 20:40, where He says that the Second Commandment (referring to the second table of the whole law), which teaches us to love our neighbors as ourselves, is "like" the first, which teaches us to love the Lord our God. That love of the neighbor as commanded in the second table is *like* the love of God, because, in the end, it is the love of God. As John says, "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us," and again, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a

liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen" (I Jn. 4:12, 20). We understand, then, that in the last six commandments God teaches us to show our love for Him, by our love for our neighbor.

This is the reason why an unbeliever cannot really keep the law of God at all, though in some respects his outward behavior may conform to the demands of the law. He does not love God, and therefore any real love for the neighbor is also impossible (I Jn. 2:9-11, 4:7, 8). Just as Jesus called the Pharisees "white-washed tombs" in their careful observance of the law, clean and white on the outside but full of dead men's bones on the inside, so the many works of charity and kindness that are done today in the name of the brotherhood of man, and by unbelievers, though they may appear right in the eyes of men, nevertheless stink of death and corruption in the nostrils of God.

All this is of great importance in our study of the second table of the law. In learning what these last

six commandments teach, we must be constantly reminded that more than mere outward conformity is required of us. In learning what they teach we must learn to love God and to serve Him in our relationships to other men. Thus, once again, we must seek for and search out God's self-revelation in these commandments as well as in the first four commandments of the law. Knowing the revelation of His glory which God has given as the foundation of each of these commandments, we will be able to make our obedience to each commandment an act of love toward Him, as well as toward our neighbor, and in our relationships to our neighbor we will also be able to fulfil the purpose of our existence, and to show His praises forth in gratitude.

The revelation which God gives of Himself in the Fifth Commandment is very precious to God's people, and a source of great comfort and hope to them in the many troubles of their present life. God teaches us in the Fifth Commandment that He is sovereign, and we all know the comfort of that truth. In a few words, it is the comfort of knowing that "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). This means, therefore, that we, who love God and the truth of His sovereignty, are called to maintain and confess that truth by submitting to those whom God has placed over us in positions of authority, as well as by exercising authority in the proper way when it pleases God to set us in such a place of authority. To put it another way, we enjoy the comforts of the truth that God is sovereign, not in some esoteric and intellectual way, but in the most basic relationships of life, by living in those relationships as God commands in the Fifth Commandment.

It is no coincidence that the godlessness and lawlessness of our society have appeared together. The lawlessness that troubles society is a result of its refusal to bow before the sovereign authority and power of the Almighty. That lawlessness shall finally issue forth in the Son of Perdition, the Antichrist, who "shall speak great words against the most High . . . and think to change times and laws" (Dan. 7:25). The shame is that this spirit of lawlessness has invaded the church, so that the authority of the offices and work and discipline of the church are despised, and so that some to whom God has forbidden a place of authority in the church, intrude themselves into these positions by indecent means. But though it is shameful, it is not surprising, for the church, by and large, has also forsaken the truth that God is sovereign, so that the lawlessness which troubles the church only reflects a god-less teaching and preaching.

That God is sovereign means first of all that He is Almighty. He is not just greater in power than all

others who have power or strength, but He alone has power. He is "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (I Tim. 6:15). This must be made clear over against all the lies that men tell about God, even while claiming to believe that He is sovereign. That He is the Almighty means that there is no creature, great or small, not even Satan, or his demons, or any one of the wicked who blaspheme His Name, who has any power apart from Him. Satan's power to rise up against the kingdom of God and against the church is given to him by a sovereign God (Job 1:12, I Kings 22:21-23, Rev. 20:1-3). The same is true of the wicked. They have no power to do anything at all, except it be given them from above (Prov. 16:9, 21:1, Is. 45:7, Amos 1:6, Jn. 19:10, 11, Acts 4:26-28). All creatures are so in the hand of Almighty God that without His will they cannot so much as move (Heid. Cat., X, 28, Dan. 4:34, 35).

That God is sovereign means also that He has all authority. His sovereignty, in other words, is not just the sovereignty of might, but also of right. He has not only the power to govern and direct all His creatures, but also the right to do so as their Creator, and as the sovereign Architect Who has decreed all things from eternity. Even more than in His power, His sovereignty is revealed in His authority and right to rule His creatures, as Paul points out in Romans 9:21, where he speaks of the right of the Potter over the clay.

The Fifth Commandment is concerned especially with God's authority, and requires submission to all those whom God has placed over us in positions of authority. God has given to such persons first of all the *right* to rule our lives, and He requires in the Fifth Commandment that we recognize that right. Certainly those who have such positions ought also to have power to maintain and uphold their authority and to do what is required of them in their position. Especially that is necessary in this sinful world. But even if they do not have that power, they still have the authority and must be honored in the Name of God Almighty Who gave them that authority.

It is not circumstance, therefore, which gives authority — not might, or wisdom, or social standing, or the consent of the governed (as our own godless Constitution states), but God only. God may use circumstances to bestow authority, and He may give it in different ways, even through rebellion against authority, as He gave it to our own government some 200 years ago, but He remains the sovereign and only Potentate, and must be recognized as the source of all authority.

The Fifth Commandment, therefore, in requiring submission to the authority of parents, husbands,

employers, government officials, and officebearers in the church, is really requiring submission to the authority of God Himself. Paul says that in so many words in Romans 13:1: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." Thus it follows that "whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." Resisting authority is resisting God and denying His sovereign right to rule over us through others. That is why all politics or theology or resistance must be an abomination to the believing child of God.

We must not allow this matter of authority to be confused by all sorts of questions about gifts, abilities, standing in God's sight, or even about the evils that are often committed by those to whom God has given authority. The question is not whether the husband is stronger than his wife, but whether God has given him authority over his wife and children in the home. The question is not whether the man in the church and in society has more gifts than the woman, but whether God has made him the head of the woman. The question is not whether governments sometimes oppress their citizens, but whether God has given government authority over its citizens. Nor is it a question of whether employers always treat their employees fairly and honestly, but whether employees are commanded by the Word of God to obey their masters.

The world throws off the yoke of authority increasingly today, and always as much as it dares in the home and in society exactly because God is not in all their thoughts. The Christian submits to authority because God is in all his thoughts, and especially because God has chosen to execute His power and show His authority through Christ, Who is the Savior of all Christians.

Rebellion in any form "is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry" (I Sam.

15:23). Just as much as witchcraft is idolatry in that it trusts in superstitious practices, rather than in God, so also is rebellion and disobedience idolatry in that it rejects the authority that God Himself has given to certain persons; and in rejecting that authority it rejects God and worships another god, the god of this world, who has no power and authority in himself, but who has used his God-given authority to become the first great rebel (Is. 14:12-15, Eph. 2:2). Obedience, on the other hand, glorifies and honors a sovereign and almighty God.

That obedience is a gift of grace. By nature we too are children of disobedience as others (Eph. 2:3), and as such we also are rebels against God and against all those whom God has placed over us with authority. In connection with the demands of the Fifth Commandment, we shall certainly be able to see our own shortcoming and failure. But God Who is rich in mercy sent us His obedient Son, Who was obedient even to the death of the cross, that His obedience and submission might cover all our rebelliousness (Phil. 2:8). That Savior, now risen and exalted, has left us an example of obedience in all the spheres of life, and has poured out His Spirit into our hearts to teach us new obedience and to give grace sufficient to serve and honor the authority and power of our sovereign God and Father.

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

Give The Standard Bearer!

News From Our Churches

January 1, 1985

Rev. Bekkering preached his farewell sermon at Trinity Protestant Reformed Church in the evening on December 9. The Bekkerings moved on December 11. Rev. Van Baren preached the sermon at Rev. Bekkering's installation as pastor in Faith Church, December 16. Rev. Dale Kuiper con-

sented to go to Trinity Church in Texas with his family for December 23 and 30. Rev. Kuiper also preached the Christmas and New Year sermons in Texas.

Rev. C. Hanko left for Florida on December 11. He expects to be preaching there during the winter

months. Rev. Hanco's address is: K & K Trailer Park, Lot #4, F. Street, U.S. 41 (14th St.), Bradenton, Florida 33505. First Church of Holland, Michigan desires that we remember Rev. R. Miersma and his family as they labor among our fellow saints in New Zealand. The Miersma's address is: #20 Maungaraki Rd., Korokoro Petone, New Zealand. Their telephone number is: 011-64-4-684-540.

Rev. Marinus Schipper, who for many years served faithfully as a pastor in our Protestant Reformed Churches, went to be with the Lord on January 2, 1985. His confession, especially during the last couple of years when he suffered much pain and discomfort, was that he had nevertheless great comfort, in that he belonged to his faithful Savior.

In a letter received by our churches, Redlands Protestant Reformed Church in California expresses gratitude for the benevolence received for the family of Rev. S. Houck. Rev. Houck continues to improve although he has some discomfort from sitting or riding for too long a time. He has fully resumed his labors and is presently working with several families who are interested in our churches. His son, Jeremy, is presently home and more stable but continues to receive weekly checkups and medication for his kidney problem. His immunity to infection and disease is very low. Let us continue to remember Rev. Houck and his family in our prayers.

I missed reporting a Reformation Day speech. Rev. Richard G. Moore spoke on "The Continuing Principles of the Reformation" in our Hull Church on October 29. I am not sure if a cassette tape of his speech is available.

The Evangelism Committee of South Holland Protestant Reformed Church informs me that the two lectures given by Prof. Hoeksema on "The Afscheiding" are available on two separate tapes at a cost of \$3.00 each. They also inform me that Rev. Engelsma lectured in Randolph on the theme, "The Important Place of Women In The Church." This

lecture emphasized that, according to the instruction of the Holy Spirit, the offices in the church are closed to women. And it addressed the legitimate and practical question of what, then, is the role of women in the church. This lecture is also available on cassette tape for \$3.00, from the Evangelism Committee of South Holland Protestant Reformed Church, 16511 South Park Avenue, South Holland, IL 60473.

An office bearers' meeting was held January 8 at Southeast Church in Grand Rapids. All male confessing members in the surrounding churches there were encouraged to attend Prof. Hanco's speech on "The Elders' Role in Family Visitation."

Rev. Van Baren is leading a post-confession class on the study of Reformed Doctrine, at Hudsonville Church, 7:00 P.M., on Tuesdays. I do not know whether this class meets every week or every other week. The young people are encouraged to attend.

Grandville Protestant Reformed Church is in the process of purchasing 4.01 acres of land in the Grandville, Michigan area to build their future church building and parsonage. They are expecting the Grandville City Planning Commission to approve their request to purchase this land.

Hope Church in Walker, Michigan has approved the purchase of a new Allen electronic organ. They held a cash drive the week of December 10 to raise the remaining money needed to buy the new organ.

Covenant Church of Wyckoff, New Jersey reports that Public Service arrived to install the gas line which runs under the driveway. They are now able to put down the stone base and asphalt paving for the driveway.

The building committee of Heritage Christian School informs us that the footing, foundation, underfloor plumbing and conduit work, sewer and water lines have been finished. The library committee is in need of good used dictionaries and encyclopedias with annual year books. Contact Kathy Veenstra and Sharon Haveman if you have these books. DH

NOTICE!!!

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

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

Ervin Kortering, Sec'y.

NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Randolph, Wisconsin on March 6, 1985, at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. Material for the Agenda must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk 30 days before Classis convenes. Delegates in need of lodging are to inform the Clerk of the Randolph Consistory.

-Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk