

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

What a power lies behind that wicked tongue! What a damage is done by this little member! Character defamation, destroyed respectability, loss of livelihood, loss of position in the church, even loss of life are but some of the bitter results of the evil tongue. Churches have been torn apart, families have been brought into turmoil, even as nations have been forced into war! The devil finds the evil tongue to be one of his strongest weapons, the hardest for us to overcome. In fact, no one can tame that evil beast, except the power of God's grace by His Spirit in our hearts.

(See Meditation — page 50)

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

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

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.

Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

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

*Department Editors:* Rev. Ronald Cammenga, Rev. Arie den Hartog, Prof. Robert D. Decker, Rev. Barry Gritters, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman C. Hanko, Rev. Ronald Hanko, Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. J. Kortering, Rev. George C. Lubbers, Rev. Thomas C. Miersma, Rev. James Slopesema, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Herman Veldman, Mr. Benjamin Wigger.

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

*Church News Editor:* Mr. Ben Wigger  
6597 - 40th Ave.  
Hudsonville, Michigan 49426

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

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*Business Office:* The Standard Bearer  
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr. PH: (616) 243-2953  
P.O. Box 6064  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49516

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

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

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

## MEDITATION

Cornelius Hanko

## The Power of the Tongue

*Quès. 112. What is required in the ninth commandment?*

*Ans. That I bear false witness against no man, nor falsify any man's words; that I be no backbiter, nor slanderer; that I do not judge, nor join in condemning any man rashly, or unheard; but that I avoid all sorts of lies and deceit, as the proper works of the devil, unless I would bring down upon me the heavy wrath of God; likewise, that in judgment and in all other dealings I love the truth, speak it uprightly and confess it; also that I defend and promote, as much as I am able, the honor and good character of my neighbor.*

*Heid. Catechism, Lord's Day 43.*

I love Thee, Lord, for Thou hast first loved me!

It is Thy love spread abroad in my heart whereby I love Thee, and also love Thy saints, the household of faith, Thy people in Christ!

There is a strong bond of unity that unites me with all those who profess a like faith, and who walk according to Thy Word.

For Thy Word is the light upon my pathway. Thy law is my sure Guide, leading me to Thy dwelling place in the heavens.

Therefore in thankfulness to Thee I may, I can, I will, I must speak the truth in love concerning Thee and my fellow saints!

My heart declares,

"Sing to the Lord, sing His praise all ye people,  
New be your song as new honors ye pay;  
Sing of His majesty, bless Him forever,  
Show His salvation from day to day."

Our Lord is the living God who sees and hears, and also speaks!

He speaks within His own divine Being as the triune Covenant God, who lives His own perfect and glorious life in blessed intimate fellowship as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

To this speech God also gives utterance outside of Himself. For by the Word of His mouth were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He spake and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. When He was about to make man, the highest of the earthly creatures, the three divine Persons conferred together saying, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Man was created to know God, to love Him, and to serve Him in love. Man was given the gift of speech to praise and glorify his Maker!

The mighty God, Jehovah, speaks through the rumblings of the thunder, the raging of the storm, the roaring billows of the sea, but also in the wafting breezes that stir the tree tops, the song of the birds, and the quiet movement of the stars of the night. "O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is Thy Name in all the earth."

Far more wonderful is the speech of the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ, as recorded in the pages of Holy Writ. "For the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."

As if that were a small thing, we have the testimony of Christ by His Spirit in our hearts, creating in us a living faith, whereby we experience

the adoption to sons and the right to eternal life. The image of God, once lost through sin, is now restored to us in Christ, so that we may know our God, may love Him as our God, and serve Him in devotion of love, declaring His wonders, His praises, His glories now and even unto endless eternity, world without end!

Amazing gift, that gift of speech! In our thoughts we travel through the pages of history, we go from one end of the world to the other, we ascend to heaven, and descend to hell, and we can also give expression to all that we see and know. We can commune with one another, share our thoughts and experiences to the edification of the saints and the glory of God's Name in Christ Jesus!

What a horrible contrast!

Our Catechism speaks of the sin against the ninth commandment as "the proper works of the devil"!

God says in this ninth command: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

We are reminded of our fall in our first parents in Paradise, with the bitter result that we are conceived and born in sin. As we are by nature, our throats are an open sepulchre, with our tongues we use deceit, the poison of asps is under our lips, our mouths are full of cursing and bitterness (Rom. 3:13, 14). If this were not written in the Bible, I would not want to admit it. Yet it is so very true that, according to our first birth, we are children of our father, the devil, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning. There is no sin mentioned in any of the ten commandments that is not committed by the evil tongue.

The wonder of grace is that we are born again as new creatures in Christ Jesus, with the life of the risen Lord in our hearts. Now we are sons of God! We know not as yet what we shall be, but this we know, when Christ appears we shall be like Him in His glory! We have the beginning of eternal life in our hearts!

That is exactly what creates the tension between the old man of sin which still wars in our members and the new man in Christ, which seeks to be pleasing to God! Our sinful nature always spontaneously sins against the ninth commandment. Only grace makes it possible for us to hear God say to us, "My child, thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor!"

The proper works of the devil have so many aspects!

There is the evil of false doctrine. We are prone by nature to debase God and to exalt man. That error was evident already in Cain, and lifts its vile head throughout all of history. The heretic readily

follows the cunning of Satan by quoting God's Word with a pretence of sincerity, "Has not God said?" Paul warns of those who approach us from every direction with cunning craftiness, intent upon deceit as they gamble for men's souls. The fundamental truths are attacked, such as the infallibility of the Scriptures, the sovereignty of God, predestination, particular atonement, and many other basic truths. Heresy is like a cancer that secretly eats at the very vitals of the church, growing rapidly and bringing destruction as it develops. The church of Jesus Christ is always in a state of siege. Its members must be alert for all the forces of darkness that wage war against her, never despairing, but always confident that the victory is already attained in our Lord Jesus Christ. Our greatest threat is the complacency that cries peace where there is no peace.

There is the evil of false witness. The extreme of this evil we meet in the courts of law where witnesses will deliberately lie under oath. They call God to witness and to confirm that they are speaking the truth, while they pour out their falsifications, as if God is not a righteous Judge. We think of Potiphar's wife and her wicked charges against Joseph. Or of Jezebel, who falsely accused Naboth to claim his vineyard. The worst atrocity of all times was directed against our Lord, who was falsely accused, slandered, wickedly condemned and crucified, an outcast among men.

Our Catechism speaks of judging or helping to condemn a man rashly or unheard. Rash judgments are born out of suspicion or distrust. They can even arise out of jealousy or dislike. The one person says, "It may be;" the second says, "I think so;" the third emphatically states, "I heard it said;" the fourth party declares it to be a fact. In the meantime the story grows out of all proportions, beyond all recognition. The worst of it is, that it is so hard for us to forget the accusations that are brought against a person. Every time we see him we are reminded of the accusation that was made. Years later that charge, right or wrong, is still brought up. It may be forgiven by God, but we do not readily forgive and forget.

Also mentioned are the sins of gossip, backbiting and slander. The things we never would want to say to the person himself we readily tell to a friend. Many social visits are characterized by what the Psalmist says, "They sit and speak evil of each other," leaving nothing but a guilty conscience. It is so common to smile to a person's face and to stab him in the back. All the incentive that a talebearer needs is the remark, "Don't quote me," or, "Don't tell anyone I told you."

What a power lies behind that wicked tongue! What a damage is done by this little member!

Character defamation, destroyed respectability, loss of livelihood, loss of position in the church, even loss of life are but some of the bitter results of the evil tongue. Churches have been torn apart, families have been brought into turmoil, even as nations have been forced into war! The devil finds the evil tongue to be one of his strongest weapons, the hardest for us to overcome. In fact, no one can tame that evil beast, except the power of God's grace by His Spirit in our hearts.

Let us repent, confess our sins, and seek from the Lord a pure heart and an upright spirit! We must have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them (Eph. 5:11).

"Be ye followers of God, as dear children" (Eph. 5:1).

A child who loves and esteems his father spontaneously desires to imitate him. His highest desire is to walk in his footsteps; to be like him.

Our Catechism teaches that I should "love the truth, speak it uprightly and confess it." That applies, first of all, to the truth of Scripture. Our love to God requires that we have a deep respect for His Word. We acknowledge it as the truth, humbly bowing before it and surrendering our lives unto it. We maintain and defend it over against every false teaching, and that at any cost. For God's Word is to us the only sure Guide, the power unto our salvation! But there is more. Our Book of Instruction adds that we must love, speak, and confess the truth "in judgment and all other dealings." That applies to our contact with our fellow saints. We are called to be honest and sincere, upright and truthful in all our dealings with each other.

We who are forgiven so much, are we ready to forgive our neighbor?

We who want others to speak well of us, do we speak well of them?

We who expect others to bear with our weaknesses, do we bear with their weaknesses?

We who appreciate a word of comfort in time of need, do we give a drink of water to the thirsty, a bite of bread to the hungry, a word of reassurance to the weary?

With the end of the ages upon us, we do well to read the prophecy of Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, and notice particularly these words: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name."

*Read and Study The Standard Bearer.*

## EDITORIAL

# The Centennial of the Doleantie (3)

The churches of the Doleantie did not long remain a separate denomination after the separation of 1886. In 1892 they united with the churches of the Secession of 1834 to form the denomination known popularly as the "GKN," the Gereformeerde Kerken van Nederland (the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands). A relatively small segment of the Secession churches did not go along with this merger but continued a separate existence; they are known today as the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk (the Christian Reformed Church), to which the Free Reformed Church in the U.S. and in Canada trace their origin.

One might have expected that the merger of 1892 was a "natural." And undoubtedly from a certain point of view, i.e., that of allegiance to the Reformed Confessions, this was true. Nevertheless, to a large extent the merger was never an organic one; the two groups, that of the Secession of 1834 and that of the Doleantie of 1886, retained their theological identities within the united denomination. Perhaps "retained" is too weak a term; to no little extent it was true that they *insisted upon* and even *flaunted* their distinct theological identities. Contributing to this situation was the fact that Abraham Kuyper was undoubtedly the dominant theologian of the period, was extremely popular, and was very influential. This insistence upon the distinct theological identities, moreover, was not only true of theologians and of ministers; it was also true among the people at large. The result was that there were always two distinct wings in the GKN: the A-wing which insisted upon the theological emphases of the Afscheiding (Secession), and the B-wing, which insisted upon the theological emphases of the Doleantie. Especially in the large cities, where there were several churches and ministers (though but one congregation and consistory) these differences persisted, even to the ex-

tent that A-people would not think of listening to a B-minister, nor B-people of listening to an A-minister. This is neither the time nor the place to enter into the differences in detail. We merely mention that these differences concerned several emphases of the B-group, especially as these emphases developed under the strong theological influence of Abraham Kuyper. They were especially four in number. The Kuyperians emphasized: 1) Supralapsarianism. 2) Eternal justification. 3) Immediate regeneration. 4) Presupposed regeneration. As the battle about these points became hotter and hotter, it became necessary for the churches to try to do something about the situation. The result was an attempted compromise in the form of the Conclusions of Utrecht in 1905. But, as with many attempted compromises, so also with that of 1905: while the differences were suppressed somewhat, the problems remained. Not real peace but an uneasy truce prevailed. And it was to no little extent the same differences (especially, however, the difference concerning presupposed regeneration) which arose again in the mid-1940s (and even before) and which led to the unjust discipline of such men as Dr. K. Schilder and Dr. S. Greijdanus (and many others) and eventually to the formation of the Reformed Churches maintaining Article 31, the so-called "Liberated Churches."

The above is not intended to be a detailed history, but only a very brief sketch.

All of this was not without significance as far as the ecclesiastical scene in America was concerned.

We must recall that the Christian Reformed Churches in this country had their roots in the Secession of 1834. The colonists who came here in 1847 and following years were sons and daughters of the Secession. And when the Christian Reformed Churches began in 1857 (by way of separation from

the Reformed Church in America into which the Rev. Van Raalte had led them), their heritage was that of the Secession — perhaps we may say especially that of the De Cock-Van Velzen wing of the Secession. And until the time of the Doleantie, the growth through immigration of the infant Christian Reformed denomination was, of course, chiefly through immigrants of Secession origins. But when the Doleantie took place, and especially when the Gereformeerde Kerken were established through the union of 1892, there began to be a large influx of Doleantie immigrants, Kuyperians, as well. The result was that also in the Christian Reformed denomination increasingly the same two types of people and the same two wings could be distinguished, and the same differences of theological emphasis could be detected. The result was, too, that to no little extent the same theological skirmishes of the A-wing and the B-wing took place, even to the extent that the attempt was made to pacify the churches through the adoption of the Conclusions of Utrecht by the Christian Reformed Synod of 1908. Nevertheless, the differences continued.

What has become of this reformation movement in the Netherlands? Everyone who is at all acquainted with developments in the Netherlands, especially since about the end of World War II, will know that there has been a steady and sad decline in the churches which had their origin in the Secession of 1834 and the Doleantie of 1886 — a decline in doctrinal and confessional soundness and a decline in piety of life and walk. To a large extent their Reformed foundations have been abandoned. In fact, today those churches stand ready to repudiate their separate existence and to make common cause with the church from which they once separated, the Hervormde Kerk. This is the *Samen Op Weg* (Together-On-The Way) movement in the Netherlands. Perhaps it is too early in history to analyze properly all the reasons for this decline. But this writer has long been of the opinion that the influences of Abraham Kuyper's theory of common grace loom large in the picture, even though in the Netherlands there was never any kind of synodical stand on the matter of common grace until the infamous Synod of Sneek-Utrecht in the 1940s.

In the Christian Reformed Churches about the time of World War I there were significant developments. Herman Hoeksema writes about these in his *The Protestant Reformed Churches in America* as follows: "About the time of which we are writing other evils developed. There was a gradually growing spirit of confessional indifference, largely caused by ignorance of the Reformed truth and not infrequently manifesting itself in open disdain of and antagonism against the

Reformed principles; and as might be expected, there developed a pronounced tendency toward a falsely conceived 'broadmindedness' together with the manifestation of a spirit of worldly-mindedness, that would hide behind the name of 'Calvinism' as a shield. Especially during the years of the World War, of which several of the leaders of the Christian Reformed Churches were enthusiastic supporters, with its spread of much false and pernicious propaganda, its confusion of the truth with purely humanistic philosophy, its hastening of the inevitable process of Americanization of the churches, long, perhaps, too long restrained, these evil tendencies received a new impetus and asserted themselves with a new confidence and emphasis. There began to appear what may be called a latitudinarian party in the churches, a group of men that assumed a certain leadership, who opposed the antithesis, stood for a 'broader' view of the Christian's life and calling in the world, and strove to abridge the gap between the world and the Church."

In the rest of the paragraph just quoted the author explains the connection with Abraham Kuyper's *Common Grace* as follows:

"... These men were wont to speak of the urgent need of a 'restatement' of the truth; they lauded the movement of the *jongeren* in the Netherlands, who clamored for something new though they knew not what; and they frequently appealed to the alleged development of a 'new mentality,' that required new methods of approach, new forms and new truths. This 'broadminded' party, it must be recorded, did not appear to have any sympathy with the views of Doctor Abraham Kuyper Sr., until they discovered that his theory of *Common Grace* offered them a philosophy that would support their latitudinarian views in the name of Calvinism. The antithetical conception of Kuyper they fairly disdained. Common grace became the warp and the woof of their life-view. 'Calvinism' and 'Common Grace' became synonyms. Only they that believed and emphasized the theory of common grace were the true Calvinists. And all that opposed them and refused to believe and proclaim this theory of common grace, they proudly and disdainfully branded as Anabaptists! By a dexterous hocus-pocus, Calvinism, always known the world over for its doctrine of predestination and particular grace, had been changed overnight into a philosophy of common grace!"

As is well known, this philosophy of common grace (plus the error of the general well-meant offer of salvation — not at all a Kuyperian doctrine) prevailed in the Christian Reformed Church(es) in 1924 and ever since.

The true line of both the Secession of 1834 and the Doleantie of 1886, that line which adheres to Scripture and our Reformed Confessions, has by

the grace of God been continued in our Protestant Reformed Churches until today. And it is in that line that we have developed and gone forward, too.

HCH

## TRANSLATED TREASURES

*Dr. A. Kuyper*

# A Pamphlet Concerning the Reformation of the Church

(In the last paragraph Kuyper has discussed reformations which took place in the time of special revelation and are recorded for us in Scripture, and reformations which took place in the history of the church of the new dispensation. He has done this to show the different kinds of reformations which have taken place and to demonstrate how these reformations have significance for the tribulations in which Kuyper found himself in the State Church in the Netherlands.)

### 64. Concerning the Reformation Which Ought Now To Be Undertaken In the Reformed Churches Of These Lands.

Also the Reformed Churches of these lands await thoroughgoing reformation once again. They do this in order that, brought into a better church condition, they may offer to God His honor, to His elect the enjoyment of His salvation, and to our people and fatherland the support against decline into deeper moral apostasy.

That this reformation is necessary appears from these sad facts which, alas, are denied by no one. These are: that godliness among the Lord's people has sunk below the common standards. That the key of knowledge, with the exception of very small areas, is lost. That world conformity has not only penetrated the members of the church, but has gained the upper hand among the masses. That the greatest immorality and the most audacious heresies, having progressed even to blasphemy, are tolerated openly and without punishment throughout the churches. That false doctrines have penetrated even into the preachers. That the sacraments are defiled in many churches. That love among the brethren gives way to strife and division. That schism exists among the churches because a number of smaller groups have organized separate churches. And finally that most of these churches stand

in a church federation which manifests a continuously more unholy character and a greater inclination to the popish hierarchy.

We do not desire to exaggerate, and indeed one must be careful of the untrue statement that the state of our churches in this land is now already on a par with, e.g., the state of the church of Jerusalem under the later kings, or with the state of the churches of our fatherland in the last part of the fifteenth century.

He who says this does not know history.

It must rather be maintained that the Reformed Churches of this land must always be distinguished from both the above mentioned churches in these respects: 1) That the administration of the Word and sacraments still continues to exist in many of these churches in a purity which in those times was entirely unknown; 2) that the heresy and immorality which has crept in has not yet nearly taken on the idolatrous and satanic character of those times; 3) that he who desires something better can still move far more freely and is not nearly as ill-treated as in those times; 4) that immorality among the preachers, even though it already appears here and there, is not to be compared with that which was seen in Jerusalem and under Rome in the fifteenth century.

If one therefore asks whether we must not consider the Reformed Churches of this land as having become false churches or synagogues of Satan, then we wish to reply by making a distinction between three kinds of churches.

In the first group of churches we put those churches where yet there is a passably pure administration of the Word and a passably pure administra-



tion of the sacraments. Examples of such churches are the churches of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, etc. If we had to guess we suppose that there would be about five or six hundred of these churches.

Concerning these churches we may not doubt for a moment that they are yet actually true churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is true notwithstanding the fact that we readily admit that the following abuses exist in these churches: 1) that they in addition to the good administration of the means of grace permit a desecration of them; 2) that they fail to exercise discipline; 3) that they give also to unbelievers the right to vote; 4) that they stand in a false church connection.

These are faults which we surely do not consider trifling, but they by no means affect us so that we dare reject them as false churches.

One well remembers that also our fathers, even though false preaching continued to exist, nevertheless never for a moment thought of giving up their local church (though Romish) as a false church.

In the second group we place those churches where the good administration of the means of grace is absent, but where there are still men who pray and where the hope is still cherished that in the Lord's time Baal service shall give way to the service of the Lord.

The examples are especially applicable to a number of churches where for twenty or thirty years none but lying teachers served, and which at the prayer of believers nevertheless are once again blessed and graced with the good administration of the means of grace. Oh, if only they give thanks to God for this!

The condition of these churches we now consider as extremely dangerous and concede that they have nearly lost their character as church or at least the *lawful form* of the church as Calvin describes it. But if we pay attention to that which happened in Israel and pay attention to the preservation of the church under the Romish hierarchy and consider the signs which our own eyes have seen in a number of other churches, we do not dare before God the Lord to declare these churches dead, nor to compare their consistories to a synagogue of Satan.

Alas, we must do this with the third category of churches, of which not a few are to be found in our provinces and of which it must be said: 1) that the administration of the means of grace has not only disappeared, but that one cannot even cherish a hope that this administration will return. 2) That the administration of unbelief and idolatry has openly taken over the holy place without even

giving offense any longer to the conscience. 3) That the enmity against the truth and the absence of godliness has proceeded so far that a moral dissolution in all the relationships of society can be seen.

We believe that it must be said of such churches: They are dead. The candlestick is taken from her place. And even though God the Lord can build a new church in that place nothing can come any more from that old, withered stem.

We do not consider it impossible that, e.g., through circuit preaching during a vacancy, the grace of God may be preached again, through which preaching a few souls are touched, and out of that circle of touched souls a new life for the church comes forth. But it is very doubtful whether one could call this a new reviving of the old church. Exactly in the same way the Word can also enter a false church through accidental circumstances without anyone being able to rehabilitate that small church by this rather minor happening.

Perhaps one asks: Why do we not add to these three categories of Reformed Churches a fourth which would include the churches of the Separation in their three or four different groups and which continue to exist under various names?

The reason for this is that we cannot and may not see in all these separate churches anything else than aggrieved churches which have temporarily organized themselves into churches which are perhaps too independent. If right now the churches of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, etc., were re-established by reformation in a pure form, we are convinced that all these separated churches will come together. However, we would not blame them at all if they refused to do this as long as that reformation tarries and an illegal church connection is maintained.

Now we know well that these separated churches will not themselves admit that they are aggrieved churches. But this does not bother us. If they were not aggrieved churches, then they would have to maintain that our churches are all false churches or synagogues of Satan. And as far as we dare to judge, at least the godly among them do not do this any more. And if it must be accepted among them as an overwhelming conviction that by no means all the churches alongside of which the separated church has appeared, have died as false churches, then it follows of itself from this that these separated churches would be schismatic, or (and that is our position) that they are to be honored as aggrieved churches with something of an independent organization.<sup>1</sup>

Earlier there stood in the way of holding this opinion the fact that certain men from the Modernists and the Groningen Movement<sup>2</sup> had taken the incor-



rect position that in our land only one large church existed which possessed local and individual parts. Following that line of thought one must indeed reason: "All that which the church does in her individual parts, as e.g., in Ulrum, the whole church also does!" Following this line of thought one must reject the idea of the church in her individual parts. But if this false collegiate idea gives way to a more Reformed idea, then it must be granted to these separated churches that the distinction made in viewing the church fellowship as a secondary matter puts the essence of the church, not in the denomination, but in the local churches.

At the same time this would arouse a reaction in the separated churches which are recognized by

the government under the name of "Christian Reformed" against the more or less collegialistic view according to which some make the denomination the important idea and the local churches as only a part of the denomination.

This is an unreformed idea and shall be gradually banished from these churches as the Reformed principle begins to dominate.

<sup>1</sup>Kuyper is referring here to the churches of the Afscheiding which split from the State Church under the leadership of Van Raalte, de Cock, etc.

<sup>2</sup>The so-called Groningen Movement was really an ethical movement which emphasized an ethical life and in fact became extremely legalistic.

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## CORRESPONDENCE AND REPLY

*Prof. H. Hanko*

# About Picketing Abortion Clinics

### Correspondence

Dear Prof. Hanko:

Generally I am in agreement with what is printed in the *Standard Bearer*, yet I must express disagreement with your answer on picketing abortion clinics in the Sept. 1, 1986 issue of that periodical. Essentially the disagreement is not so much in what you stated but in the over-simplification and lack of clarification. Please let me explain.

The peculiarity of you and me as citizens of the United States is that our government is not a monarchy, not a theocracy, not a dictatorship; it is not even what is called a democracy; it is a constitutional republic. It is a government of the people, by the people and for the people under a constitution. Our forefathers saw fit to set up a government in the following order: God, Ten Commandments, People, Constitution, following the Declaration of Independence, Government, and last of all Government Offices. They saw fit to set up a government in which Government Officials are servants of the People, government by a Constitution. The People

are not servants of Government Officials. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution support this view. In contradiction to this there seems to be a popular view, especially in some Christian circles, that our government is in a direct relationship to God, contrary to the order listed above. You and I both know that when this occurs the result is tyranny as has been so graphically demonstrated, not only by Biblical history, but world history as well.

I would assume that most Protestant Reformed people celebrate the Fourth of July, in other words the Declaration of Independence. This is a document which is, according to some, in direct violation to the extreme view of submission to government. Yet this nation under God has enjoyed a freedom that is unsurpassed by any other nation in the world today due to that Declaration which, by the way, is a constitutional document. However, this freedom is slowly being eroded by unconstitutional edicts enacted by Government Officials.

I take issue when you say that abortion has been

legalized in this country. It has not been legalized because it is in direct violation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence and the Ten Commandments. You say that we must submit to the magistrates; I agree, as long as this submission is not in violation of the Constitution, the highest government law of the land. So we are placed before this decision, do we submit to Government Officials, or do we submit to the Constitution? Even Calvin, whom Reformed people love to quote, says this: "For earthy princes lay aside their power when they rise up against God, and are unworthy to be reckoned among the number of mankind. We ought rather utterly to defy them ('conspuere in ipsorum capita,' lit: 'to spit on their heads') than to obey them." (Footnote bottom of page 1519, Calvin's Institutes by John T. McNeill and Ford Lewis Battles). Rather a strong statement, is it not?

Abortion is an act of which not only the Supreme Court is guilty, but nearly every citizen of the land is involved in it. Government Officials have ruled that in some instances it must be funded by the tax dollars of the citizens. Some maintain that they are not guilty of what the government does with the tax dollars it extorts from its citizens. This really is a cop-out under our type of government. Christians, at least, should refuse to fund murder and we are liable to be judged in this matter. When the books are opened in the final judgement only names of individuals will be found, not governments or any other organizations, only people.

Picketing has taken on an evil connotation because it is used illegally by some unions. However, I find it difficult to criticize those who wish to testify in public their protest against this evil as long as they perform this act without the use of destruction of property or physical harm. This may be a long shot but Joshua picketed the city of Jericho for seven days. Jonah picketed the city of Nineveh for three days and the Old Testament Prophets went up and down throughout the land protesting the evils that were there.

I hope that I have not been offensive but I wanted to point out that the evils being perpetrated are not simple matters for Christians. Meekness does not always call for submission.

Respectfully,  
Howard E. VanManen  
Grand Rapids, MI

### Reply

The issue quite clearly is a difference in the view of government which Mr. VanManen holds and which I hold. While I do not claim expertise in political science, several remarks are in order in answer to Mr. VanManen's assertions.

1) The Scriptures are unmistakably silent on what form of government meets with God's approval. Whether one favors a democracy, a constitutional republic, a monarchy, an oligarchy, or whatever, he cannot appeal to Scripture in support of his contention. The reason for this is simply that the Scriptures are totally unconcerned about this question and consider it to be irrelevant for the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as the God of our salvation. God's people are, while in this world, citizens of the kingdom of heaven. They are, as Peter so eloquently expresses it in his first epistle, pilgrims and strangers in the earth. The only question with which Scripture concerns itself is: how must pilgrims and strangers in the earth, citizens of the kingdom of heaven, conduct themselves in relation to the magistrate? There is only one answer to that: Submit! There is no qualification added; there are no extenuating circumstances which alter this; there are no reasons which anyone can deduce by means of which he can escape from this calling. The proof for this is abundant. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego submitted to Nebuchadnezzar; Daniel submitted to Darius; the apostles submitted to the Sanhedrin; Paul submitted to Festus, Felix and finally Nero; our Lord submitted to Pontius Pilate as an abiding example to us (I Peter 2:19-25). We are specifically enjoined to this in I Peter 2:13, 14; Titus 3:1; Rom. 13:1-5. No line of argumentation can ever alter these emphatic and sharp statements. We, belonging to the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, are enjoined solemnly and without equivocation to submit to our magistrates. It is the command of our own Lord and Master. To disobey is heinous sin.

2) Confusion sometimes arises concerning this calling to submit, as if it means also that we are called always to obey. I do not know whether our brother is confused on this point; but let me briefly mention the distinction. *Submit* includes *obey* under all ordinary circumstances. But our obedience to magistrates is fundamentally obedience to Christ the Lord. We keep the fifth commandment too because we love God. If, therefore, the magistrate requires something that involves us in disobedience to our King in heaven, we may not obey. But disobedience does not preclude submission. In our disobedience, we still submit. In our refusal to do what our Lord and King at God's right hand forbids, we nevertheless recognize the authority of the magistrate, love him, honor him, respect him and take the consequences for disobedience. That is, we still submit — as Abednego did, as Daniel did, as Paul did, as Christ Himself did, when He died for us.

3) The question whether the form of government in this country is "Christian," i.e., is Biblical,

lies at the foundation of our discussion. Mr. Van Manen probably knows more than I concerning the political theory which was the intellectual womb of our form of government. But a few points are clear to me, and ought, I think, be clear to Mr. Van Manen. a) There is no way in which either the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution can be considered in themselves to be Christian documents. No references at all to God are to be found in the Constitution; in the Declaration of Independence are only to be found vague references to divine providence while all mention of the God of Scripture and of Christ are absent. b) If these documents are, in any way, to be considered Christian, it has to be within the context of the political theories which prevailed in those days. While I do not know very much about them, I have read the Federalist Papers at one time; and, though differences of political thought undoubtedly prevailed among the colonists, one outstanding feature of many political thinkers was their obvious and undeniable Deism, a horrible heresy, coupled with a political philosophy developed by such empiricists as John Locke. There were Christian influences — who can deny the influence of a man like Witherspoon? but the prevailing political climate was inimical to the truth of Scripture. Mr. Lincoln's description of this country's political system would seem to me to support this contention: A government "of the people, by the people, and for the people?" Nothing could be more atheistic than that. A pilgrim and stranger in the earth would be satisfied with nothing less than a government of God, by God, and for God. c) The revolution of 1776 was rebellion against constituted authority, and was, therefore, contrary to the will of God. That God has given to the citizens of America unparalleled freedom is not because the form of government is itself Christian. We may not argue back from our freedoms to a Christian beginning in America. *Time* magazine was right when years ago in an editorial it observed that this country, born in revolution, was still reaping the harvest. d) To discover what Calvin believed concerning the implications of submission to authority would be an interesting and profitable study. I have not made it. I do know that Calvin consistently warned the French Huguenots against resorting to arms in defense of their position; and I know too that Calvin wrote in the context of a unique relation between Church and State which is foreign to American political thought and which, apparently, Mr. VanManen does not want either.

4) Finally, much of this is beside the point. Even if we granted all Mr. VanManen's arguments concerning the origin of the political system to which we are heirs, Scripture makes it very clear that we

are to be in submission to those whom God has set over us, not to some document. The government, God's servants, have interpreted the Constitution. Right or wrong as their interpretation of the Constitution may be, they are our God-appointed magistrates, and we had better submit to them. Nebuchadnezzar was a picture of Antichrist, but Shadrach submitted to him. Nero was a monster, but Paul submitted to him. Pontius Pilate was a weak-willed, wishy-washy political opportunist, but Christ submitted to him. Whether we live in Russia, in China, in Nicaragua, or in America, we too can only submit — as citizens of a kingdom which shall endure for ever. It is only a little time that we are strangers in a foreign land.

5) It may be that our tax dollars are used for abortions. I know that they are used for similar heinous purposes: Congressmen use our tax dollars to support revolution in Nicaragua; Welfare agencies use our tax dollars to support whores who multiply their children in abominable ways so that they can feed more fully at the public trough; and the list could be lengthened. But Paul's words ring out above all this: "For this cause pay ye tribute also, for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (Rom. 13:6, 7). And God will some day right all wrongs.

Abortion is a terrible sin. God's judgments rest with terrible horror upon a nation which murders unborn infants. We must fight this evil with every means at our disposal. But to resort to rebellion, to fall back upon might and power, to try to right wrongs by means condemned in Scripture, all this will lead only to great sin on our part and make our work, too, an abomination in the sight of God. The weapons we are called to use are not those of carnal warfare. We have the Word. Let us preach the Word. Let us leave the results in the hands of God Who saves His Church and Who works all things to accomplish the goal of the great glory of His most holy Name.

The spirit of rebellion which prevails among conservative Christians nowadays is a spirit which, if it infects the Church, will destroy her. Let us walk as citizens of the kingdom of our Lord Christ, and look forward with uplifted heads to the time when the kingdoms of this earth shall become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.

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## GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH

*Thomas C. Miersma*

# Scripture Interprets Scripture: Spiritually

The historical-grammatical approach to Scripture we have been considering sets before us certain principles for arriving at the meaning of the Word of God by allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture. The principles we have considered are by their very nature somewhat general. Scripture, while it is one Word of God, is at the same time rich and diverse. The Scriptures contain parables, visions, psalms, symbols, types, and other elements which are all to be approached in the light of the general principles we have considered.

These general principles however must be properly and carefully applied in harmony with the particular nature of the passage we are studying. Parables must be treated as one whole, as they follow the lines of an extended figure of speech. The meaning of types and symbols, and the fact that they are types and symbols must be determined by careful study, comparing Scripture with Scripture. The basic principles of interpretation which we have considered need to be applied therefore with wisdom, prudence, and flexibility. It is exactly the careful and sound spiritual judgment displayed by the Reformers in their application of these principles which makes their commentaries of abiding value, particularly those of John Calvin.

It is not our intention to pursue these matters further in a consideration of their specific application to the special problems of interpreting types, parables, etc. For those interested in pursuing such a study, our seminary has available a syllabus on hermeneutics which is recommended for further study. In our consideration of the Reformers' principles of scriptural interpretation however, we have concentrated our attention on the mechanical

aspects of Bible study, on the historical and grammatical principles. The third principle is that Scripture interprets Scripture spiritually. This principle is the fundamental one, the foundation upon which the others rest, and was to the Reformers the central one.

We have in part considered this principle in all that we have said concerning the Reformers' approach to the Word of God. It is rooted in the truth that in the study of God's Word we are taught of God, by His Spirit in our hearts. Formally this principle means that the Holy Spirit interprets His own writings as one unified Word of God, given us by the Spirit of Christ and pointing us to Christ. The significance of this for our Bible study is very comprehensive, but there are certain elements which it may well hold before our minds. The spiritual unity of that Word of God means that Scripture does not contradict itself. It has but one Author. Clearer passages of the Word of God explain more difficult and less readily understood passages. This spiritual unity is greater than the unity of its history, as the unfolding of God's revelation to us, and greater than its grammatical unity in the meaning of words and phrases. It is rooted in the purpose of the Word of God which is to reveal God as the God of our salvation in Christ. It is characterized by a unity of the truth. This one Word of truth must be appropriated and studied by faith.

This spiritual oneness of the Word of God means that underlying the study of the history, context, words, and grammar in our Bible study lies a deeper principle: the unity of the truth. The doctrines, truths, and concepts of Scripture are not at war with one another but form an essential unity which is spiritual in character and which can only be understood by faith, in the Spirit. Not only must the scriptural uses of words and phrases be studied

and their grammatical relationships, but the truths and doctrines, the content of the Scriptures, must be studied and compared with one another, so that our study consists of comparing spiritual things with spiritual, with that wisdom which is not of this world but which is taught of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13). Such study belongs to the office of believer and to the anointing of the child of God with the Spirit of Christ to understand God's Word. It is done prayerfully and reverently with a willingness to submit ourselves to the Word of God.

This principle that Scripture interprets Scripture first of all spiritually, and that it is thus that we are to labor with the Word of God, means that we know our Bibles well and our doctrine well. We approach the Word of God not only by faith but with the content of our faith before our mind and heart. We study God's Word in the light of that which we have been taught and have learned as children of God. In such study of God's Word, our confessions also serve a useful and important place. They are the expression of the content of our faith, the expression of the work of the Spirit of truth in the church, and give to us in brief and clear form a statement of that spiritual unity and truth of God's Word which forms the unity of Scripture. It is for this reason that we sometimes say that a Reformed man approaches Scripture through the confessions, and by way of the three forms of unity. By this is not meant that the confessions stand above Scripture, but rather that they are a means to set before us the content of our faith and the unity of God's Word of truth and therefore serve to lead and guide our study of God's Word in harmony with its truth as a whole.

This means that we also take the time to know our confessions, both the three forms of unity and our minor confessions, the forms for Baptism, the Lord's Supper, etc. We also use them in our Bible study as a guide and tool. Moreover it means that we are busy studying the doctrine and truth of God's Word and our unique Protestant Reformed heritage, as well as being engaged in direct Bible study. In that Reformed doctrine we find a rule or standard to guide our study of the Word of God. By it we will better understand the place of a passage in the whole of Scripture and its meaning. Likewise, by continually testing that standard against the higher standard of Scripture itself, we will also develop in our understanding of the truth of God's Word and enrich our Reformed heritage.

As the mere mechanical aspects of Bible study, the historical-grammatical aspects, are insufficient by themselves, so also the principle of the spiritual interpretation of Scripture is insufficient without them. We may not reduce Bible study to a mere mechanical method of interpretation. Nor may we

take up the truth of the spiritual principle of interpretation which undergirds it and approach Bible study merely from the principle that I have faith and God's Word and the anointing of the Spirit, and therefore I need not labor or study or have any knowledge of doctrine, Scripture, or the faith of the churches of which I am a member, out of the false idea that after all the Spirit will teach me, apart from the means which he has appointed. We may not adopt the attitude that I may simply open my Bible and read, and immediately and intuitively understand it without effort and without knowledge. Such a subjective, mystical approach to Bible study (for that is what such thinking is) is neither biblical nor Reformed. It reduces Bible study in our society life as churches to mere opinion-swapping, opinions without foundation.

Because we are dependent upon the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit rightly to understand God's Word, to teach us and to impart to us wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of mind and heart, we also have the calling to worship Him in His divine work within us, reverence that work, and to do so by taking heed to His Word with faithful and diligent Bible study and prayer. We would no doubt be horrified and offended if our minister on the Lord's Day simply walked into the pulpit, decided on a text to preach while we were singing, thumped down his Bible, opened it, and began to preach without any preparation, labor, or consideration. To do so would be dishonoring to God and an offense to the church of Christ. To do so on the basis of the office to which he is called or on the basis of the inward working of the Spirit in that office, would be a corruption of that office and of the working of the Spirit. Is it any different for one

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holding the office of believer to do essentially the same thing by showing up unprepared when the church gathers for Bible study in its society meetings? How easily do we not fall into exactly this same irreverent pattern of conduct, this same irreverent attitude toward God's Word and the working of His Spirit?

That Scripture interprets Scripture spiritually means that we also with an attitude of reverent and holy awe take up God's Word, study it constantly and faithfully, as the most used book in our home, and do so with a sincere regard for its divine author. Moreover it means that we do so with all the talents, gifts, and abilities God has given us,

laboring with God's Word as believers, that it might truly be a lamp unto our feet and a light upon the pathway of our life. We mortify the excuses of our sinful flesh which say, "I am too tired, I am not a reader, I am unlearned, I don't have time." We put away from us also "... the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge" (Proverbs 19:27), this world's amusements, books, television, and entertainments, and take time to study the Scriptures "... which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15). For in the Word of God is to be found spiritual wisdom and the knowledge of God which is eternal life.

## ***FAITH OF OUR FATHERS***

*James D. Slopsema*

# **The Baptism Form — A Prayer For Our Children**

Having instructed us in the meaning of baptism and establishing the necessity of infant baptism, the baptism form now proceeds to lead us in prayer.

The prayer of the baptism form, along with the introductory exhortation to prayer, is as follows:

That therefore this holy ordinance of God may be administered to his glory, to our comfort, and to the edification of his church, let us call upon his holy name.

### **PRAYER**

O Almighty and eternal God, Thou, who hast according to thy severe judgment punished the unbelieving and unrepentant world with the flood, and hast according to thy great mercy saved and protected believing Noah and his family; Thou, who hast drowned the obstinate Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, and hast led thy people Israel through the midst of the Sea on dry ground, by which baptism was signified — we

beseech thee, that Thou wilt be pleased of thine infinite mercy, graciously to look upon these children, and incorporate them by thy Holy Spirit, into thy Son Jesus Christ, that they may be buried with him in newness of life; that they may daily follow him, joyfully bearing their cross, cleave to him in true faith, firm hope, and ardent love; that they may, with a comfortable sense of thy favor, leave this life, which is nothing but a continual death, and at the last day, may appear without terror before the judgment seat of Christ thy Son, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with thee and the Holy Ghost, the one only God lives and reigns forever. Amen.

We notice in the introductory paragraph of exhortation the purpose of this prayer. The purpose of this prayer is that "this holy ordinance of God may be administered to his glory, to our comfort, and to the edification of his church." This is contrasted with the warning given to parents immediately after the prayer. There parents are warned against using baptism out of custom or superstition. To avoid such a misuse of baptism and to facilitate its proper use, the baptism form leads

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*James D. Slopsema is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Randolph, Wisconsin.*

the congregation in prayer just prior to the administration of baptism itself.

A brief analysis of this prayer reveals that its basic concern and request is that God graciously incorporate our children into Jesus Christ that they may walk in newness of life. This is a very appropriate prayer, since this is the essence of baptism itself. Baptism is the sacrament of incorporation into Jesus Christ and all His blessings. What a beautiful way, then, to prepare the congregation and parents to use baptism for God's glory as well as for the comfort and edification of the church.

The prayer begins by pointing out the two Old Testament types of baptism: the salvation of Noah and his family through the flood, and the salvation of Israel under Moses through the Red Sea. By these two notable events in the Old Testament "baptism was signified."

This certainly is Scriptural. I Peter 3:20, 21 speaks of "when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us . . . ." According to this passage the destruction of the world by the flood and the saving of Noah and his family in the ark was certainly a type or picture in the Old Testament of baptism. In I Corinthians 10:1, 2 we find that the same is true of the destruction of Egypt and the saving of Israel at the Red Sea. There we read, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized in the cloud and in the sea."

Both these Old Testament types of baptism have essentially the same elements.

In both instances, for example, the church was saved from certain destruction through God's judgment on and destruction of the world. In the case of Noah the church was in great peril of being swallowed up by the world. Through persecution and world amalgamation the church in Noah's day had dwindled to merely eight souls. Were the world allowed to continue, the church would soon have been swallowed up. Hence, God saved the church by destroying the world in the flood. It is customary to think of Noah being saved *from* the flood *by* the ark. However, the passage we have cited from I Peter 3:20, 21 has a different emphasis. There we read that Noah and his family were saved *in* the ark *by* the waters of the flood. You have the same idea also with the deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea. For approximately 400 years Israel had been in bondage in Egypt. At the instigation of the devil Egypt sought to destroy Israel. To save Israel, which was His church, from certain destruc-

tion, God destroyed Egypt through the ten terrible plagues and the drowning of Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea.

The second element that both these types have in common is that in both instances the church was saved by water. The church in Noah's day was saved by the waters of the flood. The church in bondage in Egypt was saved by the waters of the Red Sea.

The final element that both these types have in common is that in both instances the church was brought to a new life. Through the destruction of the world in the flood the church of Noah's day was brought to a new creation. The Scripture makes very clear that the flood drastically changed the earth so that Noah stepped out of the ark into a new creation. And although sin still clung to Noah and his family, nevertheless, in this new creation they were able to enjoy a life they never knew before in the world that had been filled with violence. The same was true with Israel when God brought her out of Egypt. From Egypt God led His church to Canaan where she was able to live a new life as God's covenant people and enjoy the blessings of God as never before.

The spiritual realities to which both of these types point are briefly described for us in Romans 6:3, 4, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Now we ought to notice that when this particular passage speaks of baptism, it is not referring to the sacrament of baptism by the church but to the spiritual reality symbolized in baptism, viz., incorporation into Jesus Christ. Notice, that this passage speaks of being "baptized into Jesus Christ." The word translated "baptize" really means "to immerse." This idea of immersion has been wrongly applied by the Baptists to the mode of baptism. They claim that immersion is the only proper way for baptism to be administered. Rather than applying to the mode of baptism, the idea of immersion applies rather to the spiritual realities depicted in baptism. The sacrament of baptism is a sign and seal of being immersed into Jesus Christ, or, if you will, of incorporation into Christ. This certainly is the thrust of the expression "baptized into Christ."

The spiritual reality of being baptized into Christ is further explained in Romans 6:3, 4 as being baptized or immersed into Christ's death and resurrection.

When we are baptized into Christ we are first baptized into His death. To be baptized into



Christ's death means to become one with Christ in His death. It means to be crucified with Christ so that our old sinful nature is destroyed. And this is of extreme importance. For, so long as our corrupt nature lives, the devil and the powers of darkness are able to control us. The devil very cleverly excites the evil lusts of our sinful flesh so that we are led time and again into sin and ultimately to destruction. But being baptized into the death of Christ, this old sinful nature of ours is crucified with Christ. At the cross, our evil nature was principally destroyed and with it the power of the devil to lead us to destruction. Being baptized into Christ, we are safe from all the attempts of the powers of destruction to consume us.

This is the spiritual reality depicted in the destruction of the world in Noah's day as well as the destruction of Egypt at the Red Sea. Even as God twice by water destroyed the world and its ability to destroy the church, so does He by the blood of the cross forever destroy the power of the forces of darkness to lead His church to destruction and ruin.

The positive truth implied in our being baptized into Jesus Christ is that we are baptized into His resurrection. To be baptized into Christ's resurrection means to be one with Him in His resurrection so that we are risen with Him into newness of life. Of this we read in Romans 6:5, "For if we have been planted together into the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." And again in verse 8 we read, "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."

Now to be risen with Christ means to be raised up to a new life of obedience and service in the power of Jesus' own resurrection. It means to be born again in the power of the resurrection unto the new life of fellowship and communion with the ever blessed God.

This spiritual reality also was depicted in the two great types of baptism in the Old Testament. For

both Noah and Israel were saved by God through water to lead new lives in His service and fellowship. Noah was delivered from a world of violence to lead a new life in the new creation after the flood. Israel was delivered from Egypt's power to lead a new life in Canaan.

Having called our attention to these two great types of baptism, the baptism form in its prayer leads us to ask that God in His grace and mercy make all these things living realities in the lives of our baptized children. This certainly is the request we make when we are led to pray, "we beseech thee, that thou wilt be pleased of thine infinite mercy, graciously to look upon these children, and incorporate them by thy Holy Spirit, into thy Son Jesus Christ, that they may be buried with him into his death, and be raised with him in newness of life."

What follows in this prayer is a development of what the new life is that we seek for our children. We are led to pray that our children may daily follow Jesus; that they joyfully bear their cross; that they cleave to Christ in true faith, firm hope, and ardent love. This is very simply what it means to live in newness of life in the power of the cross.

Finally, the form leads us to pray that our children may leave this life with a comfortable sense of God's favor and at the last day appear before the judgment seat of Christ without terror. This is the fruit of walking in newness of life. Those who in the power of the cross daily follow Christ, joyfully bear their cross, and cling to him need not fear the day of judgment. They can rather leave this life through death in peace and can in confidence stand before the judgment seat of Christ knowing that great is their reward in heaven.

For all this we pray when we are led in prayer by our baptism form. When baptism is administered according to this form, let us one and all utter this prayer with a sincere heart that baptism may be administered to God's glory, to our comfort, and to the edification of Christ's church.

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



# "Good Morning, Alice" (13)

Gise J. Van Baren

It had now become a question of allowing Alice slowly to starve to death — or undergo the rigor of surgery, with its attendant dangers, to provide an opening directly into her stomach. Alice was not able to decide. The family debated the pros and cons, and finally decided on the surgery. It would alleviate the choking spells that developed when she tried to eat, and would make her more comfortable during her remaining life. One thing: the surgery would have to be scheduled the week of Thanksgiving of 1981. Thanksgiving was always much of a family-time — especially for Alice who would usually spend it in the home of one of the relatives. Nevertheless, plans were made to have the surgery.

*Good Morning, Alice:*

*I've always been kind of mixed up in my feelings about the account of Mary and Martha. I always felt a little sorry for Martha — she too served her Lord to the best of her ability.*

*I can believe though, that the good part, the part that cannot be taken away is the "hearing" of God's Word. We can believe, and be a true child of God, and yet concentrate so much on what we must do that we take little time to spend quietly alone with God in reading Scripture and in prayer.*

*That is the part that is needful. Not to belittle the good deeds we must do, but without "sitting at Jesus' feet," and hearing His Word, we will not be nourished to continue in our lives of service to Him.*

*May our God give us grace to desire the good part, and to know that that part shall never be taken away from us.*

*With love, Your friend*

*Please read I Peter 3:8*

Other means had to be found to communicate with Alice too. Alice's expressive eyes, the nod of her head (the only part of her body she could move much anymore), or the guttural sounds were no longer enough to convey to us what she wanted. She knew what she wanted — her mind was always actively working. Finally, the practice of others with similar communication problems was adopted. A large card was used with five rows of

letters of the alphabet — the top row contained the five vowels. Alice would nod "yes" or "no" as one pointed to each row. Next, the specific letter of that row was chosen. The process was a bit slow — but effective. Alice became quite good at this. She would usually spell out a key word — and the family could quickly fill in the rest.

*Good Morning Alice:*

*I really don't know why, but I'm having trouble putting my thoughts about this verse down on paper. Read I Pet. 3:8 again and ask yourself if you love all the fellow believers in the Lord as you should and maybe you will see what I mean. I'm going to think more about it and write tomorrow (I hope).*

*With love, Your friend*

Alice went to the hospital on November 22, 1981. The surgery was successful and recuperation went quite well under the circumstances. Members of the family stayed with Alice on a 24-hour basis, especially to help her when communication was necessary. Alice could not push any button to call the nurse, nor could she call loudly enough for any to hear her. She also found it impossible to convey to a nurse her need since she could not speak words anymore — or at least not clearly enough for anyone to understand them. So, a family member would serve as intermediary between Alice and the staff.

*Good Morning Alice:*

*Have you thought more about the last verse I asked you to read? Do you see why I have trouble with it? Oh, it's easy enough to say, "Yes, I have compassion on other Christians," and say, "I love them," but when it comes right down to it — Do I?*

*Too often I grumble either to myself or aloud if others aren't just the way I think they should be, or do the things I think they should.*

*It has been good for me to look at this verse and examine myself. I know the answer is in the verse; it says, "Be ye all of one mind." But how do we do that?*

*I guess the best way is to remember that we are such sinners ourselves, and yet Christ loved us enough to die for us. Knowing Christ died for the other Christians just as He did for me, and knowing the Holy Spirit dwells in his heart, how dare I not love him?*

*If God looks upon His children through the shed*

blood of Christ, then surely I must love them.

I hope I can more and more guard my mind against speaking and thinking bad of others, be of one mind with them and love them.

With love, Your friend

Please read Matthew 25:34

But everything did not always go the way Alice wanted in the hospital. On a regular basis, medicated air would be forced into her lungs to prevent pneumonia. On several occasions, suctioning of her lungs was required — since she could not cough up anything. It's a miserable experience at best, but Alice simply detested it. On one occasion, a male technician decided it was necessary again. Alice did not think so — and her eyes clearly indicated that she refused to have it done. She had no appreciation for this particular person anyway — and had prior experience with what appeared to be his incompetence. Now he came to force medicated air into her lungs — and didn't do it very gently or properly. Just before he left, he suddenly decided that suctioning of her lungs was also necessary. The tube was rather quickly and roughly shoved into her lungs. While Alice continued to protest feebly, he did this several times. Then he left. Alice was furious. Even though she now was having difficulty with coughing and choking as a result of this suctioning, she indicated her wish to use her spelling card. Slowly, amid considerable coughing, she spelled out: s-u-c-k-e-r g-u-y!

Good Morning Alice:

There is just *so much* we don't know about heaven, isn't there? This text, of course, is about the final judgment when Christ returns. I am sure this cannot be too far in the future. It's with mixed emotions that I look at my younger children and think: will they ever marry and have children, or will Christ return before that?

Something Rev. Heys once said I will never forget. He said we should desire nothing more than the immediate return of our Lord.

I was pregnant at that time and I really wanted that baby. I guess that's why this sticks in my mind.

Every once in a while I ask myself: Am I living as if that is my first desire? Do others know — can they tell by my attitude and actions — that this is my first desire? Always, I fall so far short!

I've gotten far from the text. I really just wanted to ask if you can imagine the joy we will have when our struggle is over and our Lord says to us, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

My place of joy in His Presence was made ready for me since before the world began. What am I doing to prepare myself for that place?

In Him for Whom we wait, Your friend

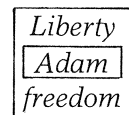
Galatians 5:13-14

Now the cards really came flooding in — especially from the Grand Rapids' area and from Illinois. Perhaps Alice enjoyed best of all the little notes sent from the lower class of the Christian grade school in South Holland. The childish expressions were simple but very precious to her. The hospital room, too, began to resemble a florist shop. Finally, a list had to be made identifying each new plant and its sender — because Alice insisted that each visitor must know who sent what plant. And Alice's "friend" began writing her anonymous notes at this time. Nothing piqued her curiosity more, nor gave greater comfort than these notes. She began to anticipate their coming each day. It gave her something to think of other than her own current problems.

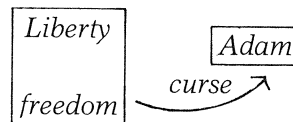
Good Morning Alice:

Do you remember I told you I'd look up Rev. J. Heys' explanation of liberty? I could never understand how having to obey the ten commandments meant we had liberty or freedom until he explained it this way. Galatians 5:13-14 explains it and Rev. Heys' diagrams make it clearer.

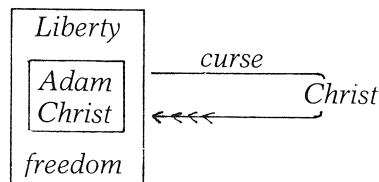
God created Adam able not to sin. He was in liberty:



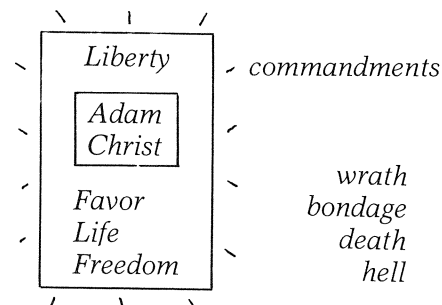
Adam fell into sin, was cursed and was not able not to sin:



As redeemed in Christ, Adam was called unto liberty, and in his new man was not able to sin:



The law of liberty is in keeping the ten commandments:



*In keeping the commandments, we experience God's favor and life. Outside of that liberty, breaking God's commandments we would only experience wrath, bondage, death and hell.*

*Knowing all this should make it all the more a joy for us to obey God's commands as, called unto that liberty, we desire to continue in His joy and peace and freedom.*

*In His Liberty, Your friend*

*Please read John 15:26-27*

## **TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE**

*Herman Veldman*

### **The Apostles' Creed (8)**

We read in the first article of our Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." In our preceding article we called attention to the relation between God's counsel and the creation of the world. That this connection exists lies in the nature of the case. This first article of the Apostles' Creed speaks of our faith in this heavenly Father Who is the Maker of heaven and earth. Of course, this divine Creator created all things according to His divine plan. Does not even an earthly builder have a plan before he builds a house? Do not the Scriptures speak of God as a Maker or Architect and Builder? When our Heidelberg Catechism, in Answer 26, speaks of God's eternal counsel as implied in this article of our Apostles' Creed, it is surely absolutely correct. And we noted that this counsel of God is eternal and all-comprehensive. However, there is much more in this first article.

Indeed, "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." So God, we read, is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ — this appears in the Heidelberg Catechism's explanation of the first article in Answer 26 of Lord's Day 9, which reads: "That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." Is this explanation far-fetched on the part of our Catechism? Does not the Catechism place an interpretation upon the first article of our Apostles' Creed which is really not implied in that first article? And the answer is: absolutely not!

Does not the child of God here express his faith in God, Almighty? Hence, He is our Father. But according to Scripture God is our Father only for Jesus' sake. That we are God's children is only because of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the Catechism, therefore, declares concerning this first article of the Apostles' Creed that to believe in God the Father, Almighty, means that He is the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, then this instruction of our catechism instructor is certainly proper and correct.

God Almighty, our Father, is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must understand the thrust of this article in our Apostles' Creed and, therefore, also of this Lord's Day (9) which explains it. Discussing Lord's Day 9 and the first article of the Apostles' Creed it would surely be an error to emphasize and dwell at length upon God's work of creation. Of course, it is well to understand that God is almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, that He, as the Heidelberg Catechism expresses it, of nothing made heaven and earth. However, the emphasis here does not fall upon the Lord's creation of the world. We may well bear in mind that the theory of evolution is relatively new and was simply unknown when these creeds, the Apostles' Creed and the Heidelberg Catechism, were composed. What receives the emphasis here is the Fatherhood of God. The emphasis does not fall upon creation here but upon the Creator. Our attention is called to creation because this creation reveals God to us, and it reveals God to us as our almighty Father. And let us understand: that the

creation reveals God to us as our almighty Father Who upholds all things and therefore also created all things according to His eternal counsel, is possible only as an object of faith. This is what we say in the first article: "I believe in God, the Father, etc." This confidence can never be the fruit merely of our natural understanding. We can never prove the divine Creator from creation itself. We can never prove, logically, the Godhead from the things that have been made. These attempts have been made. We need not discuss these theories now. They do have value, to be sure, but only to and for the Christian. How could the natural mind ever reach out to establish the divine Creator? How can the finite prove the Infinite? How can the creature prove the existence of God? The finite can never reach out to the Infinite; the creature must remain within the limits, confines, of the creature.

Besides, we surely cannot conclude from what we see and experience that God is our almighty Father, Who, according to His eternal counsel, provides us with all things necessary for soul and body and makes whatever evils He sends us in the valley of tears turn out to our advantage. Mind you, He sends us all this misery. So, in the midst of all this misery, all this sorrow and grief and death, God is our almighty Father Who always loves us, always provides us with every good thing, causes all things to work together for our good. He is leading us into everlasting and heavenly glory? But we cannot see this glory. All we see and can see is sorrow, misery, and death. God loves us, would have us live, and causes us to die? This is something we must believe, and faith here is surely the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen.

God is our Father. The fundamental idea of fatherhood is not love. The fundamental idea of fatherhood is that of origin, of begetting. That someone is my father means that I am of him, that he has begotten me.

God, now, is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here we must distinguish sharply. There are those who contend that the first article of the Apostles' Creed speaks only of the First Person of the Holy Trinity, that only the First Person is the Creator of heaven and earth, and that only the First Person is the Father of the believers, so that when we address "Our Father" in the Lord's Prayer, we are addressing the First Person of the Trinity only. This cannot be the meaning of the first article in the Apostles' Creed, and this cannot be the correct presentation of our confession in the ninth Lord's Day. Indeed, we must distinguish sharply. To be sure, the Scriptures speak of the Fatherhood of God in more than one sense. It speaks of a Fatherhood of God in relation to the eternal Son. It also speaks of a Fatherhood of God in relation to our Lord Jesus

Christ. It speaks furthermore of a Fatherhood of God with respect to creation. And it also finally speaks of a Fatherhood of God in relation to His people, the believers. And what is this distinction? The Fatherhood of God in relation to the eternal Son is a relationship between the first two Persons of the Trinity, the Father and the Son. And the Fatherhood of God in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ in His human nature, to creation, and to the believers is a Fatherhood of God as the Triune God. This is fundamental and very important. To avoid the evil of modernism, we must surely distinguish between the eternal Sonship of the Son of God and the sonship of the believers. The former is a relation within the Trinity itself; the latter is a relation of the Triune God to the creature outside of Him. The former is a relation between two Persons of the Trinity; the latter is a relation between the living God, as subsisting in three Persons, and the creature formed by His will and power. The former is an eternal relation; the latter is called into being in time. The former may be called a natural, necessary relation of God, the latter is rooted in God's sovereign counsel and will. Even when we quote passages from the Word of God, such as Psalm 2:7, "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten thee," we must be careful that we simply do not quote this passage as referring to the eternal generation of the Son. The late Rev. H. Hoeksema explains this very clearly in his explanation of this ninth Lord's Day in his *The Triple Knowledge*. There is a Fatherhood of God in relation to the eternal Son, and this refers to the eternal relation within the Trinity between the two Persons of the Father and the Son. But there is also a Fatherhood of God in relation to our Lord Jesus Christ, as in His human nature, and this is a Fatherhood of God as the Triune God.

Let us look a moment at Psalm 2:7. There are those who explain this text as referring to the eternal generation of the Son. Do we not read here: "The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten thee"? And although it is true that the Church has quoted this text in support of the eternal generation of the Son, and surely correctly, yet we must bear in mind that this text does not refer exclusively to the eternal generation of the Son; in fact, it does not even refer to this eternal generation in the first place.

We must call attention to the following. In the first place, we read here of the decree. We read: "I will declare the decree." So the Lord here declares His decree, His eternal counsel and will. It is according to His eternal decree that the Lord hath said unto Me: "Thou art My son; this day have I begotten thee." However, the eternal Son is God's eter-

nal Son, not by virtue of this decree, but because of the eternal generation of the Father within the Trinity. We may conclude immediately that this text does not refer exclusively, not even in the first place, to the eternal generation of the Son. Secondly, the text refers in the first place, not to Christ, but to David. This is surely the historical background of this word of God. What we read in the verses 1-3 refers, first of all, to David. And what we read in verse 6 surely refers to David. David is he who has been set by God upon God's holy hill of Zion. Nevertheless, in the third place, the text refers primarily to the Lord Jesus Christ. David is meant in this text only as a type. This is obvious from the psalm itself. How can Psalm 2 refer exclusively or even principally to David? Does verse 8 speak of something that was fulfilled by David? Does David receive the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession? How can the last verse: "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way . . ." be explained as being fulfilled in a mere man? Indeed, David is meant here only as a type. However, this is abundantly clear when you notice the New Testament passages in which the words of this psalm are quoted. There is probably no psalm quoted as often in the New Testament as Psalm 2. Notice what we read in Acts 4:24-28. In these words we have the prayer of the Church upon the release of the apostles by the Sanhedrin. Notice,

too, what we read in Acts 13:32-33, in the sermon Paul preached at Antioch in Pisidia on his first missionary journey. And now notice how Psalm 2 is quoted here. First, the reference is very clearly to our Lord Jesus Christ as according to His human nature. Do we not read in Acts 4:27 of "Thy holy child, Jesus"? These words surely refer to our Lord Jesus Christ according to His human nature. And in Acts 13:32-33 the words of Psalm 2:7 are quoted as fulfilled. It was then that God begat Him to be King forever upon and over Zion. The resurrection was the beginning of that exaltation which was finished when Christ was exalted in the right hand of God in glory. And the exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ was surely accomplished in Christ in His human nature.

So God, God Triune, is indeed the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has begotten Him, raised Him up from the dead, glorified Him at His own right hand. But Jesus suffered and died for all the sins of His own. God is, therefore, His Father and our Father, only for Jesus' sake. Of that Fatherhood of God, of Christ Jesus, and also of His own, this ninth Lord's Day speaks. And of this the first article of our Apostles' Creed also speaks: "I believe in God, the Father, our Father because He is Christ's Father." The Lord willing, we will continue with this in our following article.

## ALL AROUND US

Robert D. Decker

# Who's Fiddling?

The big issue facing the evangelical church today is that of Holy Scripture. Is the Bible the inspired, infallible Word of God before which all must bow in humble faith? Or is the Bible a collection of culturally conditioned, time-bound writings of men which may or may not be binding upon all peoples in every age and culture? Nowhere is this point more apparent than in the current discussion among evangelicals concerning the role of women in God's church. In order to find biblical justification for women serving in the offices of elder, deacon, or minister, one has to make the Bible say precisely what it does not say. One has to "fiddle"

with the Scriptures in order to make them teach that women may serve in church office. An illustration of this may be found in the October 3, 1986 issue of *Christianity Today*. Although the articles get into some rather technical details of hermeneutics and exegesis, we think the readers can follow them. Walter Kaiser Jr., a professor of Old Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, writes:

Like Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, many evangelicals support male authority in the church because "we've always done it that way." They have deferred to tradition rather than take Scripture at face value. As a result, great numbers of women have been unable to use their gifts in service to the church."

It ought to be noted at this point that the question involves women in church office. Women are forbidden to serve in church office. They are exhorted to use their gifts in service to the church in many other ways. Women are saved in childbearing. They may teach Sunday School classes or in the Christian Day Schools. They must teach their children and rule them too. Older women must teacher younger women in the church. Widows have a significant calling in the church, (cf. Epistle to Titus). But nowhere does Scripture allow women to serve in church office. Kaiser continues:

Where in Scripture have we fiddled with the meaning of the text? First, let's take I Corinthians 11:10: "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels." Since the days of the gnostic heretic Valentinus (d. A.D. 160), the church has incorrectly agreed with him on insisting that the "power" or "[active] authority" placed on the head of a woman by our Lord be revised to read a "veil," substituting the Coptic *ouershoun*, "veil," for the proper word *ouershishe*, "power, authority." Almost every modern translation perpetuates this gnostic myth in verse 11, saying, "a veil which is the sign of authority." However, God has given a unique sphere of authority to women; not a veil nor even a sign! This is straightforward exposition; all else is oral tradition.

The second text is I Corinthians 14:33b-36: "... women should remain silent in the churches . . . as the law says." Some are willing to risk Paul contradicting himself by forbidding women to do exactly what he had given permission for them to do in I Corinthians 11:5: "... every woman that prayeth or prophesieth . . ." This price is too high — just to maintain a traditional view of women.

But the heart of the passage is the Greek term *e*, which introduces I Corinthians 14:36. This particle startles us with its vivid forcefulness and its strong negative reaction. As J. H. Thayer pointed out in 1889 (*A Greek Lexicon*), *e* with the grave accent may appear "before a sentence contrary to the one preceding (it). . . ." Therefore, I Corinthians 14:36 is hardly a summation of verses 33b-35. Consequently Paul rejects the quotation of verses 33b-35, apparently cited from the Corinthian letter and rabbinic law: "What! Did the Word of God originate with you, or were you (men = masculine form) the only ones it has reached?"

What irony! The very text that has been used for centuries to silence women from joining in the worship of the church, Paul used to establish their equality.

One more sample of the fiddler's work must be raised for gentle admonition: I Timothy 2:9-15, where Paul says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man; she must be silent" (v. 12, NIV). The imperative verb, however, is in verse 11: "A woman must be taught . . ." The prohibitions cited in

verse 12 follow and are subordinate to it. But the problem is that few pause to listen for the reasons given in verses 13 and 14 where Paul tells us why he "would rather not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority." It is mainly because Eve had been tricked, deceived, and easily entrapped (v. 14).

But how could Eve so easily have been duped unless she previously had been untaught? Adam had walked and talked with God in the Garden during that sixth "day," thus he had had the educational and spiritual advantage of being "formed first" (v. 13). The verb is *plasso*, "to form, mold, shape" (presumably in spiritual education) not, "created first" (which in Greek is *ktizo*). Paul's argument, then, is based on the "orders of education," not the "orders of creation."

Thus, when the women have been taught, the conditions raised in the "because," or "for" clauses (vv. 13, 14) will have been met and the ban removed even as the Bible illustrates in the lives of Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, evangelist Philip's daughters, Phoebe, Priscilla, Junias, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, Euodia and Syntyche. Joel 2:28-29 bluntly tells us such a day was coming, and Psalm 68:11 enthuses, "The Lord gives the command; the women who proclaim the good tidings are a great host" (NASB) . . .

If Kaiser's exegesis of these passages is correct (and it is decidedly in error!), we have some questions. Why did not Jesus have a woman or two among the 12 disciples? Why was not at least one woman chosen to be an apostle or inspired to write a portion of the New Testament? Why does Paul in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus speak only of men serving as officebearers in the church? Why from the apostolic era to recent years (nearly 2000 years!) has the church not permitted women officebearers? Finally what does Kaiser's "fiddling" exegesis of these passages do to the truths of the perspicuity (clarity) of Holy Scripture and the priesthood of all believers restored to the church by the 16th century Reformation?

In the same issue of *Christianity Today* Bruce Waltke, professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia (Waltke holds two doctorates, in Greek from Harvard University and in Hebrew from Dallas Seminary) writes:

"First, *the sexes are equal* — both individually and interdependently — in bearing the image of God, in their standing before God, and in their spiritual gifts for service from God. God created man and woman in his image. Man's only words before his fall affirms his wife as equal and adequate to himself (Gen. 2:18, 23). All saints are children of God regardless of sexual, social, or economic differences (Gal. 3:26-29) . . . If women did not have equal spiritual gifts, there would be no issue.

Second, *husbands authoritatively lead* their wives both in the home, the micro-social unit, and in the



church, the macro-social unit . . . As Christ is the Head of his church, so the husband is the head of his wife (I Cor. 11:3) . . . Church government must be consistent with the government of the home, for if a woman had headship in the church (the higher institution), of necessity she would have headship in the home. Not surprisingly, the Old Testament (in contrast to other religions) did not provide for women to become priests who taught the Law. Likewise, Christ, who was a revolutionary for the equality of women as God's image, did not appoint women as apostles, and the apostles did not allow women to rule or teach men in the church.

In discussing how people ought to conduct themselves in God's *household* — the church of the living God — Paul does "not permit a woman to teach or have authority over the man; she must remain silent" (I Tim. 2:12), not for cultural reasons, but rather because of the unchanging order of creation, "for Adam was first formed, then Eve," and because of the historical order of the Fall. His instruction echoed his earlier ruling that "when you come together (I Cor. 14:26) . . . women should remain silent." (I Cor. 14:34f). (In I Cor. 11:5-16 Paul makes provision for women to pray and prophesy, but he is not expressly

speaking about either ruling or teaching when the church officially met.)

Third, *the model of servant portrays the manner of leadership*. Re-creation in Christ does not seek to remove social hierarchies but to redeem the tarnish of sin's subordinating drives . . . The Christian symbol of hierarchy is not the scepter but the cross. This model of government stands in stark contrast to that of the world, where men and women seek self-fulfillment and want to dominate. The Bible offers a better alternative . . .

Let us understand this is not just an example of a minor disagreement in hermeneutics and exegesis between two learned and competent scholars. The issue is Scripture itself and how we read and understand the Bible. Is the Bible God's Word and does that Word apply to us in our day and age? Does the Bible mean what it says on this issue of women? Of course it does.

Who's "fiddling" with the Biblical text? Certainly not Waltke and those of us who by grace believe that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God (II Tim. 3:16, 17).

## News From Our Churches

*Ben Wigger*

The congregation of our church in Hull, Iowa gets together to clean their church. According to the last bulletin, they even serve a noon lunch. It must be quite an event lasting all day.

All of our churches are getting into the society season. In the Grand Rapids area the beginning of each new season usually finds the different societies holding mass meetings with individuals or couples coming from their respective churches to one central location to enjoy each other's friendship and to hear a speaker address them on some interesting topic.

On October 7, the Eastern League of Men and Ladies Societies met in First Church in Grand Rapids. Prof. H. Hanko spoke on "The Benefits and Responsibilities of our Sister Church Relationships with other Churches."

And on October 14, the Mr. and Mrs. Societies and Adult Bible Classes met, again at First Church, to hear Rev. M. Joostens speak on "Dealing with Death and the Dying."

While reading the last issue of *Across the Aisle*, a publication from First Church in Grand Rapids, I

came across an interesting statistic. Someone in First Church raised the possibility that there may be more teachers attending First Church than any other in the denomination, and then they cited all the names of the teachers. I won't list those names here, but you might like to know that there are fourteen names on that list. If your church can beat that number, drop me a note, and the necessary correction will be made.

And as long as we are considering teachers, let me quote from an article written by Mr. Fred Hanko, a teacher at Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School in Walker, Michigan, who by the way is not a member of First Church. The article is entitled, *Every Year a New Challenge*: "The pleasure of teaching lies partly in the fact that we never arrive; we always have the feeling, 'Next time I can do it better.' I suppose there will always be some that have to be dragged kicking and screaming to the fountains of knowledge, but the teacher never becomes reconciled to that. Someday they will all learn willingly, even eagerly . . . we dream".

School is now about two months old, let us not forget our Christian school teachers; theirs is not an easy task.

After the evening service on September 21, the congregation of Southeast Church had a welcome

for Rev. Steve Key and family. One of the numbers in the program involved the Sunday School. The program was followed by a light lunch.

Doon Protestant Reformed Church also held a welcome for Rev. and Mrs. Dykstra and family the night of October 3 in the church basement. A meal was planned followed by a short program.

Our church in Pella, Iowa left vacant by the emeritation of Rev. Lanting has formed a trio of Rev. M. Joostens, Cand. C. Terpstra, and Rev. J. Slopsema, with Cand. Terpstra receiving the call.

Rev. J. Slopsema has also received the call from Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan.

The Evangelism Society of Southeast Church is happy to report that beginning on October 12 they will be airing their Sunday sermons over the radio on WFUR-AM 1570 at 6:00-7:00 P.M.

And the Evangelism Committee of South Holland also reports on correspondence they received from Jackson, Mississippi: "Some few days ago I bought a pamphlet entitled *A Defense of Calvinism as the Gospel* and it seems to me an excellent presentation about what Calvinism is. At the end of it I saw that you have other pamphlets in which I am deeply interested. Could you send them

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On November 7, 1986, our dear parents and grandparents, MR. & MRS. RICHARD POORTINGA, will celebrate 35 years of marriage. We, their children and grandchildren thank Jehovah God for giving them these years together.

We also thank our Heavenly Father for the constant love, guidance and covenant instruction that they have given us. Our prayer for them is that in the years to come they may continue to experience God's grace, mercy and love.

"Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations."

(Deuteronomy 7:9)

Bob and Jean Poortinga  
Carl, Steven, Jared, Chad  
Randy and Deb Poortinga  
Michael, Jennifer, Rebecca, Richard, Lisa  
Pete and Julie Zandstra  
Brenda, Laura, Sandra, Dale, Pamela, Joanna  
Ken Poortinga

Daryl and Sue

to me please? I am from Mexico and in my country there is a sad lack of Reformed materials. The Reformed faith is unknown there. I am interested in translating good Reformed books and pamphlets in order to spread them among the pastors . . . ."

Our congregations are singing congregations. This fact is very evident by the many churches in our denomination that hold regularly scheduled song services. From the many bulletins that are sent to me, it seems that most of our churches set aside at least one Sunday to sing. Most have these song services before the evening service on the last Sunday of the month. However, our church in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada holds theirs on Sunday night, well past their afternoon service.

And one final note from our Hudsonville Church. "Our societies have begun their meetings for this season. Attendance leaves something to be desired. Are we just too busy to attend? Are we not interested in a more intensive study of Scripture? Do we not enjoy fellowship of saints? Your attendance and contributions are essential."

### SYMPATHY RESOLUTION

The Ladies Aid Society of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church expresses its Christian sympathy to Mrs. Teni Poortinga and family on the death of her mother, MRS. BELINA HOOGHUIS, at the age of 92 years.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." (I Thess. 4:14)

Mr. Lou Regnerus, Pres.  
Mrs. S. Maatman, Sec'y.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 26, 1986, our dear parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. EDWARD R. BRUINSMA 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 for us.

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

Bill and Dorothy Witvoet	Lou Musich
Bill and Liane and 4 great-grandchildren	Daryl
Randy and Debbie and 1 great-grandson	Stevie
Ricky	Ed and Patty Bruinsma
Paul and Irene Pfau	Jeremy
Matt	Chad
Paula	Jared