

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

. . . there can be no question but that the Doleantie was a reformation because it constituted a return to our historic Reformed confessions, the Three Forms of Unity, and thus to the truths of the Word of God. This is the very essence of reformation. The State Church had departed, both in doctrine and in discipline, and that, too, in its official acts as church. The Doleantie changed this.

See "The Centennial of the Doleantie"

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MEDITATION

Cornelius Hanko

Our Christian Stewardship

Ques. 110. What doth God forbid in the eighth commandment?

Ans. God forbids not only those thefts, and robberies, which are punishable by the magistrate; but he comprehends under the name of theft all wicked tricks and devices, whereby we design to appropriate to ourselves the goods which belong to our neighbor: whether it be by force, or under the appearance of right, as by unjust weights, ells, measures, fraudulent merchandise, false coins, usury, or by any other way forbidden by God; as also all covetousness, all abuse and waste of his gifts.

Ques. 111. What doth God require in this commandment?

Ans. That I promote the advantage of my neighbor in every instance I can or may; and deal with him as I desire to be dealt with by others; further also that I faithfully labor, so that I may be able to relieve the needy. Heid. Catechism, Lord's Day 42

The earth and the fulness with which it is stored,
The world and its dwellers belong to the Lord;
For He on the seas its foundation has laid,
And firm on the waters its pillars has stayed.

This same Lord upholds and governs all things as Almighty God, Sovereign Ruler over the wide and vast domain and His universe! He, and He alone has claim to all the work of His hands!

In a very special sense, His people are His peculiar possession. He lays claim to them saying, "I have chosen you, redeemed you, called you by name; you are Mine!

To which we respond in faith: Yea, Lord, I am Thine with all that I have!

We are dependent creatures!

When God created man, He made him a needy, dependent creature to live out of God's hand. As long as sin had not entered into the world this created no serious problem. Adam and Eve ate from the fruit of the trees of the garden, which brought forth abundantly. They received their daily bread in thankfulness to their God. There was but one tree in the entire garden from which they were forbidden to eat. Through the instigation of Satan this became a snare to them. They became rebels, declared their independence to do as they saw fit. The Lord in His just wrath cast them out of the garden, and gave them over to die a prolonged but certain death. Spiritually they had separated themselves from God's fellowship and brought upon themselves His condemning judgment. They died!

Given over to his sinful nature, man became a thief. Rather than to listen to God's command, "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work", he devises all sorts of get-rich schemes, such as lotteries, gambling, dishonest business transactions, fraudulent merchandise, oppressing the employee, or refusing to give a full day's labor for an honest wage, strikes, boycotts, and various other attempts at dishonesty.

The Lord says, My people, whom I have delivered from the bondage of sin and the power of death, love Me! Thou shalt not steal!

We live out of Father's hand!

A striking example of that we see in Israel's journey through the wilderness to the promised land. In the waste lands of the Sinai peninsula God rained manna from heaven, a new supply every day. Very literally Israel was reminded that they ate out of the hand of Jehovah, their faithful covenant God. Never did they lack food, no, not for a

single day. This manna contained all the necessary vitamins, all the nutrients necessary for their daily existence. One would think that Israel would live in perfect contentment and thankfulness for God's providential care in a waste and howling wilderness. Yet even then they murmured, complaining that they wanted meat, and that their souls longed for the onions, garlic and leek of Egypt. For forty years they grieved God with their bitter complaints.

We have another example in Elijah sitting at the brook Cherith, waiting each morning and evening for the arrival of the ravens, which were sent of God to supply him with his daily ration of meat and bread. After one year he was sent to the widow of Sidon, who was about to starve to death. For two and a half years Elijah, the woman, and her son were fed with a daily supply of oil and meat. No, their table was not laden with luxurious pies and rich cakes; yet they had their daily bread, while thousands around them died of starvation. Together they learned to pray each day anew: "Give us this day our daily bread!" And they also saw, even including the former pagan widow, that this daily ration pointed them to Him who is the Bread of life, who feeds us even unto all eternity!

The Psalmist declares that he has never seen the righteous without food, while Paul assures us, "Godliness with contentment is a great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. But having food and raiment let us therewith be content." I Tim. 6:6-8

We are stewards in God's house!

There is a sinful obtaining, but there is also a sinful misuse of God's gifts.

Proud man is selfishly greedy. He banishes God from his thoughts and sets himself up as if he were God. He claims to have inalienable rights, the right to live, the right to be cared for, whether that be by the government or some other agency. Especially when the government is so ready with its hand-outs, every one tries to obtain all that he can. The world owes him a living; no, a living that compares with the Joneses. He claims the right to make use of his possessions as he pleases. We think of the rich man who sits mulling over the abundant production of his farm. What shall I do? I'll build bigger barns, I shall lay up my goods in store for many years. I shall assure my soul that I have found independence, freedom from want and freedom from fear. We all know how God answered this fool. We know so very well, and yet he is not foreign to any of us!

We have a stewardship to fulfill. Jesus gives us the parable of the talents, in which the man travelling to a far country (this was spoken on the eve of

Christ's crucifixion) entrusted to his servants all his goods. These are the gifts that God entrusts to us day by day. They include our span of life, our health, strength, home, family, friends; our task in life with the ability to think, to will, to act; our automobile, all our luxuries, our place in God's church, and even our contact with our neighbors, whoever they may be. To one God gives five talents, to another two, and to most of us one, each according to our ability. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10) All that we are and all that we have belongs to the Lord, even as we rejoice in the fact that we are not our own, but belong with body and soul, for time and eternity to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ! We are privileged to labor in God's House, in His fear, and to His glory! In the great day of days each of us will be called to give account of our stewardship, also with that one talent entrusted to us! And every man will be judged accordingly!

All that I am belongs to Thee,
Thy wisdom, Lord, hath fashioned me;
I give my Maker thankful praise,
Whose wondrous works my soul amaze.

God is always first!

When Elijah was sent to the widow of Zarephath he met her at the gate of the city, picking up "two sticks" for a final meal with her son, before they both starved to death. When she assured the prophet that she had only a handful of meal and a small amount of oil, enough for one last meal, the man of God told her: "Make me a cake *first*!" If it were not that he was sent of God, this would sound cruelly selfish. Yet this widow, who had until now been a pagan idol worshipper, is given in her heart by the Spirit to accept Elijah as sent by his God, *and makes a cake for him first*! There we learn our first lesson in the basic principles of the kingdom of heaven! God is first!

The Lord through the prophet Malachi accuses carnal Judah of robbing God! "Wherein", they ask, "have we robbed God?" To which the response is given: "In your tithes and offerings!" They were not always liberal and honest in giving a tenth of their income to the Lord. Their offerings were not always the best of their flocks and herds. God had second place in their lives. Pride, selfishness, and greed demanded for themselves the first place.

Is God always first in your life and mine? Do we set aside our contribution for the kingdom, our alms for the needy and our school tuition or donations, and only then see what is left for our daily needs? Do we live according to the command of Christ, "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven,"

assured that all other things will be added unto us by our heavenly Father?

We think of the widow who went to the temple with her two mites clutched in her hand. She felt that she had to give expression of her love and thanks to God for all His Fatherly care over her. Yet she had only two mites, barely enough for her earthly existence. One wonders, did she debate with herself along the way whether she should give but one mite, and keep the other for herself? But when she approached the treasure chest, her heart overwhelmed her with thanks for all that the Lord had done for her. Giving little thought to what she was doing, she cast her *all* into the kingdom. Would not God who cares for the sparrows also care for her?

Here is a lesson in humility clothed in godly fear! True humility means self denial, self surrender to our God, even as we confess: "All that I am belongs to Thee, O my God!"

This creates in us child-like trust. Jesus warns, "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For all these things do the gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (Matt. 6:31, 32).

This, in turn, arouses true contentment, living by faith out of God's hand. Elijah and the widow experienced that their bread was certain, even while the famine ravaged the land! Does not our heavenly Father care for us, O we of little faith?

Contentment gives thankfulness. While thankfulness expresses itself in giving! Freely we have received, freely we can give! Upon which our Lord assures us: "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matt. 25:35, 36).

Well may we pray, "Lord, teach me to live also according to this commandment!"

*The Standard Bearer
makes a lovely gift
for the sick & shut-in.
Give a gift of
the Standard Bearer!*

Editor's Notes

Anniversaries. Speaking of anniversaries, this year is not only the centennial of the Doleantie. It is also the centennial of the birth of two theologians: Herman Hoeksema and Karl Barth. While we are on the subject, we note that this year also marks the 450th anniversary of the first edition of John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

* * * * *

New Volume. With this issue we begin a new volume, Volume 63. There will be no extensive changes in the departments of our *Standard Bearer* this year, and only one change in our Staff. As already announced, Mr. Ben Wigger, a member of our Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, has agreed to serve as our Church News Editor. A hearty welcome to our Staff, Ben! This year we again plan to present three special issues, and the first of these will be on the first step of the Order of Salvation: Regeneration. We are also planning a new series of Guest Articles; but these will be kept as a surprise when they appear.

Business Manager. Were you surprised by the "Special Tribute" to our Business Manager in the September 1 issue? I was also. However, first of all, as Editor I wish to add my personal word of appreciation for the labor of love of brother Vander Wal. During the 18 years of his service I have had numerous contacts with him about matters pertaining to our *Standard Bearer*, as well as in connection with our other publications and our radio work. And I always found Henry — through long acquaintance I always called him that — to be a man devoted to the work, the acme of cooperation, and a man who went the extra mile in this work. Personally, I will miss him. That is, when he finally ends his work. That brings me to my second note. You probably noticed that no mention was made of his successor. No, we are not without a Business Manager. Brother Vander Wal will continue on an interim basis until the Board of the R.F.P.A. is ready to announce his successor.

EDITORIAL

The Centennial of the Doleantie (2)

The separation from the State Church brought about by the Doleantie was not a small one. It could be argued, of course, that in comparison with the large State Church of some two million members at that time, the Doleantie was relatively small — about five per cent at first. But in comparison, say, with the beginnings of the Christian Reformed Church in 1857 or with our Protestant Reformed Churches in 1924-25, the Doleantie was a very large movement; and from this point of view it may be said that the Doleantie had a very good and encouraging beginning (although some historians claim that Abraham Kuyper was disappointed at

the eventual size of the separation, having optimistically expected the reformation to sweep the church and even to bring about internal reformation, without separation, in the State Church).

The church of Amsterdam was a single, city-wide organization, with 28 ministers, a single general consistory for the entire city of 136 ministers, elders, and deacons, and a total membership of 165,000, with 10 sanctuaries and 4 chapels. When the Doleantie came about in Amsterdam, it involved 75 officebearers of the Amsterdam Consistory (well over half, therefore) and 7,000 mem-

bers of the Amsterdam Church. [There were a few congregations elsewhere in the Netherlands which separated a little earlier than did Amsterdam. But the Amsterdam Church was the first large church involved; besides, there is no doubt about the fact that the leadership of the entire movement came from Amsterdam. The initiative for the 1883 Conference (cf. Sept. 15 issue) came from Amsterdam. And it was the Amsterdam Consistory (of the reform group) which called the Conference of January, 1887.] Shortly after the conference just mentioned, the Doleantie counted some 200 congregations and a total membership of 100,000 who had left the State Church. These few statistics will furnish some idea of the proportions of the Doleantie.

It must not be imagined, however, that as a reform movement the Doleantie was a simple, peaceful transition which involved no trouble, no suffering, no persecution. For that was not the case. All the trauma so often involved in the process of reformation was involved in the Doleantie also. Reproach for the sake of the truth, bitterness and separation across family boundaries, name-calling (the "Kuyperianen"), and loss of church properties (Though there were long legal processes, the new churches eventually lost all the church properties and had to begin anew.) — all these, and more, were the portion of the churches and people of the Doleantie.

Nevertheless, the movement grew and became well established. In fact, the Doleantie was in this respect different from the Secession of 1834. It was a good many years before the churches of the Secession became a well-organized and unified denomination. We need not enter into the reasons for this now. But the Doleantie was from the very beginning well-organized and unified. Basically, this was due, of course, to the fact that the Lord Himself preserved and raised up at that time a remnant who loved the Reformed faith. But along with this it was due, no doubt, in part to the fact that the Lord provided His church with capable leadership at that time. The name of Abraham Kuyper, Sr. is best known in this connection. But there were others — men such as Rutgers and Lohman, for example. It was partly due to the fact that considerable planning and communications took place already long before the actual separation. It was partly due also to the fact that there were many ministers and elders throughout the country who were involved in the Doleantie. The latter was in this respect different from the Secession. The Secession, especially in its early years, was plagued by a severe shortage of ministers of the gospel, so that its few ministers were overwhelmed by demands for their preaching. This was con-

siderably different in the case of the Doleantie. It was partly due undoubtedly to the fact of the influence of Kuyper's prolific writings in *De Heraut* (*The Herald*), as well as in numerous tracts, which served as a mighty means of instruction in the truth for God's people throughout the Netherlands in those years. It is a rather peculiar fact of this history that Dr. Kuyper at the time of the Doleantie had long since left the active ministry and was a minister emeritus. He had become involved in the establishment and promotion of the Free University, where he had become one of its first professors of theology. Besides, he had become deeply involved in the Dutch political scene and in the Anti-revolutionary Party. But though he was no longer in the active ministry, he exercised a strong influence through his many writings; and he was widely read, both by friend and foe, throughout the Netherlands. The result of all this was that the Doleantie became a well-established, well-organized, and flourishing movement at an early date. Already in June of 1887 a Synodical Convent was held at Rotterdam. There were preliminary Synods of Utrecht in 1888 and 1889. And in 1890 and 1891 there were Synods at Leeuwarden and The Hague, respectively.

The question may be raised, especially in the light of the fact that in 1834 there had already been reformation: did the Doleantie qualify as genuine reformation? And if so, on what grounds and in what respect? This question, of course, is also important for us and for our churches: for our own Protestant Reformed churches are historically related to the Doleantie, and many among our membership are descendants of the Doleantie.

First of all, there can be no question but that the Doleantie was a reformation because it constituted a return to our historic Reformed confessions, the Three Forms of Unity, and thus to the truths of the Word of God. This is the very essence of reformation. The State Church had departed, both in doctrine and in discipline, and that, too, in its official acts as church. The Doleantie changed this. Already at the Conference of 1883 it had been decided "to admit no one to the ministry in their churches unless and until such person(s) had signed the three Forms of Unity, with declaration of hearty accord." And the insistence upon such subscription by officebearers was characteristic of the Doleantie as a reformation movement.

In the second place, the Doleantie was a return to the truth from the point of view of the offices and government of the church. The State Church was collegialistic. There was one church, and the various congregations were branches of that one church, the whole being governed by hierarchical boards and synods. The Doleantie insisted that the

local congregation constitutes the church, and the denomination is a federation of autonomous churches which has agreed to function together according to a set of rules and usages and on the basis of a common confession. In accord with this, the offices of minister, elder, and deacon reside in the local congregation; and the powers of those offices likewise reside strictly in the local congregation. Only that local congregation, through its officebearers, can and may preach the Word, administer the sacraments, exercise discipline, and administer the mercies of Christ. This, in fact, became the funda-

mental principle of church government of the Doleantie and, eventually, of the Gereformeerde Kerken — the principle for the maintenance of which especially Dr. F.L. Rutgers was famous. It is also the reason why the GKN were called "Kerken (Churches)" rather than "Kerk (Church)." And it is the reason why our denomination today is called Protestant Reformed Churches (not "Church"). It is also the reason why the Christian Reformed Church, until it departed from this principle, formerly called itself the Christian Reformed Churches of North America. HCH

QUESTION BOX

Cornelius Hanko

Children At The Table Of Communion

Recently a reader of the *Standard Bearer* asked some questions regarding children partaking of the Lord's Supper. When I answered him, I informed him that if he was not fully satisfied, he was welcome to come again. He now writes:

"Thank you for answering my questions concerning children and the Lord's Supper. I do appreciate your explanation of our churches' position on this question. I have some further questions on this matter."

I will treat these questions in the order given.

"1. I Cor. 11:28, 29 may be interpreted either as (a) barring from the Lord's table those who cannot examine themselves as can an adult, or (b) requiring a self examination according to one's capability (Luke 12:48). On what Scriptural basis do we choose the first interpretation over the other?"

First of all, let me state that the word that is used in the original for examining one's self means "to test, to try, to prove, as metal is tested, with the expectation that the good will appear." One must be able to discern between the bread at communion

and ordinary bread, and must recognize the bread at the supper as signifying the body of Christ, which is broken as a complete atonement for all of our sins. This implies an awareness of sin and guilt, a need for pardon, and a confidence that we have the forgiveness of sins in the death of Christ.

In the second place, (a) does not entirely eliminate (b). It will always remain true, that whoever examines himself will do so according to his capacity. The question really centers on whether or not a person is capable of some degree of honest and sincere self-examination that is trustworthy and dependable. A child is actually still too immature to make a sound judgment of himself, and still too unstable to make his judgment dependable.

"2. Your answer states 'From this it must become evident that our children cannot participate in the Lord's Supper until they come to years of discretion, for the simple reason that they cannot give expression to their conscious faith in the measure required by the self-examination.' Does this mean that our elders must bar from the Lord's table all those who do not or will never have this ability, whether by reason of immaturity, mental retardation, senility, or other disease?"

This question can best be answered by referring to one who has long been considered an authority on Reformed Church Polity, Dr. F.L. Rutgers, who writes in his "Kerkelijke Adviezen" (Ecclesiastical Advice), volume II, page 150: (translated)

You ask me whether a consistory may grant permission to partake of the Lord's Supper to one who is a member of the congregation and desires to partake of Communion, but is retarded, yet is said to be "faithful in church attendance," receives a blessing from the worship service, and gives a good testimony at family visitation.

My answer is that I do not fully understand what objection the consistory can have to grant this permission. Naturally, I am not acquainted with the person involved, but from your information it is clearly evident, that this person is not so seriously handicapped, that he would disturb the service with foolish remarks or actions. You also give evidence that he has some knowledge of the fundamental truths, which apply to the Lord's Supper, (sin, deliverance and thankfulness), and even has some idea of self examination. If that is the case, I would say that the consistory cannot refuse him. It has always been maintained in our churches, and properly so, that a member of the congregation can be a child of God, even though he is mentally or poorly developed, so that the rule has always been applied that in cases where it proves impossible to memorize questions and answers, or to give an answer to a specific question, no more is required than a mere "yes" or "no" to the questions pertaining to the admittance to the Table of the Lord.

The next question is:

"3. W. Walker, in his book, *History of the Christian Churches*, writes on p. 99, 'The sense of the life-giving quality of the Supper led, also, to the custom of infant communion, of which Cyprian is a witness.' On p. 274 he writes, 'The abandonment of the cup was rather a layman's practice due to fear of dishonoring the sacrament by misuse of the wine Similar considerations led to the general abandonment by the Western Church, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of the practice of infant communion, which had been universal, and continues in the Greek Church to the present.' Would you please comment on this?"

This author obviously sees a "life-giving quality in the Supper," which operates apart from faith. I question whether he regards the sacrament as a sign and seal, but rather as a power in itself. The benefit is derived from a mere eating and drinking. In that case no understanding of the holy supper and no self examination are required. Our Reformed church fathers had their own reasons for barring children from the Lord's Supper, as is evident from "*The Church Order Commentary*" by Idzard Van Dellen and Martin Monsma, from which I quote the following:

Already at the Convention of Wezel, 1568, the question arose: Who are to be admitted to Holy Communion? The Convention answered: No one shall be admitted to the Lord's Table unless he first shall have made profession of faith and shall have submitted himself to the discipline of the Church. This ruling was reaffirmed by the Synod of 1578 (Dordrecht) in slightly different words, and rewritten by the Middelburg Synod of 1581 in the wording as we still have it in article 61 today.

From the foregoing it becomes evident that the Reformed Churches from the Reformation era on have held that attendance to the Lord's Supper is not free to all. It is not a matter to be left to the judgment of the individuals. The office bearers are guardians over the Lord's Table. They must only admit those whom they believe to be worthy. Erastus and the Remonstrants — those defending the tenets of Arminianism — held that the attendance or non-attendance should be left to the individual conscience. Some adhering to the Reformed faith seem to hold to this theory

Yet not all baptized members of the Church were permitted to go to the Lord's Table. If all baptized children would be true to their baptism and manifest true faith in Christ and loyalty to His Word in conduct, then as soon as children would come to years of understanding they might approach unto the Lord's Supper without first securing permission to do so. But conditions are never ideal. There is always some chaff mixed with the wheat. There are Esaus among the covenant-keeping young people of every Church. And so Voetius (another recognized authority on Church Polity - C.H.) in answer to the question whether not all baptized individuals should be considered as entitled to partake of the Lord's Table, answered "No". Said he in substance: Faith may be present potentially without having yet developed into actual faith. And actual faith is necessary for the proper celebration of the Lord's Supper. The essence of faith may be present by regeneration, but the fruit of regeneration, conversion, must be present.

And a final question:

"4. Since our covenant children are not allowed to come to the Lord's Table, would you please explain the significance of Communion for them?"

Children are the silent observers at the Table of Communion.

Their presence at the Communion service helps them to understand that the sacrament is a means of grace, added to the preaching of the Word to strengthen the faith of the believers. This, along with the instruction in the catechism and in the home, helps them to have a better insight into the signs, which are also seals of God's promises. Their inquisitive minds will raise questions already at an early age, opening the way for the parents to prepare them for the time when they, too, can participate.

Moreover, they are also taught the importance of the Lord's Supper and its proper observance. This takes place already during the preparatory week in the home. I can well remember that when we were children our parents impressed on us that preparatory week meant that we also should examine our walk of life, and were reminded of this when we stepped out of bounds. The celebration itself must make a lasting impression on the child of God, even though still very young.

Finally, and most important of all, there is the operation of the Holy Spirit present in the heart of the child even at that early age. Just as a child receives a blessing from the preaching of the Word, which he hears, he can also receive a blessing from what he sees, even though in a very small way. The Holy Spirit does certainly create in that young heart, as it comes to maturity, a growing desire to become an active partaker of the Holy Supper.

I hope that this may be of some help to you.

GUEST ARTICLE

Richard G. Moore

Fellowship of Saints

In this new season of congregational activities, it is good to consider the blessings we have in the fellowship of saints. And in this connection to ask the questions: With whom is our fellowship? With whom do we commune? From the time of the fall there have been two seeds in the midst of this world. The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. And as God's people our fellowship is not to be with the world which is the seed of the serpent. Rather the Word admonishes us to love one another, for love is of God. And therefore, the focus of our life of fellowship is to be with one another in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to be with the fellow saints, and is precious.

In Philippians the second chapter this fellowship of the saints is referred to when we read in the first two verses; "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." And this chapter goes on to admonish us to care for one another. In particular this must characterize our life in our congregations.

What is the basis for our fellowship together as a congregation? What is the common strand that binds the members of the church to one another? What is the oneness that so unites the children of God? And in answer we may say at the outset that it is not based upon the blood relationship in which we may stand to one another.

Our fellowship together as a congregation may not be based upon the fact that we may be relatives, or that we are of the same national heritage. The fact that we may be Dutch or German, etc. is not the basis for true communion in the church. And the fact that our parents have attended church here is not the ground for our fellowship in the body of Christ, although we thank God when He gathers His church in our midst through the lines of continuing generations. And earthly ties are a reality also in the church. But this does not unite us together with Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nor does our union come from our philosophical perspective, nor from our social activity; that is, that our fellowship comes from our desire to discuss certain philosophies, which may be interesting. Nor do we seek the communion within the church for social expression — for our discussion groups, banquets, entertainment, etc. Although certainly as God's children we enjoy discussion of the

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Scripture's presentation of the true philosophy, or direction of life; and we also may rightly enjoy our society life. But these things can never form the basis for fellowship within the church. They do not bind God's people together in spiritual union, but may be the fruit of that union!

Rather, we are drawn together in fellowship and communion exactly because of the fact that we are saints, and in this we are drawn together and seek out one another.

Now we must understand that a saint is not one who has distinguished himself by some special works of sanctification so that he is in some special way set apart by canonization, such as was done by the Church of Rome. Rather a saint becomes such because God has set Him apart to live consecrated to His service. And this God does by an act of His grace alone as He has redeemed us in Christ and called us by His Word. This results in the saint walking before God in all humility, seeking to serve Him in all things, and finding all joy in that service.

Then we must be given to understand that all true members of the Church are saints, and are such only because God has made them so. In ourselves we as saints are no different from the most carnal of men; and we must be the first to admit that by nature we transgress the whole of the law of God and indeed are inclined to all evil. We are not by nature saints, but are transformed by the grace of God to become saints.

So God, as the sovereign God, by His good pleasure alone has determined us to be saints. This He did already in eternity, before we did any good or evil. And in time God sent His Son to clothe us with the white robes of righteousness as saints, and by His Spirit breathes into us the consciousness of the forgiveness of sins. He turns us from our evil ways and causes us to begin to seek God in the narrow pathway of obedience that leads to heaven itself.

The one abiding in Christ, the saint, speaks the truth about God. Our God has been pleased to reveal Himself to us, and He especially sets this revelation of Himself forth in the infallibly inspired Word. Now the saint humbly bows before that Word of God, and trembles at putting in the mouth of our God Words that which He has not spoken. This is often done in our day. The Bible often is considered anything but the infallibly inspired Word of God. It is done through the construction of Paraphrased "Bibles". It is done through considering of the Bible to be time- or social-conditioned. Indeed we must have nothing to do with this heresy.

Rather, we desire as true saints of God to speak of the living God only as we are guided to so speak in truth from His Word. And we do this especially

on the Sabbath Day as we are gathered under the preaching of that Word of truth by Christ Jesus our Lord. In this way we confess before all the faith that unites us together, and we grow in the knowledge of the Word that unites God's children. For this reason it does make a difference to us where we go to church! There are doctrinal differences between churches that make a big difference and which may not be overlooked. We confess together the truth, and any departure from that truth causes separation from the true fellowship and communion of the saints. How precious and what a blessing that God has preserved His truth in our midst! This is cause for great thanksgiving! May we resolve, by grace, staunchly to defend this truth of the infallible Scripture!

In the second place, we as saint express our faith in our daily lives. Not only do we say with our mouth that God is holy and ascribe to Him our praise, but we shall also confirm this with our works. By God's abiding grace we shall live in humble submission to His Word. And we shall do this in our home, work, business, government, and in our leisure, desiring in all of our lives to glorify God in thought, word, and deed. This is our calling as saints in the Lord Jesus.

We often do not do so well in manifesting in our lives this sainthood. There are times when we desire to seek God's kingdom in all that we do, and when our zeal for the truth is very great, and we stand so close to God and love the communion of the saints. These are blessed times in our lives when faith is on the foreground. Yet this we have at the best of times only in principle, and often become blinded to the true walk of faith by our sin and spiritual frailty. And then, at these times, the fiery darts of the wicked do us true harm. We do not fellowship with God as we ought in prayer and in our worship. We fail to serve Him as children, and at these times the wages of sin do not seem so great, and we walk with oh, such weakness.

This was the experience of Paul as his words are recorded for us in Rom. 7. In Rom. 7:15 "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." And in Rom. 7:18 "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." These words of the apostle express the constant struggle that we have as regenerated children of God as we yet dwell in the midst of this world. We have to daily battle the battle of faith, and this within ourselves. And often we come up short in this battle, walking in sin. Such a walk in sin disrupts our love of God and our love and fellowship with the saints. May we then in this season be given to the seeking of the grace of God in this bat-

tle against sin. For sin impairs fellowship. Saints and sin do not mix, as is evident in our lives. When we walk in sin without repentance we do not enjoy the consciousness of God's fellowship, nor can we have true fellowship with God's children.

We have need, therefore, to know that we are right with God. Daily we have need of the assurance that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord, Jesus, Christ." Righteousness and holiness is the only ground for fellowship with our covenant Father. And only in the way of our confession of sin daily, can we with clear conscience stand in the presence of God and enjoy His communion and love. And in this way only shall we enjoy the fellowship of the saints.

How precious then is the faithful preaching of God's word to us, which calls us to repentance, and through which the Spirit applies the blessings of Christ's atoning cross to our hearts. Thus we are assured of the righteousness that is ours in Christ, experience the love of God for us, and grow in grace, to fellowship and commune with God and His people. May we receive of God the grace to attend diligently the proclamation of His Word, turn often to the Scripture for our guidance, and be given to prayer for this His care. Then indeed, we shall experience a growing communion with our God and the saints, which shall strengthen us in the battle of faith.

IN HIS FEAR

Arie den Hartog

Spiritual Mindedness

Spiritual mindedness is and should be the great characteristic of the true child of God. When the Bible uses the term "mind" as in Romans 8, and many other places as well, it refers not only to our thinking and reasoning but also to the related desires, purposes, and affections of our mind. The child of God is spiritually minded because the Spirit of God dwells within him. The spirit of God has transformed and renewed his mind. The Christian is led by the Spirit of God. This spiritual mindedness must always be evident in the life of the child of God. We are exhorted to walk in the Spirit and not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

There is an absolute difference between the spiritual and the carnal mind. Those who are ungodly are carnally minded. These have not the Spirit of God. They do not know God truly. They are none of His. God is not in all their thoughts. They do not seek after Him. Their entire life is consumed by carnal ambition. The apostle John in his first epistle characterizes their life as being of the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and of the

pride of life. That is all you can say about them. A true evaluation of their life will reveal this. If you hear their speech you will find that it is full of pride and lust and vanity. They do not speak of God at all except in cursing and swearing and blasphemy. If you consider their desires and ambitions you will find that they are worldly. They seek only the vain glory of man and of life without any regard for God at all. If you truly examine their works you will find that they are evil altogether. It is not true that their works are in some sense good and pleasing to the Lord as some in the church have sought to claim. Paul says in Romans 8:7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." What a dreadful reality this is. In all of his thinking, in all of his purposes, all of his desires and affections the carnal-minded man stands at enmity against God. What can be more terrible than to be at enmity against the Sovereign Holy Lord of heaven and earth and the judge of all men? And to be carnally minded is death. The carnally minded man has no life in him at all, no life toward God, no spiritual life. He is destined to die eternally in hell. Jude speaks of the terrible judgment that shall come upon ungodly

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sinners: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (Jude 14-16).

We were also once carnal by nature and subject to the same judgment. But the Lord has chosen us to be His people according to His grace in Christ. He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings. He has sent forth His Spirit in our hearts and renewed our minds. We must never forget how awful it is to be carnal. We must always remember how wonderful and blessed it is to have been made spiritual. Paul exhorts us in Romans 8:9, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Therefore we must always show ourselves to be a spiritually-minded people.

There is a real and constant danger that we will again become carnal. Sin still dwells in our bodies. We must not let sin reign again in our mortal bodies. We must not obey the lusts of sin in our bodies nor yield our members to unrighteousness unto sin (see Romans 6). We must always remember that to live after the flesh means death. "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13).

As children of God we must strive always to be truly spiritually minded. But what does it really mean to be spiritually minded? A spiritually minded man minds the things of the Spirit of God. He thinks about these things, he desires these things, he sets his affection on these things. This spiritual mindedness will come out in his conversation and walk. Let us give some examples of this to determine whether we are truly spiritually minded. By the Spirit of God is the knowledge of God. There is no higher joy and blessedness for the Christian than to know God, to know Him in a deeply personal and rich way. Without the Spirit of God no man can know God. (See I Corinthians 2). Through the Spirit we learn of Him, what and who He is. The spiritually-minded man desires to know God more and more. He hungers and thirsts after the true knowledge of God. He will not be satisfied with a shallow and superficial knowledge of God. He seeks to know the deep and wonderful things of God such as His sovereign grace and love, His wisdom and knowledge, His wonderful predestination, His perfect righteousness and holiness. The spiritually-minded man will therefore search the scriptures diligently and eagerly for therein God reveals Himself. He will have regular times of devotion and

prayer to God in which he truly meets with God and talks with God and learns of God. It will be the great delight of the spiritually-minded man to frequent the house of God for he knows and experiences that God dwells there. He diligently attends unto the preaching of the Word of God wherein God's truth is made known and explained to him. He will make good use of the many excellent books and Christian literature that is available today. He will not waste his time reading the carnal trash of this world nor watching the evil and carnal movie pictures of the world on TV and on the video and in the theater. If one were to examine our life carefully, would he find us to be truly spiritually minded?

Spiritual mindedness stands in contrast to all worldliness and materialism and covetousness. How much is our mind on earthly things? How much of our time and energy is spent in gaining material wealth of this world? How little is spent in obtaining spiritual things? Yes, we must be involved in an earthly occupation. We must study to prepare ourselves for such an occupation. We may seek to establish ourselves in our career. We may seek to advance our business and seek to make our farm prosper. But at what point are we becoming carnal when we do this? How much may we give ourselves to these things? If we are truly spiritually minded all the things of this world are secondary. Spiritual and heavenly things are primary. We are ready to sacrifice and even to lose all earthly things for the heavenly. Are we? That is what it means to be spiritually minded.

The spiritually-minded man is deeply concerned about himself. His concern is not merely to improve himself and advance in this world. His great concern is to advance in sanctification and obedience to the Lord in his life. The spiritually-minded man is by the Spirit of God convinced of his own sin. He knows the seriousness of sin and the great offense it causes against God. Therefore he hates his sin, he seeks to flee from it. He is very deeply concerned, very earnestly desirous about overcoming his personal sins and weaknesses. He longs to be made spiritually perfect before the Lord. The remnants of the sinful nature within him are the source of constant struggle for him. With all his might he strives against the sin that remains in him and prays earnestly to God to overcome it. He is not satisfied with sitting still in his sinful nature. He strives for change and progress in his Christian life. He desires to be made more and more conformable to the image and example of the Lord Jesus Christ. His great ambition in life is to be holy as the Lord our God is holy. He desires to be a humble and faithful and obedient servant of the Lord. He desires to be made a vessel fit for the master's use.

He desires that the Lord God might be glorified in all of his life.

You can distinguish the spiritually-minded man from the carnally-minded man in his daily conversation. Eavesdrop on the home of those who are truly Christian. Listen to the conversation. In the home of the carnally-minded man you will find that the conversation always centers in worldly things, material things, careers, business, farms, making lots of money, sports, pleasure, and vacations. In the home of the carnally-minded you will constantly hear foul gossip and slander and evil speaking. It will be different and must be different in the home of children of God. Their speech about and towards one another will be seasoned with grace. The spiritually-minded man constantly speaks of the truth of God that he loves so deeply in his heart. It is inevitable for him. It is spontaneous. What his heart is full of his mouth overflows with. If you hear two spiritually-minded Christians speaking to each other you will often hear them encouraging and exhorting and edifying each other with the Word of God. They will speak with each other of the wonderful things of God, of His blessed promises, and of the joy and hope of His salvation.

You will find that a truly spiritually-minded man thinks often of the church of Jesus Christ. The church belongs to the things of the Spirit of God. She is gathered and defended and preserved by the Word and Spirit of God. The spiritually-minded man loves the church. He is concerned about her welfare. He is concerned that the truth and righteousness of God be maintained in her midst. He is concerned that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ be faithfully preached by her. He seeks to maintain her peace and unity by walking in love with his brethren. He is concerned lest he cause a member

of the church to be offended and to stumble and fall. When offenses arise between brethren he earnestly desires by the grace of God to bring peace and reconciliation. The spiritually-minded man sees the great importance of taking an active part in the life and work of the church. He desires to serve the Lord in her midst. He does not make himself so busy in his business or farm that he has no time to attend church meetings and join in the fellowship and life of the church.

The spiritually-minded man knows that the work of evangelism is part of the great task of the church of Jesus Christ here on earth. He knows that the gospel must be preached not only to the members of the church but also to the community. His great desire is that the name of God be exalted in the preaching of the gospel. His earnest desire is the salvation of his fellow man, even as many as the Lord will call and save according to His purpose of election. Therefore the spiritually-minded man is actively involved in programs of evangelism in his church. He desires also personally to give a faithful testimony of his Lord in his life. He desires by his testimony and good works to bring others to the Lord. He is not ashamed of the gospel which is the power of salvation unto all them that believe. He speaks boldly which is the power of salvation unto all them that believe. He speaks boldly and courageously for his Lord to those whom he meets in the daily intercourse of life.

We could go on in our description of the truly spiritually-minded man. Are we truly such people? Is this clearly evident in our life. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:6, 14).

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

Herman Veldman

The Apostles' Creed (7) Our Faith in Our Almighty Father (2)

In our preceding article we asked the question whether God became richer when He created the world, whether God with the creation is richer than

the Lord without this creation. After all, did not the Lord have something after He created the world which He did not have prior to the creation of this

universe? First of all, the Lord cannot and did not enrich Himself when He created all things. On the one hand, this would imply a certain poverty on the part of God before His creation of the world, a certain lack, something which He did not have prior to His calling all things into existence. There is no lack in God. He is the God of eternal Self-sufficiency. On the other hand, however, the world is but a mirror in which is reflected in a creaturely measure the goodness of our God. How can a mirror enrich the Lord? A mirror simply reflects that which exists eternally and fully and completely within the alone living God. God, we repeat, is the God of eternal Self-sufficiency.

Besides, we must bear in mind that God has willed and planned all things from before the foundation of the world. This is God's counsel, something which is beyond all human understanding and comprehension. God's counsel is not merely a dead blueprint. This is true as far as an earthly architect is concerned. His blueprint is a dead blueprint. If all we had were a blueprint of an house, we would quickly freeze to death. The blueprint is nothing, merely a design or plan; the building itself is the reality. But this does not apply to the Lord. With God, God's counsel is the living reality. God, in His counsel, has conceived of all things. All men and all spirits (good and evil) stand eternally before Him. They all stand before Him also in their relation to one another. And this is not all. God has also conceived of all things, in the heavens above, upon the earth beneath, and in all the waters under the earth. He has willed all creation, animate and inanimate, living and lifeless. He has willed the whole world of plants and vegetation. In His counsel appear every wind and storm, all raindrops and snowflakes, all things, also in their relation to each other. Indeed, we must conceive of this plan or counsel in the supralapsarian sense of the word. He has willed the Christ, the Mediator and Head of His own; He has willed all the elect with Christ as their Head; and He has also willed the devil and all his host. All the reprobates, light and darkness, life and death, sin and grace are all within this counsel of the Lord. This counsel of God is therefore the absolute, living reality. Whereas we see but the smallest part of it as this counsel unfolds, God sees this living reality eternally in all its fulness. What an amazing truth this is, incomprehensible and beyond all human understanding. Indeed, God's counsel is *the* living and absolute Reality. Known unto God are *all* His works from before the foundation of the world. This is surely implied in this wonderful first article of our Apostles' Creed.

Of course, when we consider the question con-

cerning the creation of the world and God's eternal counsel, whether the Lord became richer when He created all things, we stand before an unfathomable mystery. After all, we are dealing here with the living God, the relation of the Infinite to the finite, the Eternal to the temporal, the Absolute to the relative, the Creator to the things He created. God, we understand, is incomprehensible, infinitely exalted above all our human puny understanding. We read in Job 36:26, "Behold, God is great, and we know Him not, neither can the number of His years be searched out." In Psalm 145:3 we read, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable." And in Isaiah 40:15-18, 28 we read, "Behold, nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof for a burnt offering. All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will you compare unto Him? . . . Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding." How, then, shall we comprehend His work? We read in Job 11:7-9, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

Concerning this relation between God's counsel and His creation, we wish to add a few remarks to what was stated in our preceding article. First of all, as far as God's counsel is concerned. God's counsel is eternal. Now we probably think of God's counsel as some sort of a blueprint that was drawn up by God at some moment before the creation of the world. We ourselves are creatures of the dust. And we think, shall we say, in the area of time. Eternity, however, is not the same as time, neither is time a part of eternity; eternity is not time endlessly stretched out. God created time. So, God's counsel is not something that was drawn up, that did not exist before it was drawn up, and which is no longer of value when once it is being realized and carried out, as is the case with our blueprints. But God's counsel is the eternal and living and almighty mind and will of God with respect to all things, in time and in space. God never was and never will be without His counsel. He is the eternally decreeing God. In the second place, God's counsel is all-comprehensive. We also referred to this in our preceding article. It embraces all things, this eternal and infinite knowledge of the Most High. How

completely beyond all human understanding is also this truth! We are aware of only a small part of the world at any given moment. We are children of time. And as children of time we see only a very small part of the world, and that only on the surface, and whatever we see comes and goes. For us the world of the past is gone and the world of the future is not yet; we live in that indivisible moment which we call the "present." But the counsel of God is ever before the Lord. He is constantly seeing His eternal and all-comprehensive plan. And He sees this reality, not as an experience that comes to Him from the outside of Him, but as the sovereign decree of His own will. All things, from the beginning in Paradise, throughout history and culminating in the antichrist and our Lord's return upon the clouds of heaven, stand eternally before His eternal and sovereign mind. Is it not this that we read in Acts 15:18: "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world?" And this is not all.

In this eternal counsel the Lord also sees all things in their proper relation to each other. Eternally the Lord sees the first Paradise in its relation to the second Paradise. And we must bear in mind that we must not introduce the element of time into this counsel of the Lord. There are in the counsel of God no firsts or seconds or thirds, etc., timewise. There is in God no before and no after. It is not so that the Lord decreed something today and then something else tomorrow. All God's counsel, we understand, is eternal. There is in this will of God no order of time, only an order of importance, what we, therefore, call a logical order. And in this logical order, the order of importance, the order in which everything occupies its proper place, the greatest purpose is the glory of God's Name, His Self-revelation and praise, in the divinely sovereign way of sin and grace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. This is the supralapsarian conception, emphasizing that all things have been divinely ordained as means unto the end. This is the divine wisdom, the eternal Reality of all things. Eternally the Lord knows and sees all of history, all things in the heavens above and upon the earth beneath and in the waters under the earth, all men, saints and sinners, including the devil and all his host, in their relation to one another and as serving the glory of God's Name, and all this from the beginning even until the end of the world. This is God's counsel or will or good pleasure, the eternal, living Reality of all things. And in the light of this we may perhaps somewhat grasp the thought that the creation of the world did not make God any richer, inasmuch as the eternal reality of all things is constantly and eternally before His divine mind. Indeed, the creation of the world did not enrich the Lord inasmuch

as the eternal reality of all things is eternally before His face and mind.

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We would now call attention to an amazing statement at the conclusion of Answer 26 of our Heidelberg Catechism, which answer is the Catechism's explanation of the first article of our Apostles' Creed, relative to our faith in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

This is an amazing confession of faith. Imagine what we read here at the conclusion of this answer: God will provide me with all things necessary for soul and body, and, further, He will make whatever evils He sends me, in this valley of tears, turn out to my advantage. This is indeed an amazing confession.

To understand the amazing character of this confession we must bear in mind that we are not standing in the original Paradise, in the midst of earthly perfection, as did Adam. Adam had nothing to fear. Death was nowhere at hand. There were no enemies to threaten his life. The evils whereof we read in the Catechism's explanation of the believers' faith in God were not in existence. To the contrary, we are in the midst of a valley of tears. Of this valley we read in this twenty-sixth answer. And this means that, seemingly, God is doing the exact opposite. Today we hear voices to the effect that our evils do not come from God. This, however, as is evident from this answer, is not an opinion shared by our fathers. We read here of these evils that it is God Who sends them unto us. And this means that the Lord, instead of causing all things to work together for our good, is seemingly doing, we repeat, the very opposite. Surely, all our sorrow and misery and grief and death are not accidental. These evils do not befall us by chance. The living God is doing all this; the Lord is therefore executing us every day. The Lord is seeking our good and welfare? Fact is, it is by His wrath that we are being consumed, even as we also read it in the ninetyeth psalm. Instead of giving us all we need, causing all things to work together for our good, He appears to be against us, executing us every moment. We may and can never separate all these evils from the living God Who alone is in sovereign and absolute control of all these things.

And now we confess this wonderful truth. How can this be? First of all, my heavenly Father is the Creator of the heavens and of the earth. Secondly, He surely realized His counsel in Paradise. We are now in this valley of tears? Well, this valley of tears is from Him, our Father in Christ Jesus, and it is from Him as from our Father in Christ Jesus. He is saving us, not from this valley of tears but exactly through it. And, finally, this heavenly Father also

sustains all things. Hence, we have nothing to fear. Our almighty Creator-Father is in absolute control. He is constantly leading and guiding us. We are always in His hand. We believe this; and faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of

things unseen.

The Lord willing, we will continue with this first article of our Apostles' Creed in our following article.

ALL AROUND US

Robert D. Decker

Euthanasia Why Knock Rock? Points Worth Pondering

Euthanasia:

For most of us the Netherlands is the "land of our fathers." Some of us were born there. When we think of Holland we think of the Reformed Churches and the Reformed Faith. Certain names come to mind like Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, the Canons of the Synod of Dordrecht 1618, 1619, *et. al.* But things have changes in the "Vaderland" and the change is bad. One of my colleagues, the Rev. Robert C. Harbach, called my attention to the May 29, 1986 issue of *National Right To Life News* in which the following article appeared. The author is J.C. Willke, M.D., president of the National Right To Life Committee.

Last year, one-sixth of all people who died in Holland were directly killed by their doctors. When that statement was made last January on the CBS news program, *60 Minutes*, frankly I didn't believe it. So, when Barbara and I were recently in Holland, we investigated. Sadly we return knowing it is probably true.

Barbara and I went to Holland at the invitation of *Evangelisch Omroep* — the Dutch evangelical television station. The Dutch evangelicals are one of the two main new forces opposing abortion and euthanasia in that nation. The other is a string of 138 well organized women-helping centers.

Both of these are growing rapidly, and — I believe — just in time, for that solid little nation is well on the way to moral deterioration. Although its neat countryside is dotted with churches, they are largely empty.

Abortion is common. Pornography is open. The birth rate is way below replacement level, and direct euthanasia took the lives of 20,000 people there last year.

Euthanasia is not legal — yet. But it is widely practiced. Several doctors have been arrested, and one convicted, for killing patients. But that doctor's one-year sentence was revoked and he is still seeing patients and perhaps still killing some of them.

How? Well, current practice is that a patient, or any person, will decide that they want to die. A doctor will be called to the home, or to the patient's hospital bed. If the doctor thinks that the person is making a free decision, and if the doctor agrees that death is a good idea, he gives that person a lethal injection.

Sounds incredible, doesn't it? But it is happening. I was told about one doctor who admitted to killing over 50 people. My informant, a pro-life physician, shook his head and estimated that it could be closer to 500, as this doctor of death is called by families when their own doctor refuses.

While the courts have allowed widespread euthanasia, it is still technically illegal. To "remedy" this, in February 1986, a bill was introduced into the Dutch Parliament that would have made it legal. The only requirements would have been that the patient requested it, and that the killing be done by a licensed physician.

We were told that currently, "euthanasia is administered" only if the person is of sound mind and requests it. Among those I spoke to, however, this was judged to be a cynical lie, for people who pro-euthanasists want most are those no longer sound of mind, such as those in a coma, those senile with Alzheimer's and the like. Indeed, I was told that, in

practice, the doctors-of-death were also acting on requests from the families or social agencies.

For example, I heard one story told of an ailing old man who was quite wealthy. A doctor was called, came to his house, and killed him. The story was that he had requested euthanasia. Not many people really believed that story, however, especially when they saw his wife and children begin to freely spend the money he had worked so hard to save

Can it happen in this country? Given the history of the abortion issue, not only can it happen, it is likely that it will. This ought not strike fear in our hearts. Rather it ought to move us to pray the more fervently for Jesus' return. These things and more are signs that the end is very near. (cf. Matthew 24)

Why Knock Rock?:

John Worst, music review editor of *The Banner* and a professor of music at Calvin College wrote an article under this title in the August 11, 1986 issue of *The Banner*. Our young people ought to know what Rock is. Here are excerpts of what Dr. Worst had to say.

The Peters brothers, Dan and Steve, pastors from Minnesota, have done considerable work — conducting interviews with disc jockeys and rock stars, listening to music, analyzing lyrics, collecting record jackets — in setting up a rock-and-roll seminar that they present to schools, colleges, and church youth groups. This cassette is a live recording of one such ninety-minute session, rather like a lecture-demonstration with some questions and answers.

When I received the cassette, I assumed it was another ill-founded, poorly researched harangue against America's music with, probably some strident calls for total condemnation and record burning. I found the contrary. Although the Peterses have indeed conducted record burning ceremonies, their seminar is a reasoned, well-documented exposé of a portion of popular music that deserves condemnation. Although I have some quibbles with one or two of their conclusions as well as with their slightly alarmist style, on the whole I believe they present a strong case against what they see as the insidious power of contemporary rock and roll, especially the heavy metal kind — its power to affect minds, its power to infiltrate the heart, and its power to destroy the soul. The devil has entered the arena of America's popular music and has begun an all-out battle for the intellect, the loyalty, and the spirit of America's young people In the first half of each seminar the Peterses discuss six key questions:

- Does the image reflect reality, or is it mere hype?
- What do the lyrics really mean?
- What message do the album covers convey?
- What are the goals or intentions of rock and pop stars?
- Is the force behind the music good or evil?
- What are the spiritual consequences of listening to too much rock?

During the rest of the seminar, the brothers focus on what they call "rock's fatal flaws": escapism and suicide, rebellion and sadomasochism, nihilism and hedonism, drugs and sex, and Satanism. Examples of song lyrics, quotations from popular music magazines (*Rolling Stone*, for one), and interviews reinforce the authors' contention that "the general direction in rock and roll is away from the Lord Jesus Christ." The prevailing attitude in rock and roll is no longer a seemingly innocent escapism or naive pleasure but "Let's get crazy! Let's get wild!" total abandonment.

Their main concern is the music of such groups as Kiss, Prince, Twisted Sister, Motley Crue, Scorpion, Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden, the Rolling Stones, Berlin, Quiet Riot, AC/DC, Ozzie Osborne, Ratt, Billy Idol, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, even some music by pop-rock groups like the Pointer Sisters, the Doobie Brothers, Hall and Oates, the Bee Gees — music whose lyrics often deal very explicitly with sex, homosexual love, rape, incest, suicide, masochism, sadism, transvestism, drug trips, or other sorts of perversion. The main themes heard and attitudes expressed in so much of this music are "Do it! Get the ultimate thrill! Sex is salvation! Drugs will open your mind! Life is cheap! The devil is in control!" Horrible stuff. But the Peterses don't resort to harangue and scare tactics; they simply quote song lyrics, show album covers, cite news items, read appropriate Scripture texts, and ask their audience to make a choice — will you serve God or the devil? . . . One thing many younger as well as older people fail to understand is that music — any music — is not just an innocent, fun-filled, innocuous diversion! Popular music especially is not simply the escapist, lively, danceable stuff that every kid listens to on her car stereo. Music is a spiritual force that works powerfully on people; it has the capacity to affect them for both good and evil.

So *Why Knock Rock?* Because it is shot through with all kinds of gross immorality. Originally a music of bounding energy and high spirits, albeit somewhat rebellious, much of rock today has degenerated into a music of hatred, drugs, violence, and sexual perversion. It needs to be exposed for the evil it harbors, and Christians need to rise up and get angry over what is happening not only to America's young people but also to America's music

We hope and pray that the youth of God's church (and their parents for that matter) refuse to listen to this music and that rather they: "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Ephesians 5:15, 16) We hope and pray too that they will heed the Word of God which says: "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:17-19)

Points Worth Pondering:

In its column "Reflections" *Christianity Today* prints excerpts of various books, articles, sermons, lectures, etc. which it calls "Classic and Contemporary excerpts." The following appeared in a recent issue. We quote them without comment:

GOD'S RICHTER SCALE

I think we are now living in the very decade when God may thunder his awesome *paradidoomai* (I abandon, or I give them up) (Rom. 1:24ff.) over America's professed greatness. Our massacre of a million fetuses a year; our deliberate flight from the monogamous family; our normalizing of fornication and of homosexuality and other sexual perversions; our programming of self indulgence above social and familial concerns — all represent a quantum leap in moral deterioration, a leap more awesome than even the sup-

posed qualitative gulf between conventional weapons and nuclear missiles. Our nation has all but tripped the worst ratings on God's Richter scale of fully deserved moral judgment. Carl F.H. Henry, *The Christian Century*, (Nov. 5, 1980)

THE PROBLEM WITH CROSSING

We . . . are talking about crossing over The term serves perfectly to describe a fact that hit me some seasons ago with the force of revelation. For a score of years we've all been saying, "Look at how popular evangelicalism is changing the world! It's become acceptable!" No, rather, "Look at how worldly popular evangelicalism has become to become acceptable. It changed more than the world did."

. . . One problem with crossing, with a cross over: it tends to lose the Cross. And that, as they say, is crucial. Martin Marty, *The Christian Century* (Jan. 1-8, 1986)

THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

Ronald L. Cammenga

Alone, But Not Lonely

The problem of aloneness can be a serious one. But it is very much unlike the problem of loneliness. Loneliness, psychologists tell us, is a serious and growing problem. One of the results of our modern, mechanized, technological society is loneliness. One of the most serious consequences of the breakdown of marriage and family life in our day is loneliness. Loneliness is worse than physical sickness. People who are lonely say that they would rather face any other problem, even death, than the problem of loneliness.

You may be lonely. Perhaps you are lonely because you've lost a husband or a wife, a parent or a child, or a dear friend in death. Perhaps you're lonely because you are separated in marriage, or divorced. Perhaps you're lonely because you have no close friend to whom you can talk and in whom you can confide. Or perhaps you're lonely because

friends that you have had and that you trusted have turned against you. Perhaps as young people you have had to stand up for your convictions, and this has alienated you from your peers, leaving you with a sense of loneliness. Perhaps your loneliness causes you to weep into the dark hours of the night. Perhaps your loneliness has even caused you to contemplate suicide.

In John 16:32 Jesus deals with the problem of loneliness. He says to His disciples there, "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." Jesus was going to be left alone. His disciples were going to be scattered. Yet, Jesus teaches here, He would not be alone, because the Father would be with Him.

The first time the word "alone" is used by Jesus in John 16:32, it is used in a physical or geographical sense. "You will leave me alone," Jesus says. This is the kind of aloneness that results when

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everyone around you has left. It's the kind of aloneness caused by physical isolation. It is one thing to be alone. It is one thing to be alone because your loved one has died, or because friends have left you, or because you find yourself in a strange place where there is no one around you know or to whom you can speak. That's one thing.

But the second time Jesus uses the word "alone" here, something else comes into view. He says, "I am alone, YET I am not alone. Although in one sense of the word I am alone, in another, more important sense of the word, I will not be alone." The disciples will physically leave Jesus alone, and He will be surrounded by people who are His enemies. But He will not be lonely. Alone, but not lonely. They are two different things. Even in the hour of betrayal, when all turn against Him and everything falls away from Him, even when He is left alone, He will not be lonely. He will not be lonely in the Garden of Gethsemane. He will not be lonely in Pilate's judgment hall. He will not be lonely when He is victimized by His captors. He will not be lonely as He carries the cross on His bleeding back to Calvary. He will not be lonely when He hangs there on that cross. Why? "Because the Father is with me."

There are at least four different causes of aloneness. First, there is aloneness caused by desertion. Jesus was left alone because the disciples deserted Him. Matthew 26:56 tells us, "Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled." This was also the experience of the apostle Paul. He writes in II Timothy 1:15, "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." In II Timothy 4:10 the Apostle says that "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." We have all experienced the desertion of friends and family. We know by experience this kind of aloneness.

A second cause of aloneness is necessary separation. Perhaps this is the separation from loved ones because it becomes necessary to move to a different part of the country, or even of the world. Christian school teachers, ministers, and missionaries often experience this. Or perhaps it's the separation of a young man from his family because he must go off somewhere to fight for his country. Or perhaps the separation is the permanent separation between loved ones caused by death. Think, once, of the aloneness of Joseph, sold as a slave into Egypt, separated from his home and family. Think of the aloneness of the widow and the widower, or of parents bereft of a child.

A third cause of aloneness is opposition. Often the most intense sense of isolation is experienced

when one is surrounded by enemies. Then we are very alone. This was the sense of aloneness that Elijah felt: "And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." This was the aloneness that Job felt too, and that he gives expression to in Job 19:13-19. There he speaks of being estranged from his own brethren, forgotten by his most familiar friends, an alien to the members of his own household, so that his breath was strange even to his wife, and the children and servants despised him.

A fourth cause of aloneness is misunderstanding. Because of misunderstanding and misapprehension, we may be left alone. Our best friends misunderstand us, doubt the sincerity of our motives, our actions, or our words, and so turn against us and betray us. They simply have taken us up wrongly, or deliberately twisted things. We have all had this, I'm sure.

Although the child of God may be alone, he ought never to be lonely: ". . . and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." We need not be lonely because, in the deepest sense of the word, we are not alone; the Father is with us! Above and beyond all other relationships, Jesus had His attention focused on His relationship to His Father. He was constantly in the presence of His Father, and therefore He was never really alone.

The Psalmist shares this conviction in Psalm 139. This psalm praises the omnipresence of God. The Psalmist perceived that, no matter to what place in the world he would go, no matter how he might isolate himself from every human being, yet he would not be alone. God would be there.

This is certainly the testimony of all of Scripture. The word of God in Hebrews 13:5 is, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." In II Corinthians 4:9 the apostle Paul speaks of being ". . . persecuted, but not forsaken." The Psalmist expresses his conviction in Psalm 27:10 that "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." And we have the great promise of Christ Himself in Matthew 28:20, at the time of His ascension into heaven: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the World." Christ is with us, with us always, with us even to the end of the world. The great privilege of the Christian is that although we might be left all alone, we are not lonely. Christ Himself is always there. Although we are alone, the loneliness is swept away by an ever present God and His Son

Jesus Christ.

As believers we ought to take a special interest in those members of the congregation who are alone and who are faced with loneliness. We ought to write them or send them a card, we ought to stop and visit with them, or have them over for a meal and for fellowship. James says in James 1:27, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Part of the "affliction" of the widows and orphans is the affliction of loneliness. We ought to do what we can to assist them in this affliction.

But the fact is that you can't do anything ultimately for the lonely person that will cover his loneliness 24 hours a day. For a little while you can assuage his loneliness. But you can't ultimately

take it away. Only God can do that. The lonely person must be pointed to God and to Christ for the solution to his loneliness. The Lord says in Jeremiah 49:11, "Leave thy fatherless children (to me), I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me."

Only God can dispel our loneliness. And this is our hope. Even though every meaningful relationship in life is dissolved, the Lord is still with us. We have a God Who will see us through, Who will stand by our side, Who will dissipate our loneliness. We will not be alone even at the end, when we face our last great enemy, death: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me" (Ps. 23:4).

Though we might be alone, we shall never be lonely.

Book Reviews

ROMANS, A Shorter Commentary, by C.E.B. Cranfield; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985; 388 pp., \$10.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

This commentary was first published in The International Critical Commentary series, and has been now abridged by the omission of the Greek Text and many notes and references.

One always turns with eagerness to a commentary on Romans because, as the author himself says in the introduction: "Again and again (this epistle) has played a decisive part in the renewal of Christian faith and life" (p. ix).

In some respects this is a good commentary. In connection with Romans 1:16 and the author's discussion of faith he writes:

And it (faith) is not — as man's response to the gospel — a contribution from his side which, by fulfilling a condition laid down by God, enables the gospel to be saving. In that case, faith would itself be, in the last resort, a meritorious work; but it is of the very essence of faith, as Paul understands it, that it is opposed to all human deserving, all human establishing of claims on God. Faith is the openness to the gospel which God Himself creates. He not only directs the message to the hearer, but also Himself lays open the hearer's heart to the message. (p. 19)

In his discussion of justification in 1:17 and in his interpretation of 7:15 ff, the author has also many worthwhile things to say. He is convinced, e.g., (contra Ridderbos and Hoekema) that the latter passage refers to the child of God who is sanctified in principle.

Many commentators have stated confidently that it cannot be a Christian who speaks here. But the truth is, surely, that inability to recognize the distress reflected in this cry as characteristic of Christian existence argues a failure to grasp the full seriousness of the Christian's obligation to express his gratitude to God by obedience of life . . . The assertion that this cry could only come from an unconverted heart, and that the apostle must be expressing not what he feels as he writes but vividly remembered experience of the unconverted man, is, we believe, totally untrue . . . (p. 169).

But the real test of an author's willingness to bow before Scripture in the book of Romans comes with his interpretation of Romans 9. Here the author falls flat. In openly denying sovereign reprobation, the author writes as his perspective of the entire chapter:

And the implication of the argument is that, though the roles they fulfil are so sharply contrasted, Ishmael as well as Isaac, Esau as well as Jacob, Pharaoh as well

as Moses, the vessels of wrath as well as the vessels of mercy, that is, the mass of unbelieving Jews (and unbelieving Gentiles too) as well as the believing Church of Jews and Gentiles) stand within — and not without — the embrace of the divine mercy. (p. 227)

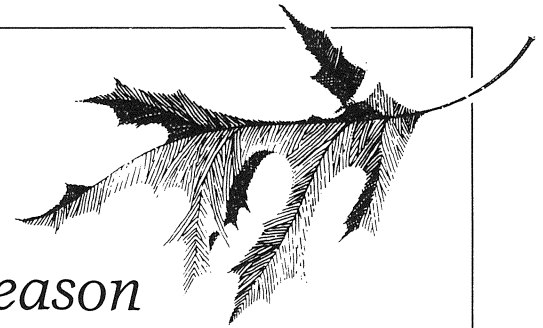
C.E.B. Cranfield is professor of theology at the University of Durham, England.

THROUGH THE PENTATEUCH CHAPTER BY CHAPTER, by W.H. Griffith Thomas; Kregel Publications, 1985; 191 pp., (paper) \$5.95. (Reviewed by Prof. R.D. Decker)

This book provides a brief, well-written, and good introduction to the first five books of the Bible. It would make a good addition to the libraries of Christian School teachers, Sunday School teachers, and anyone interested in an overview of the Pentateuch.

Following two introductory chapters in which the author deals with the "Great Principles and Methods of the Study of the Bible" and "An Introduction to the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Pentateuch" Thomas introduces each of the five books of the Pentateuch and gives an outline of each. The introductions cover such subjects as these: the title, the purpose, the plan, the unity, the value, the typology, and the message of each of the books of the Pentateuch. The author then in outline form provides a summary of each chapter of each book.

The material is easy to read, and completely free from any references to the Hebrew and from any technical jargon. W.H.G. Thomas (1861 - 1924) was born in England, pastored a church in London, lectured at Oxford and in Toronto, and was one of the founders of Dallas Theological Seminary.



*During this busy Fall season
we need to make time to read and study
the Standard Bearer.*

*Do something nice for yourself and your family,
study the Standard Bearer together!*

Report of Classis West

September 9, 1986

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches met in Houston, Texas, from Wednesday morning, September 3, until Friday evening, September 5. Twelve elders and eleven ministers represented the churches of the West. Rev. D.

Kuiper led Classis in opening devotions, addressing the delegates from I Corinthians 9:7-14, concerning the financial support of the Gospel-ministry. Rev. G. Lanting presided over this Classis. Three delegates were present at Classis for the first time and signed the Formula of Subscription — Rev. C. Haak

(Lynden), Elder P. Howard (Lynden), and Elder B. Huizenga (Randolph).

In response to the request of Doon, Classis examined Mr. R. Dykstra, Pastor-elect of Doon, as required by Article 4 of the Church Order. Mr. Dykstra preached before the delegates at a special worship service of the Trinity, Houston Congregation on Tuesday evening, September 2. His text was Matthew 7:24-27. Classis approved Mr. Dykstra's examination and advised Doon to proceed with his ordination. Three synodical delegates and examiners were present at the examination and concurred with the decision of Classis. By the time this article is published, Mr. Dykstra will have been installed in the office of the ministry in Doon, Iowa, leaving only one vacancy in Classis West.

This vacancy is Pella, Iowa. The Consistory of Pella brought to Classis a request for Classis' approval of the emeritation of her Pastor, Rev. G. Lanting, because of age, according to Article 13 of the Church Order. Rev. Lanting had made this request of his Consistory. Classis approved Rev. Lanting's emeritation and sent to the Emeritus Committee his request for support, with Classis' approval. Classis expressed appreciation to Rev. Lanting for his labors as Pastor in Classis West and the desire that God will grant him and his wife His richest blessing in Rev. Lanting's emeritation. Ordained in 1953, Rev. Lanting has served Christ in our churches for some 33 years. He has held pastorates in Grand Haven, Michigan; Holland, Michigan; Edgerton, Minnesota; Loveland, Colorado; and Pella, Iowa.

Classis gave Pella classical appointments, according to the following schedule: Sept. 14, 21 — Cand. C. Terpstra; Oct. 5, 12 — Engelsma; Nov. 16, 23 — Moore; Dec. 14, 21 — Dykstra; Jan. 11, 18 — Slopsema; Feb. 8, 15 — De Vries; March 1, 8 — Kuiper. Rev. Slopsema was appointed moderator of Pella during her vacancy.

Much of Classis' time was taken up with judging the appeal of a member against his Consistory's decision to censure him. Classis sustained the appeal and advised the Consistory to retract publicly the charges of sin against the member; to apologize to him; and, thus, to lift the censure.

In part because of Classis' concern that the right of appeal not be infringed upon, Classis decided not to adopt regulations limiting the size of appeals. Classis had appointed a special committee to study the matter and to propose such rules to Classis, because of a very large appeal that had been submitted to Classis. Classis did adopt the recommendation of the special committee that Classis:

declare that it reserves the right not to read lengthy documents in their entirety on the

floor of Classis. Grounds: 1. The determination of the legality of an appeal or protest does not depend on its being read in its entirety on the floor of Classis. 2. We *must assume* that all the delegates to Classis have read all the material in the Agenda thoroughly. 3. All the material of a case will be available to Classis and committees of Classis for study and discussion. 4. Occasionally, Classis receives a document the length and repetitiousness of which does not serve the understanding of Classis.

Taking cognizance of the acceptance by Synod, 1986, of Classis' offer of the gift of the C. Vander Molen estate to Synod for use in the support of our emeriti ministers, Classis authorized the transfer of the money to Synod. By the time the money is transferred to Synod, it will amount to about \$220,000.

The Church Visitors reported on two, special visitations made since the March Classis, to help a Consistory.

In view of the decision of Synod, 1986 that the Synodical Treasurer pay bills only upon proper authorization, Classis designated the Classical Committee of Classis West as the instrument of Classis to approve all expenses incurred on behalf of Classis in the interim of Classis.

Classis declined the invitation of Dordt College to appoint a minister to the Board of Trustees of the College, on the ground that such an action by Classis would violate the requirement of Article 30 of the Church Order, that "in these assemblies ecclesiastical matters only shall be transacted."

A proposal by South Holland facilitating arrangements for lodging at Classis by the use of a form that the delegates will send to the host church prior to each Classis was adopted.

In closed session, Classis considered the requests of two Consistories for advice concerning discipline of members. In the one case, Classis advised the Consistory to proceed with the second step of censure; in the other, Classis advised the erasure of a baptized member.

Our sister in Houston, Texas has existed as a Protestant Reformed Church, and been a member of Classis West, for nine years. This was the first time that she was privileged to host the Classis. The members of the Congregation were warm and gracious hosts and hostesses. Because of the small size of the Congregation and because the church building lacks the facilities to serve meals at church, the hosting of Classis was demanding for the Congregation. Households lodged five or six

men; a few women prepared meals for some twenty-five men; the entire Classis had the noon and evening meals in the homes of families of the Congregation. Such was the graciousness of the spirit in which all this was done that the delegates were made to feel that they did the Congregation a favor in allowing them to serve. The "Texans" spoke of the benefit of Classis' meeting there for the Congregation; the fellowship with the Congregation at the meetings and in their homes was

equally beneficial to the delegates from the other churches of the Classis. In many cases separated from each other by great distances and isolated, the churches of the West desire the expression and enjoyment of their unity afforded by the meeting of Classis.

The Spring, 1987 meeting of Classis will be held in Hull, Iowa, on March 4, the Lord willing.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk

News From Our Churches

Ben Wigger

October 1, 1986

The month of October marks a new beginning for the *Standard Bearer*. It is the start of a new volume year. And now that it is October, it also means that it is time for me to go to work as the new News Editor. I just hope that the back page of this magazine continues the excellence that it has enjoyed in the past. Over the years I have always enjoyed reading the Church News and I hope that enjoyment continues on into the future for both you and me.

Not only is this the start of a new year for our *Standard Bearer*, it is also the time of the year when our church life takes on a much busier schedule. Our church bulletins are full of all sorts of announcements concerning the start of catechism classes and family visitation. There are reminders to us of the start of Bible societies, of choirs, and discussion groups. You can tell that summer is over by the number of church activities starting up. There is no need to look outside your window to see if it is fall. Just look at your church bulletin.

There was one announcement that was not seen in any of our church bulletins this fall. Did you miss it? The announcement I am speaking of concerns our seminary convocation. As you all no doubt know, there are no young men enrolled in our seminary this fall. No students, no convocation. This fact has to make us all a little sad. We should remember this need daily in our prayers.

Even though the Hope Heralds, an all male chorus from our Hope Church in Grand Rapids, gave their latest concert on September 7, it should

still be mentioned here because that program marked their twenty-fifth anniversary as a group. It isn't always easy to stay together as a choir for 25 years, and we should add our congratulations to all the men who took part in that group over the past 25 years.

By this time you all should have gotten your copy of the *Acts of Synod 1986*. Although this book will never make the best seller list, it's free after all, and very informative to read. After all, it deals with the life of our church. I always like to spend some time looking in the Yearbook section of the *Acts*. It is amazing just how much information about our churches can be found there. And if you haven't gotten your own free copy of our *Acts*, don't forget you are entitled to one.

Rev. R. Flikkema has accepted the call extended to him from Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Wyckoff, N.J.

Our church in Lynden is busy with plans for a public Reformation Day lecture on October 30 at the Lynden Middle School Auditorium. And they are also looking into the possibility of putting their church services on the radio.

South Holland's Evangelism Committee has also decided to sponsor a Reformation Day lecture in the area of the Northwest Chicago Mission, with our missionary, Rev. Van Overloop, as speaker. As of now a site and topic have yet to be decided.

Hudsonville Church is in the process of completing a new pictorial church directory. I discovered this when I was informed by my wife that our family was scheduled to have our picture taken on a Saturday for that directory. Personally, I like pictorial directories, and I have often thought it

would be nice if all our churches had them so they could be exchanged from one congregation to the other.

First Church in Grand Rapids has set Thursday, October 16 as the date for the formal dedication of its new church building and their new organ. An interesting program is being planned, part of which will be numbers sung by a choir being formed just for this event.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to the family of Mr. and Mrs. Duane Mingerink in the death of his father, MR. THOMAS MINGERINK.

May they be comforted with the assurance of the promise of Isaiah 35:10b: "They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Rev. B. Gritters, Pres.
Kenneth Kuiper, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to the Jay Holstege family in the death of their daughter and sister, LORI HOLSTEGE.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4)

Rev. B. Gritters, Pres.
Kenneth Kuiper, Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 28, 1986, our parents and grandparents, GEORGE AND GRACE KAMPS celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary. We, their children and grandchildren thank God for giving them these years together and for giving them to us. May our covenant God continue to bless and keep them in the coming years.

"For the Lord is good: His mercy is everlasting. And His truth endureth to all generations." (Psalm 100:5)

their loving children and grandchildren

LEAGUE MEETING NOTICE

The Fall Meeting of The League of Eastern Men's and Ladies' Societies will be held, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, October 7, 1986 at 8:00 p.m. at the First Protestant Reformed Church, in Grand Rapids.

Prof. Herman Hanko will speak on "The Benefits and Responsibilities of Our Sister Church Relationship with Other Churches." All members and others interested in this topic are urged to attend.

Elsie Kuiper, Secretary

Heritage Christian School in Hudsonville opened its doors for the school year on September 3 with an enrollment of over 250 students. That's quite a few students for only the second year of operation for Heritage. Several classes are over 30 in number and this again means split classes for grades K-3. Needless to say the school is growing faster than expected. But this does present a new problem — room. The Board is currently studying the possibilities of portable classrooms or an addition in the future.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The members of the Adult Bible Society of the Doon Protestant Reformed Church wish to express their Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Jim Hoogendoorn, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Mantel, Mr. and Mrs. Glen Mantel and Mr. Marvin Mantel in the death of their mother, MRS. GLADYS MANTEL.

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

Adult Bible Society
Karen Van Den Top, Sec'y.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 26, 1986, our dear parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. JOHN PFAU celebrated 45 years of marriage. We wish to congratulate them and thank them for their many years of dedicated parenting and God-fearing examples. We pray God's blessing upon them for as long as He spares them for each other and us.

"The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever." (Psalm 37:18)

Bill and Dorothy Witvoet

Bill and Liane and 4 great-grandchildren
Randy and Debbie and 1 great-grandson
Ricky

Paul and Irene Pfauf
Matt
Paula

Lou Musich
Daryl
Stevie

Ed and Patty Bruinsma
Jeremy
Chad
Jared

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies Aid Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to our fellow members Mrs. Ben Bleyenbergh in the loss of her husband, MR. BEN BLEYENBERG, and also to Mrs. Tony Jansma, Mrs. John Hoksbergen and Mrs. Alvin Bleyenbergh in the loss of their father.

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

Rev. Richard Moore, Pres.
Mrs. Ted Hoekstra, Vice Sec'y.