

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

. . . The best thing that we can do to bring order and decency in the life of the church, to insure peace and harmony in our Christian schools, and to prepare our children to live in all godliness and honesty in society is to set our homes in order according to the teaching of the Fifth Commandment.

See "God is Sovereign" — page 234

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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MEDITATION

The Necessity of Good Works

Rev. C. Hanko

Ques. 86: Since then we are delivered from our misery, merely of grace, through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we still do good works?

Ans.: Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit, after His own image; that so we may testify, by the whole of our conduct, our gratitude to God for His blessings, and that He may be praised by us; also that every one may be assured in himself of his faith, by the fruits thereof; and that, by our godly conversation, others may be gained for Christ.

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 32

Of Thanksgiving.

This heading above the third section of our Catechism reminds us that we are now learning to confess the third part of our one and only comfort, the true thankfulness, which makes our all sufficient comfort complete in Christ.

We have already confessed with our Book of Instruction that we are fully aware of the immensity of the guilt of our sins and the vast extent of our depravity. No, better, we are daily burdened with the great misery of our sins, or our guilt, and of our depravity. Deep sorrow floods our hearts at the very thought of it.

Not as if we seek our comfort in our misery. We also know how God has prepared a way of deliverance through the atoning blood of His Son. That is, we experience the riches of God's grace whereby we are daily assured that, though our sins are as scarlet, we are made whiter than the snow by the cleansing power of the blood.

From which follows that we know how to be thankful for such a great deliverance. The same grace of God that justifies and sanctifies us also fills our hearts with love to God, which causes us to rejoice before Him in true thankfulness.

Thankfulness and the giving of thanks are synonymous.

True enough. But how can an empty vessel pour forth water? Still more, how can a filthy vessel pour forth pure water? How can a wretched sinner, who has nothing good of himself, give thanks to God, a thanks that is pleasing in His sight?

Our fathers answer that by saying that thankfulness is, first of all and primarily, *receiving*. We bubble over with that which we receive. We are filled to capacity with the mercies of God, which come to expression in us with sincere thankfulness in word and in deed.

This our Catechism teaches us. We are delivered from all our misery through Christ. Through Christ alone. This is merely of grace. It excludes any merit of us. Pure grace! Therefore it must follow that our thankfulness is the fruit of God's grace working daily within us. By the power of His grace we may give thanks. We can. We will. And therefore we must.

We may give thanks.

Even though the prayers of the wicked are an abomination in God's sight, we who are unworthy sinners have access to the throne of grace through our Intercessor, Jesus Christ. Even though our expression of thanks, at its very best, is so very imperfect and polluted with sin, our God receives us in Christ.

Jehovah has redeemed us through the atoning blood of His dear Son. He paid the ransom price to deliver us from the bondage of sin and corruption, and merited for us the right to eternal life with Christ in His glorious presence.

This gives us the necessary boldness to enter into the sanctuary in prayer, to bow before God's face, to worship in humble adoration, and to pour out our hearts in prayer and supplication *with thanksgiving*.

We have the right as God's children to serve Him, to keep His commandments, to exercise the communion of saints with God's people, to participate in the public worship, to hear the preaching of the Word — in one word, to enjoy the blessings of salvation in anticipation of eternal covenant fellowship with God in glory. We belong. We belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ with body and soul, in life and in death. In Him we have the right to true thankfulness and to give expression to it.

We can be thankful.

Our Catechism teaches us that thankfulness consists of a daily conversion, a walk in sanctification according to God's commands, and an intimate life of covenant fellowship with our God that comes to expression in prayer.

This is more beautifully expressed in Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His (God's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Imagine that! God's workmanship! Each of us a masterpiece, coming forth from the hand and master mind of God! God formed Adam. God made a Moses, an Elijah, a Peter, a Paul, each in his own time and place, and He also made you and me. He made us soul and body, with our own nature, gifts, and talents, according to the purpose we must serve in His church, and even in the world round about us, and in the world to come.

He created us also as new creatures in Christ! We are born again as sons and daughters in His house, no more to live unto ourselves, but unto Him Who made us.

Created unto good works! We tend to regard good works as those deeds which we perform beyond the call of duty. Our life is our own, but a small part of it we give to the Lord. How wrong we are! Whether we eat, or whether we drink, whether we are at work — father in his employment, mother in the home, the teenager in his or her engagements, the child in school, at home or out to play — we are duty bound to do all to the glory of God. God has determined our place in life, our own unique place, which no one else can fill, in order

that He may carry out His purpose in us, even as we perform those duties which God has eternally ordained for us to carry out, for a witness in this world, for the welfare of the saints, unto the coming of His kingdom and the glory of His Name. We are His friend-servants, called out of darkness into His marvelous light to tell His praises. By His grace we can!

We are also willing.

Christ breaks our stubborn, rebellious will. He restores His image in us in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, that as prophets, priests, and kings we may know Him, love Him, and serve Him with a willing heart. He enables us to want to "testify with the whole of our conduct our gratitude to God for His blessings."

This becomes evident in our daily sorrow for sin, hating and opposing all that is evil, according to the new man in Christ. This also becomes evident in a daily walk in sanctification, as we live our lives antithetically opposed to the evil world round about us. This especially becomes evident in our daily devotion to God in prayer.

In our prayers we extend needy hands to God. When your child is hungry you do not want him to go to the neighbor to be fed, but you enjoy having him rush to you in eager anticipation that you will care for him. What greater expression of thankfulness can we show than that we approach our heavenly Father with all our needs and cares, pouring out our souls before His face in eager supplication? The Psalmist asks, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" This I will do: "I will take up the cup of salvation," counting my blessings. And then I will ask for more. (Psalm 116:12, 13)

Yes, we count His blessings as part of our thankfulness. There are times when we are troubled, downcast, burdened with anxious care. The night is so very dark; we despair of the dawn. Things will never be right again. Yet when we stop to count our blessings and to remind ourselves of God's faithfulness, we can again cry out with the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits!" (Psalm 103:1, 2). We

may, we can, and we are also willing, according to the new man in Christ, to give God the thanks for all our life and being!

From this follows that we also must.

The main question of this Lord's Day is this: Why *must* we as redeemed and saved saints still express gratitude to God?

The answer is: This is the necessary fruit of Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross and of His work of grace in our hearts by His Holy Spirit.

Why does a stream rush down the mountain side? Because God created water to run down hill. Why does a flower turn toward the sun? Because God causes it to seek its life from the sun. Why does a child spontaneously turn to its mother? Because it belongs to the nature of the child to seek its mother in all its needs. Why must a child of God turn to God, approaching Him as the overflowing Fountain of every good and perfect gift? Because he is Father's child, with Father's love in his heart.

Yet at this point our fathers raise a warning finger against all spiritual laxity and indifference. They warn us that no one can enter into eternal life as long as he continues in his unconverted life of sin. Sin may not reign in us. Sin must be daily confessed and forsaken! Only when we rush to the cross, embrace it and seek all our salvation in Christ, can we enjoy the assurance of God's mercy and live in true thankfulness before our God.

Good works have their own fruit in our lives.

Our purpose must always be: "That God may be praised by us."

That purpose may be attained when we walk in full assurance of faith! And that full assurance of faith is attained only through a godly walk in close communion with our God.

That purpose is also attained by letting our light shine — in the family, in the church, and in the midst of the world — that the members of our family, the members of the church, and also those who are outside may see it. God uses us for the gathering of His church and the coming of His kingdom. Even that is a wonder of grace!

To Him be the glory!

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

Editor's Notes

Photograph. Elsewhere in this issue you will find a photograph of the late Rev. Schipper. This photo should have appeared in the February 1 issue with the obituary article. Contrary to our explicit instructions, it was omitted by our typesetter, Commercial Printing. We apologize to the family of the late Rev. Schipper, and especially to those who made a special effort to provide the *Standard Bearer* with this picture.

* * * * *

Out of Order. Our typesetter made another blunder. The article by Rev. Lubbers (*From Holy Writ*) which appeared in the February 1 issue was chapter XVIII in his current series; but chapter

XVII has not yet appeared. Please keep this in mind, so that when the 17th chapter appears you can read (or re-read) them in proper sequence.

* * * * *

Church Order. In spite of the fact that it has been advertised more than once, the new edition (loose-leaf and green cover) of the *Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches* is not being purchased at breakneck speed. Especially all our officebearers should have this up-to-date edition. The price is \$6.00 (\$6.50 by mail). It can be obtained from: Prot. Ref. Seminary Bookstore, 4949 Ivanrest Ave., SW, Grandville, MI 49418.

EDITORIAL

One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty (3)

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

(Note: At this point we are still discussing the subtopic, "One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty: Their Meaning." We have completed a brief account of the Secession of 1834 and its transplantation to this country and continuation in the Christian Reformed Church in 1857. We are now ready to discuss the "Sixty Years.")

It is some ninety years later. The scene is Grand Rapids, Michigan. The time is what might be termed the post-Jansen era, a period when the supporters of Dr. Ralph Jansen, ousted from Calvin Seminary for higher critical views, were still seeking to justify him and had succeeded in making common grace an issue in the Christian Reformed Church. The Revs. Henry Danhof and Herman Hoeksema had parted ways with the rest of the staff of *The Witness*. The official church papers, *De Wachter* and *The Banner* had been closed to them, so that they could not defend themselves and discuss the common grace issue (even though Her-

man Hoeksema had twice been appointed editor of the "Our Doctrine" department in *The Banner*.) Controversy was raging in the churches. There were those who had sworn to avenge the ouster of Dr. Jansen. And especially Danhof and Hoeksema were the objects of their wrath, partly because both of them had played an important part on the Majority Committee in the Jansen case, partly because they were the only two who had not backed off when the Jansen forces began to make common grace an issue.

What was to be done?

Fifteen men from Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo were meeting in the parsonage of the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church on April 8, 1924. Their purpose was to make it possible to publish brochures, and, if possible, a magazine, "to offer the aforementioned ministers (Danhof and Hoeksema) the opportunity to defend themselves against their attackers in the eyes of the Reformed

reading public." (quoted from the minutes of the first meeting of what later came to be called the Reformed Free Publishing Association). At their first meeting this small group of men raised \$425.00 toward the expenses of this new venture (would that be about \$4000.00 in today's dollars?) Later in the year more meetings were held and more funds raised. By June, 1924, the membership was 196 men; and well over \$3000.00 had been raised.

That was the beginning of the R.F.P.A., a small and inauspicious beginning indeed, but a very enthusiastic one.

The earliest publications of the R.F.P.A. began before the Synod of 1924 and before our Protestant Reformed Churches were born. They were two booklets, or brochures. And in those days, when Dutch was still the predominant language in the churches, they were in the Dutch language. The first was *Langs Zuivere Banen* (Along Straight Paths), in which the Revs. Danhof and Hoeksema set forth their views with respect to common grace both negatively and positively. The second was *Om Recht en Waarheid* (For the Sake of Justice and Truth), in which the two ministers defend themselves against their attackers.

We are interested now especially in the second booklet, because in its last chapter the authors announce their intention to begin publication of *The Standard Bearer*, whose anniversary we are celebrating on this occasion. In this chapter the two ministers announce in great detail their intentions and their plans as to the nature and content of *The Standard Bearer*.

It was only after the Synod of 1924, where the Three Points of Common Grace were adopted by the Christian Reformed Church, that *The Standard Bearer* made its appearance in October of 1924. It appeared first as a monthly magazine, but after a year as a semi-monthly periodical. Bear in mind, therefore, that *The Standard Bearer* began as a Christian Reformed periodical (roughly comparable say, to the status of a magazine like *The Outlook* today).

As to its character, unquestionably the first purpose of our magazine was to be a medium of defense for our original editors and their doctrinal position. And it served that purpose well: *The Standard Bearer* immediately gained attention, both favorable and unfavorable. Moreover, *The Standard Bearer* has continued to have that character ever since. It has had through the years, and it still has, an antithetical and polemical and apologetic stance. It purposes to maintain the truth over against heresy, and that, too, first of all, in the circle of Reformed churches. This is no accident; it is intentional.

However, let it also be emphasized that our *Standard Bearer* never intended to be merely negative, merely on the defensive, or merely polemical. This was also made very plain in that last chapter of *Om Recht en Waarheid*, where plans for the magazine were first outlined. It would be well worth our while to translate that chapter in its entirety, because it so clearly sets forth the purpose to which our magazine has adhered through all these sixty years. However, to put it very briefly, from the outset *The Standard Bearer* purposed to develop positively the Reformed line of the truth and the Reformed world-and-life view. To this purpose we have, by the grace of God, adhered. There have been changes in format and changes in division of duties among staff writers; and there have been various cosmetic changes (for instance, the addition of a church news section). But to its original purpose *The Standard Bearer* has adhered.

One more question may be raised in this connection: what has been and is the connection between *The Standard Bearer* and our Protestant Reformed Churches?

Historically, of course, there was a close connection from the outset. For the publication of *The Standard Bearer* became the occasion and one of the alleged reasons for the ouster of the Revs. Danhof and Hoeksema and G.M. Ophoff. Today, perhaps, that may even seem unbelievable and perhaps a bit absurd. But it is a fact that according to the records of Classis Grand Rapids East and Classis Grand Rapids West of the Christian Reformed Church, the publication of *The Standard Bearer* was among the reasons why they were deposed! The "S.B." has indeed played a significant part in our history, therefore. Besides, over the years, our magazine has been everywhere recognized as the literary voice of our Protestant Reformed Churches; and frequently it has played a significant part as a medium of initial contact and instruction in connection with our home mission activity. Moreover, everywhere through the years *The Standard Bearer* has been recognized as the journalistic voice of our Protestant Reformed Churches, even to the point that is often thought of and even referred to as our churches' magazine. The latter, of course, is not true. Ours is not a "church" paper. The organization which publishes it is "Free," that is, free from all ecclesiastical control. No consistory, no classis, no synod has any say-so about *The Standard Bearer*. And thus it must remain! (to be concluded)

*Read and study
the Standard Bearer!*

ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

The Idol: Sports

A number of articles in recent publications have called attention to a "sacred cow" which even in our circles is not often mentioned: sports as idolatry. One hears often, with regard to TV, "I have it only because of my interest in sports." And who would dare condemn sports? Is it not the "innocent" programming which can be enjoyed by the Christian on TV? Is it not *the* engaging activity associated with school?

There appeared a quotation in the *Christian News* (Sept. 10, 1984), taken from *U.S. News and World Report*, containing some sobering thoughts:

"Sports-Crazy Americans" was the cover story of the August 13 *U.S. News & World Report*. The weekly said that "richer and with more leisure time than ever, the U.S. has truly become a sports-crazy nation. In every age group, in every region, in every walk of life, a passion for athletics is blossoming — . . ."

"On TV, viewers can watch events ranging from Monday-night football to Irish rugby or Thai boxing. 'I know people who will line up three televisions on a Sunday afternoon in football season — two for network football games and one for whatever ESPN might be showing,' says Prof. Charles Prebish of Pennsylvania State University.

"*Replacing religion?* Prebish, whose field is religious studies, has created controversy even at sports-minded Penn State by arguing that sports, for an increasing number of Americans, has 'replaced traditional religion as a means of teaching ultimate reality.'

"Religion or not, sport's appeal lies in the sense of freedom and release such activity offers from the monotony and pressures of everyday routine."

U.S. News & World Report quotes Amherst Prof. Allen Guttman, author of *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sport*: "Taking part in athletics gives people a sense of control and mastery that might not be present in other parts of their lives."

Too many are making sports an idol.

Another such article appeared in the *G.R. Press*, January 26, 1985, titled: "Do Competitive Sports Offend God?"

Competitive sports are against Christian principles, undermine Christian values and distort our God-given urge to play, according to Shirl J. Hoffman, associate professor of physical education at the University of Pittsburgh.

"Competitive sports, as they are played in our culture, don't exemplify Christian qualities," said Hoffman at the Calvin College Mid-Day Series this week.

"Competitive sports extinguish the Christian signals. They push a form of winning at someone else's expense. Thus, winners in our culture appear to be better."

The Mid-Day series is held throughout this month at Calvin. Hoffman, who is also director of graduate studies at the Pittsburgh University, has studied the relationship between sports and Christianity for several years.

He believes sports, at least as this society plays them, are a distortion of the Christian message.

He noted that Christian athletes today "are describing their athletic endeavors as worship experiences."

This is a perversion of the Gospel, a strange departure from what Jesus Christ taught.

"Sports is an experience, not a discipline," he said. "Sports have become an increasingly important part of the Christian life."

"The trend, even on Christian campuses, is toward larger sports teams. Chapel services often finish a poor second to the big games. And this must make us think."

With this emphasis on sports, Christians are taking themselves further from the basics of their religion.

Hoffman indicated that many college and professional athletes today are calling themselves Christians, but they actually aren't exemplifying Christian values on the playing field.

"We are seeing many athletes today who dedicate their efforts to God," he said. "It seems as if there no longer are any atheists in the dugouts."

"The question, though, is, why, how and where are Christian athletes to play?"

Hoffman said he isn't opposed to sports; quite the contrary. Sports are a form of play, and play, he said, is an important part of human existence.

"The urge to play is a divine gift, given for a divine purpose. God planted the desire to play and man created the variety of formats in which to express it."

Sports for Christians, he added, should be an opportunity to exemplify Christian values.

But that isn't happening, not in sports as we know and practice them.

"Competitive sports today give us a chance to demonstrate our own superiority over someone else. Winners are regarded as being better than losers."

Importance is placed, at least in most organized sports, on the killer instinct, which enables athletes "to keep pressure on an opponent."

Christ taught his followers to love, to value another's life, to be humble.

"As Christians we supposedly learn to love our neighbors, but then when the whistle blows we have to be tough. We have to squash them. We have to win one for good old First Baptist."

"Sports encourage dissension and rivalry, an attitude of 'do it to them before they do it to you,'" he said.

Competitive sports devalue the importance, the sheer joy of play.

"We're kidding ourselves to think the highest levels of sports image the ideals of faith. How can we support an activity in which injuries are almost guaranteed?"

Hoffman isn't suggesting everyone turn in their shoulder pads, hang up their spikes and put their hockey sticks in moth balls.

"I'm calling us to re-think our ideas and approaches to sport," he said. "We've got to design more flexible ways to express the emotional, playful side of our natures."

Humans need to play, to take part in sports, but as Christians they must also think deeply about the way in which they do play.

"Sports, as we know them today, lack the form and substance, the right stuff to be God-ward gestures."

"Christian athletes in the deep recesses of their minds know that sports, as we know them, aren't acceptable."

Sports too often these days come neatly packaged with religious justification. Teams get God working on their sides, he said.

In light of the above two reports, there is room for much sober reflection. How many of us place sports above society attendance? How much time is spent in the home watching sports — while family relationships suffer? Are sports even occupying our attention on Sunday afternoons (how many watched the recent "super-bowl"?)?

And in school sports, is not emphasis placed on the "winning"? It is true that we are reminded that the play is the important thing. Still, what losing team gains a following? And what kind of excitement is generated by a winning team? What admiration is directed to the player who manages to score the most points? Seldom, if ever, is that team member honored who scores no points. And, what activity is best attended: a championship basketball game — or a lecture on the Sovereignty of God? Why is "school spirit" enhanced and school support increased when there is a championship team at that school? What would most young men prefer in school: playing on the team — or singing in choir? What would a young lady prefer: being a cheerleader — or playing in the band?

I ask the questions for your careful reflection. The above articles can serve to enlighten that reflection.

Gambling Is Sin

The *Christian News*, Sept. 10, 1984, contained also several articles about gambling. One becomes conscious of this terrible evil especially here in Michigan where this is a "sport," run and promoted by the state. There is a designed attempt to get many people to gamble. The *Christian News* writes:

"Record \$40 million Lotto pot sets off frenzied rush for gold" was the front page headline of the September 1-2 St. Louis Globe Democrat.

After the lottery jackpot was won, the Globe said in an editorial that "In fact, when stripped of its gaudy trappings, the lottery can be seen as one of the biggest con games ever invented, one that uses its victims to

promote it."

Major newspapers throughout the nation recently published a series of articles from the Associated Press on gambling.

The first of the series of four began: "A new 'American Dream', striking it rich by taking a chance on change — is putting billions of dollars into state coffers and millions of dollars into bettors' pockets as the fever spreads from baccarat tables of Atlantic City to new lottery games in Washington state."

"In a pastime where numbers are keys to the dream, numbers also tell the story:

"Americans bet \$44 billion last year in legal games — more than half as much as they spent on automobiles — averaging \$200 for every adult and child in the country, according to an Associated Press survey of officials in all 50 states and the District of Columbia."

"More and more people are treating gambling as an acceptable form of leisure activity," said Duane

Burke, president of the Public Gaming Research Institute, in Rockville, Md. Forty-six states now have some form of legal gambling. Bingo is legal in 43 states, as long as it is conducted by charitable or non-profit organizations. Some of the largest bingo games in the country are conducted on Indian reservations . . .

The article concludes by emphasizing the sin of gambling. It is for many an addiction which, when one is away from the game, causes a "restlessness, irritability, chills, stomach pain, headaches and nausea." The sin is the abuse of good gifts which God gives. It is a reliance upon "chance" to gain vast wealth without diligent labor. The poor, who so much desire to become rich, are most likely to gamble — though they can least afford to.

The evils of this sin will become increasingly evident in the future. Let every child of God beware this evil — and oppose it where he can in the area in which he lives.

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

The Apostles' Creed (1)

Rev. H. Veldman

Introduction

Having concluded a series of six articles on "Preservation and Perseverance" and two articles on "Integration and Segregation," we now would call the attention of our readers to the twelve articles of our Apostles' Creed. This is a beautiful confession. That it is a confession is clear from its content: I *believe* in God, the Father, Almighty, etc. It is a beautiful confession, first of all, because it is so brief. This creed is easily memorized, also by children. And it is a beautiful confession, secondly, because of its broad, comprehensive content. True, there are fundamental truths not mentioned in this creed, such as the doctrines of sovereign election, of sin, of the preaching of the gospel, and of the sacraments. Yet, it is broad in its content. It begins with the doctrine of creation and reaches its climax in the everlasting hereafter: I believe in the resurrection of the body and in life everlasting.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ" is indeed the keynote of the gospel. We read in Acts 16:30: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And this question the apostle answers in verse 31: "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Indeed, how scriptural is the truth that we are saved by and through faith! We read in Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." In Galatians 2:20 we read the wonderful words: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." And the same apostle writes in Galatians 3:2: "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Is this not what it is all about in the epistle to the Galatians, that

faith and works are set irreconcilably over against each other? And does not James in his epistle, emphasize the absolute importance of a living faith? Saved by grace through faith is surely scriptural.

We are saved by grace through faith. And we add: of course! How else can a sinner be saved? Is not salvation humanly impossible? Are we not hopelessly guilty, burdened down with a guilt we can never pay? Are we not conceived and born dead in sins and in trespasses? Are we not darkness, haters of God and of the neighbor? Is not all salvation alone in Christ Jesus? He is the reservoir of all salvation, of all the blessings of salvation. In us is nothing but sin. In Him is our all. How else can we be saved than in unity with Him, by being united with Him? What else is faith than that almighty power of the alone living God whereby, united with Him, we live out of Him by a true and living faith? Indeed, "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ" is the keynote of the gospel. It is the keynote of the glad tidings (gospel) because it alone reveals salvation to a hopelessly lost sinner.

However, *what* must we believe? How pertinent is this question? Today we have so many so-called revivalists; and all that they mention and emphasize is to believe in Jesus. And yet, in all these circles there is a woeful lack of knowledge concerning every fundamental truth of Holy Writ. And this is not all. They also oppose and ridicule you when you confront them with these fundamental truths. Why is this?

Indeed, we must believe. But, what must we believe? In Lord's Day 7 of our Heidelberg Catechism, Question 22 asks: "What is then necessary for a christian to believe?" And the answer reads: "All things promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our catholic undoubted christian faith briefly teach us." Then, in answer to Question 23: "What are these articles?" our Heidelberg Catechism sets forth the Apostles' Creed. So, must we believe all this? The Arminian revivalist has a gospel he can write on a thumbnail. But, must we believe all this, these articles with all that they imply? Why must we believe all this? Why must we believe in God Triune, in sovereign double predestination (election and reprobation), in absolute depravity, particular atonement, irresistible grace, the perseverance of the saints? Why must we believe all this? To be saved? Question 20 reads: "Are all men, then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ?" And the answer reads: "No; only those who are ingrafted into Him, and receive all His benefits, by a true faith." And then the question is asked: "What is true faith?" Upon this follow Questions and Answers 22 and 23 which we have already quoted in this paragraph. Is the question what we must believe important? It is, we

understand, all important. It is a matter of our salvation.

* * * * *

We must believe, as we read in Question and Answer 22, "all things promised us in the gospel." Two interpretations are possible of this expression. First, all Scripture here refers to the promises of the gospel. Even as all Scripture, for example, is called the law, or the law and the prophets, so also all Scripture is designated here as the promises of the gospel, and the heart of that gospel is the promises of the gospel as realized in Christ. Secondly, the promises of the gospel are separated from the rest of Scripture, and although we believe (hold for true) all that is written in the Bible, yet saving faith takes hold only of those parts of the Bible which set forth the promises of the gospel. Now, we adopt the first interpretation. The second interpretation reminds us of Report 44 of the Christian Reformed Church, which report drives a wedge between parts of the Bible. Besides, we must certainly take hold of the entire Bible, the entire Word of God as revealed in the scriptures. That this is true is evident from Question and Answer 23 (What are these articles?), which speak not only, strictly speaking, of the promises of the gospel, but of all the fundamental truths of Holy Writ.



Reverend Marinus Schipper
1906 - 1985

And then we read in Question and Answer 23 of the Apostles' Creed. Now the apostles were certainly not the authors of this creed. First, there is absolutely no evidence for this. And, secondly, it was not the calling of the apostles to prepare confessions of faith for the church; it was rather their calling to lay the foundation of the church. This creed has this name because it sets forth, in brief, the teachings of the apostles. We have already called attention to the fact that this creed, although brief, nevertheless sets forth the fundamental doctrines of the church. Not all the fundamental doctrines are set forth in this creed, as we have already noted. Yet, although brief, it is also rather comprehensive. It begins at the beginning, at the creation of the world, and it leads us finally, over the cross, into life everlasting.

That we must believe all this, these articles, is denied today in all our modern day and age, as by our sickening Arminian revivalists. Today they present a gospel on a thumbnail. The fundamental truths of Holy Writ are simply silenced. When do you hear of the fundamental truths such as election and reprobation, particular atonement, irresistible grace, the perseverance of the saints? Today all the preaching simply centers in the sinner, calls upon him to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and this is accompanied by bands and orchestras and soloists and professional sports celebrities, and the "sawdust trail," offering to all salvation and begging the sinner to accept Jesus before it is too late. A preaching that is designed to edify, build up the church in all the knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is simply unknown. But this is not all. There is more, much more.

Fact is, in these circles, also in what are known as fundamentalist circles, the fundamental truths of the Word of God are not only silenced, but they are also boldly denied. The love of God is presented as universal, and they will ridicule you if you are "crazy enough" to say that the love of God is particular. This has happened to the writer of these lines. They preach a universal suffering and death of the Lord Jesus Christ and hold you in contempt if you are foolish enough to speak of a particular atonement. They preach that the sinner is not wholly dead, is able to accept the gospel and, if you maintain the absolute depravity of the sinner, they will accuse you of denying man's responsibility and of making God the author of sin. Indeed, they deny every fundamental truth of Holy Writ, and they go along with every heretical wind of doctrine. They are Arminian to the core and despise everything that makes man nothing and exalts the living God as the only and truly sovereign Lord of heaven and earth.

Notice now, generally speaking, what we believe

in these twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed. First, we believe here in the Trinity. We read this in Articles 1, 2, and 8. This involves us in the doctrine of the Trinity, that God is one in essence and three in Persons, and that these three Persons are God and therefore co-eternal and co-equal. Secondly, in this Apostles' Creed we believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, our Lord. On the one hand, we have here the triple name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here you have the name Jesus, Jehovah saves, the name Christ, which means the Anointed One, and also the name Lord. Here, therefore, you have the Saviour in all His significance. And, on the other hand, we read here that this Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son. The Apostles' Creed, therefore, holds before us the truth of the eternal Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ; we read here that He is God's *only* begotten Son, and this name is given to our Lord Jesus Christ because He is the only natural Son of God, Light of light, Life of life, God Himself. Then, we read in Article 3 of this creed: Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary. This article sets forth the truth of the Incarnation. Here you have the tremendous truth that the eternal Son of God, God Himself, also became man; that He became man and remains God; the Eternal became temporal and remains eternal; the Infinite became finite and remains infinite; the Boundless One became limited and remains boundless. The creed here teaches us the tremendous truth that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of a virgin without the will of man. He was the rock or stone hewn out of a mountain without hands. This holds before us the exclusively divine origin of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who became like unto us in all things, sin excepted. Fourthly, Christ's humiliation and exaltation are set before us in this creed in Articles 4-7. Our fathers speak here of His humiliation. Mind you, the wonderfulness, the great significance of this passage can be understood only when the question is asked: Who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, buried, descended into hell? After all, to suffer under Pontius Pilate, to be crucified, to die, to be buried, to descend into hell cannot be restricted to a few. Many suffered under the Roman governor, were crucified, died, were buried. And is it not utterly hopeless for one to descend into hell? Hence, what kind of Saviour is this? So, the wonderfulness of this can be understood only when you ask: Who suffered under Pontius Pilate, etc.? And, then we have His exaltation: His bodily resurrection from the dead and the grave, His ascension, sitting at the right hand of God and return to judgment.

The Lord willing, we will continue with this in our following article.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

Missionary Methods (27)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

In the previous article we noted that Rufus Anderson emphasized the absolute necessity of the preaching of the Word on the mission field. Without preaching, the church simply cannot be gathered. Because this preaching, as well as the work of elders and the ministry of mercy, must be done by native converts it is necessary that schools be established. In some fields it is a must that the Scriptures be translated into the native tongue. But all of these activities, as necessary and salutary as they may be, must be kept in strict subordination to the chief task of the missionary, viz., the preaching of the Word. According to Anderson the aim of missions is the gathering of the elect out of the nations. These must be organized into local manifestations of the institute of the church of Christ. The means by which this is accomplished is the preaching of the Word. With this we are in hearty agreement. We would add to this the fact that the preaching of the Word also has a hardening effect in the hearts of the reprobate and renders them thus without excuse. Still more, when the Gospel shall have been preached to the nations for a witness, then shall the end of all things come (Matthew 24:14).

To support his views on preaching and on the value of native preachers, Anderson relates some of the history of various mission fields of his day. This material is not only interesting, even fascinating, but it illustrates the mighty, sovereign power of the grace of God through the preaching of the Word. It ought to be remembered that Anderson is writing about foreign fields in the 1800s, a time when he estimated: "One hundred thousand dollars a year would board and educate *four thousand* native youth (emphasis mine, R.D.D.). That sum would support five hundred or six native ministers with their families . . ." (Rufus Anderson, R. Pierce Beaver, ed., *To Advance The Gospel*, p. 106).

Anderson first cites the work of Rev. William A.B. Johnson, a missionary sent by the Church Mis-

sionary Society of London to preach in Sierra Leone, West Africa: "When Mr. Johnson first took up his abode at what was afterwards called Regent's Town, in Sierra Leone, the people numbered about a thousand. They had been taken at different times from the holds of slave ships; were wild and naked; and being from twenty-two different nations, were hostile to each other. They had no common medium of intercourse, except a little broken English, had no ideas of marriage, lived crowded together in the rudest huts. They were devil-worshippers, and most of them lazy, thieving, plundering, brutal savages.

"Mr. Johnson was at first exceedingly discouraged. But he resolved to preach Christ to them as the Saviour of sinners, in the simple manner of the gospel, and to open to them the miserable state of a sinner rejecting such a Saviour. His resolution was the same with that of the Apostle Paul, when he surveyed the desperate pollutions of the Corinthians, '—to know nothing among *them*, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' There is no other adequate power of deliverance. After pursuing this course the greater part of a year, preaching salvation through the Lord Jesus, a remarkable change began to come over the people. Old and young became concerned for their souls. There was, in short, an outpouring of the Spirit. Many sought retirement in the woods for prayer; and soon the neighboring mountains echoed, in moonlight evenings, with the hymns of worshippers. Mr. Johnson has left a record of the experience of many of the converts, in their own simple and broken, but expressive language, when examined, as they all were, for admission to the Lord's Supper. I am impressed by his record of their convictions of sin; their acknowledgements of the divine forbearance; their distrust of their own hearts; their inward conflicts; their tender consciences; their faith and patience; their benevolence; and their love for souls.

The outward changes were most striking. The people learned trades, became farmers, attached well-kept gardens to their dwellings. They built a stone church large enough, with the help of galleries, to seat closely nearly two thousand persons; which was regularly filled with decently dressed, orderly, and serious worshippers. They built a parsonage, school-houses, store-houses, a bridge of several arches — all of stone. Most of the adult population were married. Their night dances and heathenish drumming ceased, and so did their oaths, drunkenness, and stealing; and the schools contained a thousand children.

"All this Mr. Johnson lived to see; but he died in 1823, *only seven years* (emphasis mine, R.D.D.) from the commencement of his mission! Was there ever a more wonderful religious change? It shows the power of the simple gospel, both to convert the savage, and to civilize him. It shows the power of the cross of Christ . . . In the year 1842, twenty-four years after Mr. Johnson began his mission, one fifth of the population of Sierra Leone was at school, and the attendance at public worship was estimated at twelve thousand. In 1862 native pastorates were established, and ten parishes undertook the support of their own pastors; and no less than six different missions were sent by the people to the unevangelized tribes beyond the colony. The present number of nominal Christians in the colony, is said, on high authority, to be eighty thousand, of whom twenty thousand are communicants; and the missionary work at Sierra Leone is regarded as having been accomplished" (Anderson, pp. 107-109).

Anderson continues: "Look next at the great island of Madagascar, situated on the eastern coast of Africa. Here we shall see, as of old, infant churches struggling successfully against the utmost efforts of the civil power to destroy them. The London Missionary Society commenced a mission on that island in 1820, under the protection of the King Radama. The missionaries gave the people a written language, a grammar and dictionary, school books, a hymn-book, and the Bible, and taught some thousands to read the Scriptures. The converts were virtually, if not formally, embodied in churches. A pagan queen, the widow of Radama, succeeded her husband in 1828, and, being hostile to the Christian religion, forbade the observance of its ordinances, and the reading of the Bible; and persistence in either was punishable with death. Perceiving that the gospel continued to gain ground, notwithstanding her decree, she, in 1835, banished all the missionaries. The Christians, still increasing, were then subjected to fierce persecution, which continued through twenty-five years, until her death in 1861. They were poisoned; they

were hanged; they were speared; they were stoned, and the stoning was a most barbarous mode of execution. They were thrown down a fatal precipice. Loaded with heavy iron collars, and chained together, they were driven into banishment. They were burned at the stake, and some were crucified. Many were sold into slavery. It is believed that more than two thousand persons suffered as Christians, during this persecution, in some cruel form or other.

"So far as was possible, they associated together as Christian communities; and there were those of their number intelligent and courageous enough to act as pastors and teachers, though always at the peril, and sometimes at the sacrifice, of life. The result was a continual growth in numbers through all the persecutions.

"The queen was succeeded by her son; who favored the Christians, and invited the return of the missionaries. This was seven years ago, and now. . . there are within and around the capital of Madagascar, ninety churches, with more than five thousand members; one hundred and one native pastors; and twenty thousand claiming the Christian name. In the space of four years, the number of nominal Christians was more than doubled, and the number of the communicants was increased tenfold . . . We may read the history of Roman persecutions from Nero down, and we shall find none more cruel than the one in Madagascar, and none more distinguished for the inflexible firmness of its martyrs; upon whom, it should be remembered, the fiery tempest burst in the very infancy of their religious life. Nor should we forget that these heroic martyrs belonged to the negro race" (Anderson, pp. 109, 110).

Anderson continues by giving several examples of native preachers. Among these he cites a certain "Bartimeus, an eloquent blind native preacher at the Sandwich Islands. From the lowest physical, intellectual, moral, and social degradation and wretchedness, in his state of heathenism, Bartimeus (so named at his baptism) gradually rose, under the new creating power of the gospel, to be a devoted, active, eloquent, and successful minister of the Word. The late Dr. Armstrong, a judicious and able missionary, who was with him five years, speaks thus of him: 'He is a short man, and rather corpulent, very inferior in appearance when sitting, but when he rises to speak he looks well, stands erect, gesticulates with freedom, and pours forth, as he becomes animated, words in torrents. He is perfectly familiar with the former as well as the present modes of thinking of the islanders which gives him a power in comparisons, allusions and direct appeals, which no foreigner will ever

possess. Often, while listening with exquisite delight to his eloquent strains, have I thought of Wirt's description of the celebrated blind preacher of Virginia.' . . . Bartimeus died in the autumn of 1843 . . . His calling to be a preacher was evidently of God. He had original endowments for that service. He had great strength of memory, and there has already been a reference to his eloquence" (Anderson, pp. 115, 116).

Two truths are illustrated by these examples. 1) There comes a time when the missionary must move on. The native church must be left to stand in its own right as a manifestation of the body of our Lord. We must not be afraid to "cut the tie." 2) The foreign church needs its own pastors. A large part of the work of foreign missions must be the training of native pastors. *to be continued . . .*

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

The Nicene Creed

Rev. James Slopsema

Article 10 — *We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.*

In this article the early church first of all acknowledged one baptism.

This confession is based on 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."

The context of these verses deals with the unity of the church. In verse 3 the saints are exhorted to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. In verses 4-6 cited above we find the basis for this unity. The basis for the unity of the church is to be found in the fact that there is one God, one Lord, one Spirit Who works in the members of the church one faith and one hope.

To this is added the idea of one baptism. The baptism referred to here is not first of all the sacrament of baptism but the spiritual baptism symbolized in water baptism. This spiritual baptism consists of incorporation into the church and covenant of God through the washing away of sins in Christ's blood. Of this profound spiritual reality the sacrament of baptism is a visible sign and seal. Consequently, it is through the sacrament of baptism that one is also incorporated into the church as institute. The point however is that there is only one baptism, not many. Also this suggests and establishes the unity of the church. By one baptism the elect of God are all incorporated into one church.

This idea of unity as expressed in Ephesians 4 is also incorporated into the whole of the Nicene Creed. In Article 1 the early church confessed her faith in "one God, the Father Almighty." In Article 2 she confessed her faith in "one Lord Jesus Christ." On that basis she also confessed her faith in Article 9 in "one holy catholic and apostolic church." And now in this article the church acknowledged "one baptism." By one baptism God's people are all incorporated into the one holy catholic and apostolic church of God.

It would appear as though this truth of one baptism was incorporated into the Nicene Creed to reject the baptism of certain heretical groups that had either departed from the church or been cast out.

Already at this early date the church had debated whether it was proper to acknowledge the validity of baptism administered by various splinter groups and heretical sects.

There were those led by the church father Cyprian who maintained that the baptism of heretical groups was not valid. Those who had received heretical baptism and who sought entrance into the catholic church had to be baptized. Cyprian refused even to speak of rebaptism under these circumstances for fear of giving any validity at all to the baptism by heretics.

This position of Cyprian was totally consistent with the doctrine of the church that had developed already at this time. As we saw in our discussion of Article 9, the doctrine of the church at this time

allowed for only one institution of the church. The body of Christ was limited to the one institution controlled by the bishops, who, it was claimed, were the personal successors of the apostles. The implication of this is clear. Since the sacraments are entrusted by Christ to the church institute, to be administered by her alone, it simply follows that the baptism administered by the one catholic church is alone valid. All other baptisms administered by those who have departed from this mother church are fraudulent. Those who come from these heretical groups must renounce their false baptism and receive proper baptism from the church.

Opposition to this view was found primarily in the western branch of the church. Led by the Roman bishop Stephen there were those who advocated a more pragmatic position. They were inclined to accept the baptism by heretics provided that baptism was administered with the intent to baptize and done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the great council of Constantinople (381), which added the article we are now discussing to the Nicene Creed, the church officially decided to accept the baptism of some heretical groups but reject the baptism of others.

Rejected as invalid were the baptism of the Eunomians, Sabellians, Montanists, and others.

The baptism of the Eunomians was rejected because their baptism was not administered according to the accepted practice that prevailed at that time in the catholic church. The catholic church practiced immersion at this time. By immersion is meant the dipping of the head of the candidate into the water in which he stood. In certain circumstances (scarcity of water, physical infirmity, etc.) baptism by pouring from a shell or vessel or from the hand on the head was considered equivalent to immersion. The important element in the administration of baptism however was that there be three immersions, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Eunomians was rejected and declared false by the council of Constantinople because they "baptize with only one immersion."

The baptism of the Sabellians was rejected because of their teaching of the "Son-Fatherhood." The Sabellians denied that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct persons in the Godhead. They taught rather that these three are only three manifestations of one person. The Father is God as He revealed Himself in the Old Testament as the Creator. The Son is the same person who later revealed Himself in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer. The Holy Spirit is the same person as the Father and Son only now revealed after Pentecost as the

Sanctifier. Because of the nature of this heresy the baptism of the Sabellians was also declared by the church to be invalid.

Finally the baptism of the Montanists was rejected, evidently because they did not use the baptism formula found in Matthew 28:19 — they did not baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

However, the council of Constantinople did accept and declare valid the baptism of other heretical groups. Surprisingly, the council accepted the baptism of the Arians, who taught that the Son of God did not possess the same being or essence as the Father and therefore is an inferior god to the Father. The council also accepted the baptism of the Sabbatians, who taught that those who had fallen away during times of persecution ought not to be allowed back into the church. Accepted was also the baptism of the Quartodecimanians, who differed with the catholic church on the date of the Jewish Passover and Jesus' death. Finally, the baptism of the Apollinarians was accepted. The Apollinarians denied that Jesus possessed a complete human nature.

It would appear from this that the early church had decided on certain requirements that had to be met for her to accept the baptism of heretical groups as valid. These requirements were evidently two in number. First, it would appear as though baptisms must be administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, using the baptism formula found in Matthew 28:19. This however did not require that those administering the baptism believe the doctrine of the Trinity; for the council of Constantinople did accept the baptism of the Arians. The second requirement was that baptism be administered in such a way that the candidate be immersed three times in water. If these two requirements were met, baptism was considered valid regardless of who administered it.

According to the 9th Article of the Nicene Creed this is the one baptism acknowledged by the early church. She did not acknowledge several different baptisms. She did not acknowledge single immersion baptism. She did not acknowledge baptism administered in the name of the Son alone, as some were inclined. There was only one baptism that was valid — a threefold immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

With certain modifications the Reformed churches historically have taken a similar position. They have acknowledged one baptism. This one baptism has essentially two requirements. These are the two requirements laid down in the Scriptures. First, baptism must be administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by a

church that acknowledges the truth of the Trinity. Secondly, baptism must involve the washing of water as a sign of the washing away of sins in the blood of Jesus Christ. All other considerations are immaterial as far as the validity of baptism is concerned. Whether baptism is administered by way of immersion or sprinkling, whether there is a three-fold immersion or not are all immaterial. These elements do not belong to the essence of the sacrament. Nor does the validity of the sacrament depend on the personal faith of the person performing the baptism or the orthodoxy of the church administering the sacrament. This is because baptism is an institution of Christ. Its efficacy and power therefore belong exclusively to Christ and not to the church or minister who administers it as an agent of Christ.

All those who have received this one baptism have the sign and seal of a deeper, spiritual baptism — incorporation into the one church and covenant of God through the washing away of sins in the blood of Jesus Christ. Where there is faith the baptized person is also able to lay claim to this inner spiritual baptism. He is assured and guaranteed by the very sacrament of baptism that he has been incorporated into the one holy catholic and apostolic church by the blood of Jesus Christ. Having that confirmation through baptism it is his solemn duty to seek and promote the true unity of the church with all those who share with him in this one baptism. Doing this he can truly confess with the church, "I acknowledge one baptism."

GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH

The Doctrine of Scripture and the Reformation: Unity and the Non-Issue

Rev. T. Miersma

We have been concerning ourselves for some time in this column with the history of the doctrine of Scripture as a larger part of the history of doctrine. That study has now brought us to the threshold of the Reformation. It is to the doctrine of Scripture as developed and defined by the Reformation that we now turn our attention. We can well express our subject in these terms. The Reformed doctrine of Scripture developed by the Reformation was not the work of only one man or individual but was the work of the Reformation as a whole. Whether we turn to Luther or Calvin, to Zwingli or others of the Reformers, always there is an underlying unity of thought and agreement among them on this doctrine.

It is true that there were individual differences in the way the Reformers expressed themselves, or differences in the points which received emphasis among them. Nor did every Reformer see the doctrine of Scripture with the same clarity or insight.

But the striking thing about the doctrine of Scripture held by the Reformers, from different countries, speaking different languages, and of varying backgrounds, is this, that they were united in one common view of Scripture as the Word of God and as the sole authority for the faith and life of the church. "Scripture alone" was truly the watchword of the Reformers.

This unity of thought and doctrine was not due to any one man or his labors. Luther in Germany and Zwingli in Switzerland both arrived at essentially the same view of Scripture independently and from very diverse backgrounds. In various ways and by various means, God led the Reformers to the Word of God and to Scripture's own testimony concerning itself. In so doing, He led them also to sound principles of interpretation and of understanding that Word of God, principles which were not new, but had already been laid down in Scripture and developed in seed form by the early church. It is

this which makes the Reformation truly a re-formation, a return to the doctrine and truth of the Word of God and a reforming of the church upon the foundation of Scripture.

In that return to Scripture the doctrine of Scripture taught in the Word of God itself was again set forth and developed. But it was now developed in clearer form than that achieved by either the early church or the forerunners, Wyclif and Huss. Though they may have differed on other points, in the doctrine of Scripture the Reformers were essentially one. It was this doctrine which set them apart from the rationalism and unbelieving scepticism of the Renaissance and from the church of Rome, which set tradition alongside Scripture and placed the church's authority over the Word of God. The Reformers were united concerning the one principle: "sola Scriptura," or "Scripture alone" as the sole authority for faith and life, the foundation of doctrine and the church. From that principle they would not waver.

This means that in our study of the Reformed doctrine of Scripture we are confronted with a wealth of material to be drawn from the writings of the Reformers and from their history, for this one principle of "Scripture alone" was a matter of much controversy, not indeed among the Reformers themselves, but between them and their Romish opponents. It is to these controversies and the issues raised by them that we shall direct our attention in coming articles. They embrace such questions as, which books form the Word of God? from where does Scripture derive its authority? and does it have sole authority? Such questions also concerning how Scripture is to be interpreted, by whom, and by what means, confronted the Reformers. These questions are also today very much living questions in the Christian church at large, and it is important therefore that we know of them and of the answers to them. As we consider these questions we will see that on these matters the Reformers indeed speak with one voice.

One issue however deserves our attention from the outset. That issue may properly be called the non-issue of the Reformation. For indeed, in all their discussions, even with Rome, neither Rome nor the Reformers had any disagreement upon one point, at least formally, and that was this, that the Bible was the authoritative, infallible, inerrant Word of God. Rome indeed disagreed with the Reformers' definition of the nature and source of that authority, disagreed with the Reformers that Scripture had *sole* authority, setting beside it also what it conceived to be an infallible oral tradition received from the apostles. But that the Scriptures were the Word of God, possessed authority, and were more-

over infallible and inerrant, was not an issue of the Reformation. It was confessed by the Reformers and by Rome, at least in principle. Rome indeed in its veneration of tradition denied in practice what it confessed formally, but nevertheless, that the Scriptures were the infallible and inerrant Word of God was never the issue.

The church of Rome, in its response and answer to the Reformation at the Council of Trent, 1546, in its fourth session, declares concerning Scripture that it "... receives and venerates with equal affection of piety and reverence, all the books both of the Old and New Testament — seeing that one God is the author of both — ..." While Rome added to the list of the Old and New Testaments the apocryphal books, yet the principle of divine authorship was never denied. Though Rome speaks of inspiration in mechanical terms of dictation, rather than the organic view held by the Reformers, which things we shall more fully consider, the Lord willing, yet, that the Bible was God's Word, of divine authorship, infallible and inerrant, and of divine origin and inspiration was not an issue even between the Reformers and Rome. We will not find therefore that this issue, which is today a prominent one, is an issue which was much debated by the Reformers directly.

It is important that we understand this non-issue clearly. It is so often contended today that the Reformers, in their views of inspiration and Scripture, held a low view of these matters. Thus the Reformers are often claimed by those who today would deny divine inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy, as even advocating these modern-day opinions. The appearance of proof for this idea is given by selecting various statements of the Reformers which speak rather freely of the Word of God, the books of Scripture, their authorship and contents. This abuse of the Reformers' writings is nothing more than a deliberate distortion of the facts of history and the Reformers' views. The Reformers were free to use the language they did and in the form they did simply because these modern heresies had not yet arisen in the church. It is historical falsehood to read back now into the Reformers issue which they did not even consider at the time and which for them were never points of controversy. To pull, for example, as is so often done, offhanded comments of Luther from the notes and reminiscences of his students and friends (*Luther's Table Talks*), and which were made while sitting at table, and then to present them as the authoritative view of the Reformer on the doctrine of Scripture is nothing more than the practice of deceit upon the ignorant. In like manner, imprecise statements of Calvin have been selected to show

that he taught both Arminianism and the theory of common grace. Indeed, in such a manner one could make the Reformers teach nearly anything one wished.

The united testimony of the Reformers as a whole and of the Reformed creeds which they produced gives expression to one clear principle, that the Scriptures are the Word of God, of divine authorship, fully sufficient for faith and life, and to be received in all their parts as the Word of God, infallible and without error. The current departures from this truth in the churches of the Reformation and the denial of these things is simply not Reformed, but rather innovation and heresy. Nor is there any need for lengthy reports on these subjects in Reformed churches which hold to the three forms of unity, as has also been the case in recent years. Our Heidelberg Catechism, for example, states in Question and Answer 21, that true faith holds for truth "... all that God has revealed to us in His Word" (emphasis added, TM), and that this belongs to the certain and assured knowledge of

faith. Likewise our Belgic Confession of Faith in Article Three declares, "Therefore we call such writings holy and divine Scriptures," and again in Article Five, "We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith; *believing without any doubt, ALL things contained in them, . . .*" (emphasis added, TM). This is the Reformed view, the view of the Reformers under whose influence and doctrine our creeds were written. He who teaches otherwise, or that church which teaches otherwise, or in its decisions manifests that it so teaches, has departed from the position of the Reformation and can no longer call itself Reformed or Lutheran. In the light of the fact that Scripture's infallibility and inerrancy was a non-issue in the Reformation, even between the Reformers and Rome, but one of agreement, to deny this principle is to depart from the historic Christian faith; and, as our Catechism makes plain, it is a matter of unbelief, for it is not the expression of "true faith."

IN HIS FEAR

God is Sovereign (continued)

Rev. Ronald Hanko

We have seen that the underlying truth of the Fifth Commandment is God's sovereignty. God is the one Who has all power and authority in heaven and earth, and He is the one Who gives power and authority in the different spheres of life, so that not only kings and governments, but also parents, husbands, employers, and church officebearers rule at His command.

Our confession of God's sovereignty, therefore, is no mere lip service, but something that is woven into the very fabric of our lives. We confess God's sovereignty by bowing to or exercising God-appointed authority in every sphere of life. A man who speaks of God's sovereignty and professes an admiration for that truth, but refuses to submit to those whom a sovereign God has appointed to rule his life, is revealed as a liar and a hypocrite by his rebellious and disobedient conduct. The same is

true of the man who, in the exercise of authority, either in domestic or civil relationships, is a tyrant and a bully. He too, by his own actions, denies any lip-service he pays to a sovereign God, by refusing to use his authority as a gift from God.

When the Fifth Commandment speaks only of the relationship of parents and children, we are not to think that it has nothing to say about these other relationships of authority and submission. That the Fifth Commandment governs all these relationships is evident from the fact that Scripture often speaks of rulers, masters, and others in authority as "fathers" (Gen. 4:20, 21, II Kings 5:13, I Cor. 4:15, I Tim. 5:1, 2). The Fifth Commandment speaks only of parents and children because it is a summary, but as a summary it points to the very heart of the whole issue of authority and submission to authority.

The Fifth Commandment reminds us, then, that the family is the basic unit of human society. All other relationships are only a development of that most basic family relationship. That development was necessary as human life became more diverse and complicated and as men multiplied and spread over the earth. The example of Abraham shows, however, that all the other relationships governed by the Fifth Commandment have their source in the relationship of parents and children and are dependent upon that relationship. Abraham was not only the father, but the religious authority, the priest, in his household (Gen. 12:7, 8), and the highest civil authority (Gen. 13:8, 14:14 ff), and thus the authority in every area of life for his family.

All this means that the breakdown of authority in society, in the church, and in the schools must be traced to the home, that is, to the breakup of the family, and the refusal both of parents and children to recognize the authority that God Himself gives to parents in the home. We cannot expect things to go well in the churches and schools when parents do not take upon themselves their God-given authority, either because they are too busy or too lazy, and when neglected children do not learn to submit to authority in their own homes. The refusal of parents to exercise their authority, and the subsequent disobedience of children is the grossest form of sin against the Fifth Commandment, not only because it strikes directly at the sovereignty of God, but because it strikes at the very foundations of human society, and produces hellish chaos and lawlessness in all of life. The best thing that we can do to bring order and decency in the life of the church, to insure peace and harmony in our Christian schools, and to prepare our children to live in all godliness and honesty in society is to set our homes in order according to the teaching of the Fifth Commandment.

As we have already indicated, the calling of children to submit to their parents implies the calling of parents to exercise their God-given authority over their children. It is sad that so many parents today are not even home often enough to have any real authority over their families. In refusing to fulfil their responsibilities they are the cause of their children's lawlessness. And this is true in every area of life. The cause of rebellion is not only to be found in the wicked hearts of those who rebel, but in the wickedness of those who will not fulfil their responsibilities in the positions of authority that they have received.

Parents, and others in authority, therefore, confess God's sovereignty by faithfully and diligently undertaking their duties. And just as God's authority means that He has the sovereign right to deter-

mine right and wrong, to demand obedience and submission to His determination, and to punish and reward rebellion and submission, so it is with those whom God has placed over us. They must uphold and reward the good and condemn and punish the evil (Rom. 13:3, 4). In doing this, however, they must also confess God's sovereignty by determining right and wrong, and punishing and rewarding according to the perfect standard of God's law, and not according to some standard of their own. In other words, it must be God's authority that they uphold. Those who are in authority do this by dealing justly, honestly, and in love with those who are under them (Eph. 5:25, 6:4, 9, Col. 3:19, 21, 4:1). Authority without love and justice is not the authority which God has given, but petty tyranny which provokes disobedience and discourages obedience.

What must be emphasized, though, is that the failure of those who hold positions of authority are never an excuse for insubordination and rebellion. The submission which God demands is unconditional, and there are no circumstances at all where God permits rebellion against authority in the home or in society. It is for this reason that the Commandment speaks of "honoring" authority rather than "obeying" it. In speaking this way God recognizes that those who hold authority are sinful, even if they are children of God, and that their demands may conflict with God's Word. There may be times, then, when God's people must refuse obedience to the demands of a husband, of parents, of government, or of employers. But even then we may not cease to recognize their authority or make any attempt to overthrow it either in word or deed, or fail to obey in other things.

Clear conflict with God's command is the *only* reason for not obeying, and there is *no* reason or excuse for rebellion. Unfairness, oppression, cruelty, and dishonorable deeds are never an excuse for rebellion, not even for disobedience. Acts 5:29 teaches us to obey God even if it means disobeying men, but I Peter 2:18-20 teaches that we must submit always. There Peter commands servants to be subject to their masters, not only when they are treated well, but even when they are mistreated. Peter gives us the example of Jesus to emphasize this for us in I Peter 2:21-25. In His trial, Jesus submitted both to the religious and the civil authorities of that time, though both were corrupt and wicked. He was reviled, treated most unjustly, threatened, persecuted, and finally murdered by those whom God had placed in positions of authority. Yet He never refused submission, not even when Caiaphas put Him under that hypocritical oath that He tell them whether He was the Christ. By His own example He teaches us what our submission must be

in every area of life, even when we must for God's sake refuse obedience. Never may we revile those whom God has placed over us, never may we threaten them, never may we sin against them, or deal evilly with them, even when they do so to us. Our only recourse in such cases is that which Jesus Himself took — the way of committing Himself to Him that judges righteously. For this the Christian must need suffer much injustice and oppression, but he does so confidently, knowing the example of Christ, and his part in Christ's reward.

The application of these principles is very far reaching. It condemns, for example, the rebellious origin of our own government — rebellion not only against an oppressive government in England but also against God, as reflected in the teaching of our Constitution that government has its origin in the consent of the governed and not in God. The fruition of this godless principle is seen in the lawlessness of our society today.

The unrighteous origins of our government do not mean, though, that we may add our own disobedience and rebellion to the chaotic condition of our society. By whatever means the authority of our government has been established, it is from God and we must submit for His sake, even to the extent of paying our taxes (Matt. 17:24-27, Rom. 13:6, 7). Nor may we have any sympathy for the oppressed citizens of communist countries or of our own country when they rebel against the government, nor may we support them in any way. The Roman government of Jesus' day was no better than many governments today, but Jesus and the Apostles never advocated any form of "liberation theology" but rather by word and example taught the theology of submission, that is, the theology of

God's sovereignty and its application as Paul sums it up in Romans 13:1, 2.

It is this commandment also which condemns membership in labor unions. The purpose of such organizations is always, in one way or another, to force employers to live up to their responsibilities. Again, there is no question that employers often treat their employees unfairly and wickedly, but it is no excuse for rebellion. For his faith in a sovereign God the Christian will have to suffer much, being unable to accept the better-paying jobs, but also in these things he remembers the reward that a righteous judge has promised him and commits himself to the keeping of that great Judge.

In the home, in the church, and in society, in the exercise of authority and in submission to authority, the Christian is known by his fruits as one who believes in and honors a sovereign God.

In his obedience he lays hold on the sure promise of a sovereign God, for this Fifth Commandment has great promise for those who love God and keep His law. Paul even calls it in Ephesians 6:2 "the first commandment with promise," not because the first four have no promise, but because this is the first which makes the promise known, founding that promise in the glory of a sovereign God. Submitting to all authority, therefore, we have the proof and assurance that we shall live long in the land which God gives — not the earthly land any more, but the heavenly Canaan of which the earthly land was but a shadow. There we shall have life forever under the sovereign rule of God and of His Christ and have authority and power and dominion over all God's works, through Christ Jesus our Savior, who submitted even to death for us.

THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

Fear of God

Rev. Ron Cammenga

"The fear of God," the Presbyterian John Murray has said, "is the soul of godliness," (*Principles Of Conduct*, p. 229). Murray is right. The fear of God is the essence of the Christian life. There can be no godly, pious living apart from the fear of God.

There is in the church today a sad lack of fear of God. This is a lack of fear of God that often shows itself in the flippant, disrespectful, even irreverent way in which the worship services are conducted. The solemnity and reverence of the worship ser-

vices more and more are done away with. Preaching becomes a time for relating humorous stories and jokes. God is addressed in prayer as if men were talking to their next door neighbors. The people come to church dressed more and more casually, the younger men wearing blue-jeans and the younger women wearing slacks. The things of God's Word, spiritual things are not taken seriously, but regarded with indifference.

Undoubtedly this general loss of the fear of God in the churches today is due, in large measure, to the widespread acceptance of the false teaching that God is a God of all love and that God loves all men. Just in proportion as the churches have made their message the message of the universal love of God, they have muted the message of the wrath and fear of God. And the loss of the message of the wrath and fear of God has had the most disastrous effects on Christian living.

There can be no Christian life apart from fear of God. The whole motivation for Christian living, why we do the right and hate the wrong, is only this: the fear of God.

The Scriptures make plain how indispensable to the Christian life is the fear of God. The Psalmist says in Psalm 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Upright Job is described by God Himself in Job 2:3 as "a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God." The Virgin Mary proclaims concerning God in Luke 1:50, "And His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation." The Apostle exhorts us in II Corinthians 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." In I Peter 2:17 we are admonished, "Honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king." In Jeremiah 32:40 God promises the children of Israel, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them." In the same verse He goes on to explain what the establishment of His covenant will mean: "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." The whole Book of Proverbs calls covenant parents to bring up their children in "the fear of God." Of the outstanding men of faith in the Old Testament, such as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Job, David, and Solomon, it is said that they "feared God."

Obviously, the fear of God exhorted upon the child of God is distinct from the fear of pure dread and terror. There is nothing godly or Christian in this attitude. James tells us that the devils possess this kind of fear of God. He writes in James 2:19 that "the devils also believe, and tremble." Of that unbelieving monarch, Felix, which confronted by the gospel-preaching of the Apostle Paul, we are

told that he "trembled" (Acts 24:25). But this was no genuine fear of God. In fact, this kind of fear stands opposed to the genuine, saving fear of God that characterizes the believer. The Apostle John writes, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (I Jn. 4:18).

But in distinction from the fear of terror, of dread, there is the good, necessary, and proper fear of God.

This proper fear of God is occasioned, first of all, by a recognition of ourselves as guilty sinners and as those who, on account of the guilt of our sins, are liable to God's righteous judgment. In the end, it is impossible to eliminate entirely from the Biblical teaching concerning the fear of God the terror which His righteousness and judgment cannot help but produce. Surely, this is not the only thing, or even the main thing, that characterizes the fear of the child of God. But it is an element! It does enter into the picture!

That ought not seem strange to us. This is true even in earthly relationships. Every believing son loves his father. But that doesn't prevent him from having a certain fear of his father also, especially a fear of the wrath of his father and the chastisement of his father should he sin against his father. And it is exactly that fear that motivates him not to do what would be displeasing to his father. This same thing, now, is true of our relationship to God. Murray states:

... it is quite obvious that the Scripture represents the dread or terror of God's wrath as belonging to the total concept of the fear of God. Even where there is no sin, and therefore no existent wrath, we cannot eliminate the fear of incurring God's displeasure as one motive deterrent to the commission of sin (*Principles Of Conduct*, p. 235).

The Scriptures often emphasize this aspect of the fear of God. The Psalmist declares in Psalm 119:120, "My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee; and I am afraid of Thy judgments." Jesus says to His own disciples, "Be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (Luke 12:4, 5). The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews urges this fear upon his readers: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 4:1). The Apostle Peter exhorts in I Peter 1:17, "And if ye call on the Father, Who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." In the

Old Testament, the person who sinned presumptuously, was to be put to death. God Himself gives the reason for this, "And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously" (Deut. 17:13).

But, in the second place, the fear of God which the Scriptures enjoin is a fear motivated by reverence for and love of the God Whom we fear. The fear of God contains an unmistakable element of dread, but goes beyond that. It is more than mere dread aroused by the apprehension of God's wrath. And, in the end, dread of judgment will never itself produce the love of God and hatred of sin in which salvation consists. The fear of God that characterizes the believer is a fear which manifests itself in adoration, love, and humble supplication of God. It is the fear that consists of awe, reverence, honor, and worship before a God Whom we know to be a holy God, a God of all glory, truth, and righteousness.

The Apostle John has this fear of God in mind when he says in Revelation 15:4, "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest." The Psalmist says in Psalm 2:11, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." And in Psalm 5:7, "But as for me, I will come into Thy house in the multitude of Thy mercy: and in Thy fear will I worship toward Thy holy temple." The good condition of the early church is described

in Acts 9:31, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." Believers are exhorted to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). The ungodly, who reject the revelation of God and refuse to worship Him, are described in Romans 3:18: "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

There is nothing more conducive to godly, holy living than the fear of God. There is nothing that so much motivates the child of God to hate and flee from sin as the fear of God. There is nothing that produces in his life carefulness to know and obey the will of God as the fear of God. There is nothing so sadly lacking in the church today as a proper and healthy fear of God.

Such a fear of God is of benefit to us ourselves. It's demanded by God Himself, but it's also beneficial to us ourselves. There is no book of the Bible that emphasizes this truth so much as the Book of Proverbs. "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened" (10:27). "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death" (14:27). "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life" (22:4).

Let each of us make the prayer of the Psalmist in Psalm 86:11 our own: "Teach me Thy way, O Lord; I will walk in Thy truth: unite my heart to fear Thy name."

Book Reviews

A MOMENT OF TRUTH (THE CONFESSION OF THE DUTCH REFORMED MISSION CHURCH 1982), Edited by G.D. Cloete and D.J. Smit; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI. ISBN 0-8028-0011-4, 161 pp., paper, \$9.95.

WALKING ON THORNS, The Call To Christian Obedience, Allan Boesak; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI. ISBN 0-8028-0041-6, 65 pp., paper, \$3.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema)

These two books are closely related. They are both concerned with the struggle against apartheid in South Africa by non-whites in the church there.

But for that very reason the stand taken last year by the Christian Reformed Church, the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (GKN), and the Reformed Ecumenical Synod declaring apartheid to be heresy is also involved. If you want to understand something of these matters and just what it is that the CRC, the GKN, and the RES are supporting and approving, then you should read these books.

In the fall of 1982 the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa, what is called a "colored" church in distinction from a black church or a white church, declared that the situation confronting the churches in South Africa with respect to apartheid constituted a *status confessionis*, a condi-

tion in which the very truth of the gospel is at stake. In this connection they drafted a confession of faith with respect to the apartheid question, a confession which sets the DRMC apart from its "mother" church, the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa. The first of these books contains the text of that draft confession, as well as nine essays examining the historical precedent, background, theological meaning, and practical consequences of this action.

But be warned that what you will find in this book and in this confession is the social gospel undisguised; maybe today you would call it "liberation theology." Here is a sample, from Article 4: "We believe that God has revealed Himself as the one Who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among men; that in a world full of injustice and enmity He is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor, and the wronged and that He calls His Church to follow Him in this; that He brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; that He frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind; that He supports the down-trodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows, and blocks the path of the ungodly; that for Him pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering; that He wishes to teach His people to do what is good and to seek the right; that the Church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the Church

must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream; that the Church as the possession of God must stand where He stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged; that in following Christ the Church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others."

The second book purports to be a book of sermons by Allan Boesak, president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and darling of the World Council of Churches (this book was first published by the WCC, which should be a sufficient negative recommendation!). They are not really sermons, but propaganda speeches in the nature of a takeoff from various texts and with a religious crusade character. I have never heard Boesak speak or preach, but when I read these messages, I am reminded of Martin Luther King, Jr., both as to the content of the messages and as to the admitted charisma of which they give evidence.

I close with an editorial note which really goes beyond the scope of a book review. If this is what the CRC and the RES believe, as in the light of last year's decisions it is fair to believe, then why not be honest and join the World Council of Churches? This would also be a final solution for the RES of their perennial and perplexing problem of World Council membership; the RES could disband!

News From Our Churches

January 31, 1985

Rev. Jon Smith has accepted the call to serve as pastor to Trinity Protestant Reformed Church in Houston, Texas. Hull Protestant Reformed Church in Iowa has called Prof. R. Decker to serve as pastor, from a trio including also Rev. R. Hanko and Rev. G. Van Baren.

Rev. Houck is doing better. He is able to get around and do his work again for which he is thankful. Jeremy is much improved. His kidney problem is in remission so he is losing weight and feeling much better. His kidney problem is characterized by flare-ups and remissions lasting in varying periods of time until he is a teenager.

Rev. and Mrs. R. Miersma and Eric have a pleasant home in Korokoro. It is built on long poles because it is located on a hillside. This splendid

location gives them a magnificent view of the bay and of the city of Petone right below them. The Wellington Fellowship is comprised of four families while Palmerston North is comprised of two families. They worship in St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Naenae at 11 A.M. and 7 P.M. Once a month they travel to Palmerston North to preach on the second Sunday of the month. Right now they are in the summer season, which means that their Christmas was like a warm June day. They have experienced extremes in weather, strong winds at 93 mph and an earthquake. Although separated from us by 10,000 miles they are with us in the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

The mission church in Blue Bell, PA meets at the Lower Providence Community Center, Hillside Avenue in Blue Bell. Worship services are at 10:00

A.M. and 6:00 P.M. One of their members, Dan Holsopple, made public confession of his faith in Covenant Church in Wyckoff, New Jersey.

The Mission Committee sponsored a conference on home mission work which was held in the Grand Rapids area in the early part of January. The subject of the conference was the growth of a mission group and the relationship between the Mission Committee and the calling church.

Tapes of Faith's Choir Program, *The Christ Child Cantata*, are available for \$4.00 from Dan Boone, 454-4616.

The Board of the Heritage Christian School in Hudsonville, MI has hired Mr. Gerald Kuiper as the school's administrator/teacher. Mr. Kuiper is currently assisting the board in many aspects of open-

ing the new school in the fall. The starting of this new school has presented some unusual circumstances for Hope School in Walker, MI. Several of the present school board members in Hope have indicated that they would resign since their children will be attending Heritage School. This meant that Hope School had to elect five new board members to begin working with the board. Due to requirements of the constitution these newly elected interim members will receive an advisory vote until they actually fill the positions of the board members who resign.

NOTICE!!!

All students enrolled in the Protestant Reformed Seminary, who will be in need of financial assistance for the coming school year, are asked to contact the Student Aid Committee, Mr. Larry Meulenberg, Secretary, 342 Begole, S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504. (Phone 616-453-8466). This contact should be made before the next meeting of the Committee on February 21, 1985, the Lord willing.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society, "Ruth," of Hope Protestant Reformed Church extends its Christian sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Louis (Esther) Kamps, in the death of her father, REV. KELLY TUCKER.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

"In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

Mr. John Huiskens, President
Miss Marilyn King, Secretary

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Study Society of SouthEast Protestant Reformed Church expresses its Christian sympathy to Mrs. M. Schipper in the death of her husband, REV. M. SCHIPPER.

"That I, with body and soul, am not my own, but belong unto My faithful Savior Jesus Christ."

Rev. C. Haak, Pres.
Mrs. D. Hauck, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Study Society of SouthEast Protestant Reformed Church expresses its Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Kamminga in the death of her mother, MRS. GERTRUDE OFFRINGA.

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

Rev. C. Haak, Pres.
Mrs. D. Hauck, Sec'y.

NOTICE!!!

An Officebearers Conference will be held, the Lord willing, at the Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin on Tuesday, March 5, from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. The subject — "THEONOMY". Those in need of lodging or transportation from the Dane County Airport (Madison) should notify Randolph's Clerk — Mr. Martin De Vries, Route 1, Box 70, Randolph, WI 53956; Phone — (414) 326-5195. The public is invited.

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. Delegates in need of lodging are to inform the Clerk of the Randolph Consistory.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church extends its Christian sympathies to its fellow Council Member, Mr. Wilbur Bruinsma, and to the family of the late LEWIS BRUINSMA in the death of their brother, husband, father and son.

It is our prayer that they may be comforted by the Word of our Saviour Lord, — "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven, for you." (I Peter 1:3, 4)

Rev. David J. Engelsma, Pres.
Louis R. Regnerus, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The South Holland Ladies Society expresses its sincere sympathy to one of its fellow-members, Mrs. Phyllis Bruinsma, and to her children and grandchildren. On December 12, 1984, the Lord took unto Himself their beloved husband, father and grandfather, MR. LEWIS BRUINSMA, at the age of 54 years.

We commend them to the gracious keeping of Jehovah our merciful God, Who is a Husband of widows and a Father to the orphans.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (II Corinthians 4:17)

Rev. David Engelsma, Pres.
Mrs. Kathy Vander Meulen, Sec'y.