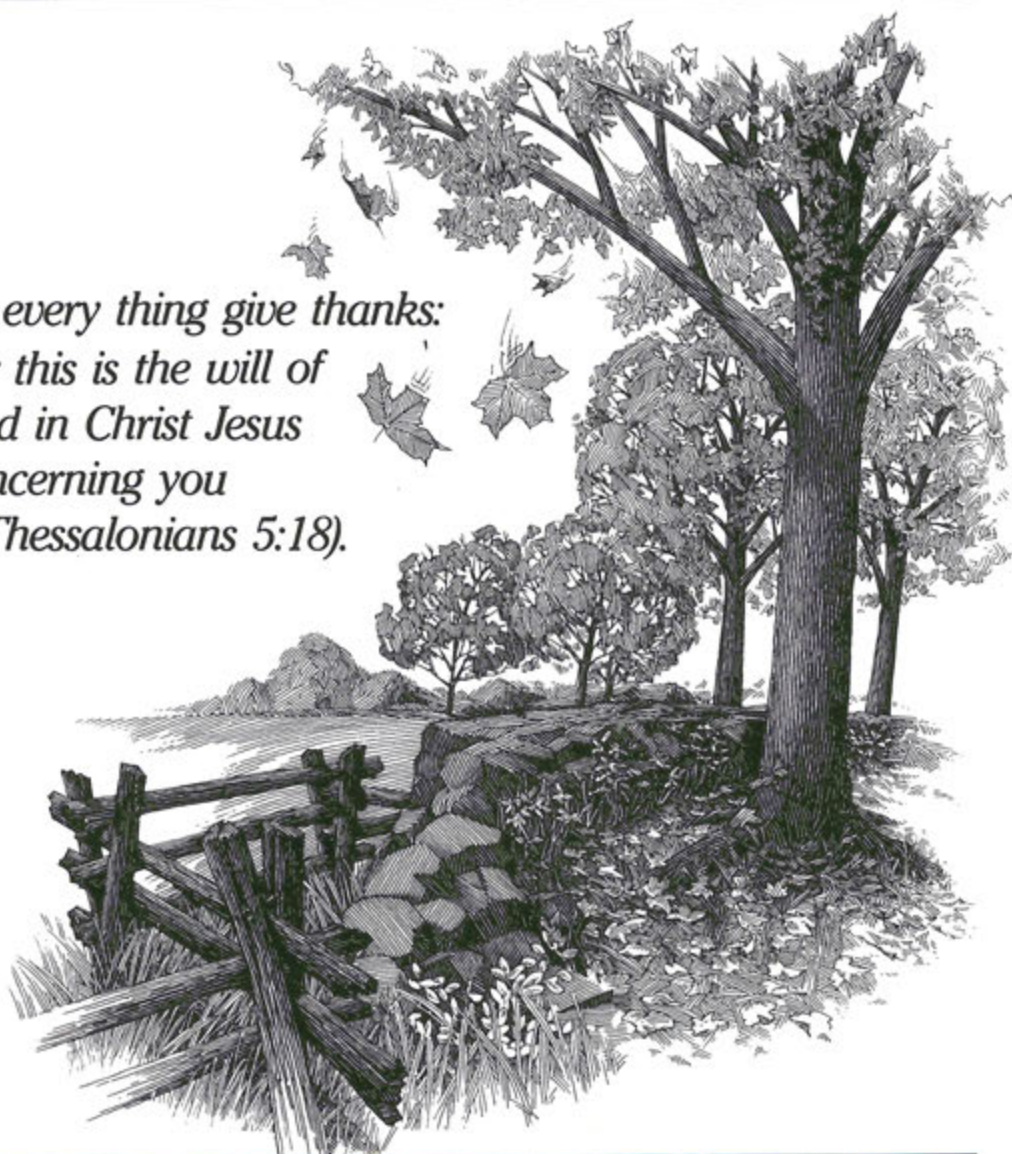


THE STANDARD BEARER

A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine

*In every thing give thanks:
for this is the will of
God in Christ Jesus
concerning you
(1 Thessalonians 5:18).*



Vol. 65, No. 4
November 15, 1988

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In This Issue . . .

Do you attend church regularly?

Or do you find it quite sufficient to attend church only once on the Lord's Day?

* * * * *

Do you take a great interest in the work of the church? Do you support her? Do you pray for her? Are you actively involved in the life of the church? Are you zealous about using your gifts to the praise of God and for the benefit and edification of the church of which you are a member?

Or are you so absorbed in your secular work that you have little time to be involved in the life and work of the church?

* * * * *

Do you have a high regard for the office-bearers whom God has ordained in the church to care for the souls of its members?

Or are you quick to criticize and slow to hear them?

* * * * *

If the church of which you are a member forsakes the truth of the Word of God, or tolerates evil practices clearly contrary to that Word, would you be willing, finally, to separate yourself from it and join yourself to a small, despised church?

* * * * *

Do you love the church?

(For a thought-provoking article dealing with our attitude toward the church, see Rev. denHartog's rubric, "In His Fear.")

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Meditation
Prof. Robert Decker

Giving Thanks in Everything

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

There are three great truths concerning thanksgiving taught in this little verse.

Thanksgiving is not to be limited to special occasions or to a special day. We are to be giving thanks in everything. Just as we are to rejoice evermore and to pray without ceasing, so we are to be giving thanks always.

Thanksgiving in everything also means thanksgiving for everything. Nothing lies outside the scope of our thanksgiving.

And precisely for this reason thanksgiving is possible only for believers. Giving thanks is a profoundly spiritual activity in faith. And, faith is God's gift.

In everything . . . give thanks!

This does not mean we give thanks for some things but not for others. We have a bad practice in this respect. We tend to divide our possessions and our circumstances into two groups: that which we call good, and that which we call bad! The good things are health, wealth, a good family, success. The bad things are sickness, grief, the disappointments of life. Then we give thanks for some things and some circumstances, but not for others. The text says we must give thanks in everything.

In everything! This does not mean that we give thanks for the good and patiently bear the bad. If this were the meaning, it would not be difficult to understand and believe the text. But the text says, "In everything give thanks!"

Of course, the Bible teaches that we must be patient in adversity and endure afflictions. But even this must be done with thanksgiving. The Christian is no Stoic who simply accepts whatever comes his way.

In the sphere of everything we are called to give thanks. We may not qualify this Word of God. We are not to put our limits on what God says here. The Lord means in every circumstance, in every experience, in every life situation, give thanks!

As churches we are to give thanks in everything. For the boundless blessings we enjoy as we gather in the communion of saints to hear the Good Shepherd through the preaching of the Word . . . give thanks. What a blessing that is! Lord's Day after Lord's Day we hear Jesus as He comforts, instructs, corrects, and encourages us. For the wonderful task of preaching the gospel on the mission fields . . . give thanks. For the privilege of witnessing beyond the four walls of our sanctuaries by means of radio and printed page and by our godly walk . . . give thanks. For being used by God for the gathering of His church out of the nations and for the coming of His Kingdom . . . give thanks. For pastors, elders, and deacons through whom Christ, the Chief Shepherd, cares for us . . . give thanks. For the freedom to worship unmolested and to educate our children in the fear of God . . . give thanks.

But this is not everything! When the text says "in everything," it means that should God take away our freedoms and send us persecution we must also then give thanks. There are thousands of saints in other lands who must worship in secret and who are put in prison merely for reading the Bible. To them the Lord says, "give thanks." Also when the great tribulation comes

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we shall be called to give thanks in everything. After all, to suffer together with Christ is also to be glorified together with Him!

The same applies to our lives as individuals! In everything give thanks! For our earthly life and all its gifts, our powers and talents, our health and employment, our abundance of food and drink, our peace and plenty, our homes and families, the rain and sunshine, the crops and harvest . . . in and for all these give thanks.

But our thanksgiving doesn't end there! This is not everything. Our earthly life is not all prosperity, joy, peace, and plenty. It's also a weary night of sin and death. The creation itself bears the curse of sin, and the creature is subject to vanity. Death pursues us relentlessly and casts its shadow over even our brightest moments! There is health, but also sickness. There are fruitful years, but also barren; peace, but also war. There is rain and sunshine, but also wind and storm. There are joys, but also sorrows!

In all these circumstances too, give thanks!

Impossible, you say? Indeed it is! For the unbeliever! No matter his life's circumstances — whether God sends him health or sickness, poverty or plenty, he cannot give thanks. His life consists of the abundance of the things he possesses. And all these are lost in death.

But can we who by grace believe on the Lord Jesus Christ give thanks in everything? Can we give thanks for sickness? When God takes the love of our life from our side can we give thanks?

Yes, we can! We can give thanks in everything because this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us. God willed us to be in Christ. God sent His Son to die on account of our sins and to be raised from the dead on account of our justification. By His Spirit we are born again with life from above. We are united to Christ by faith, God's gift. This is the gracious will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us!

Why? Because God wants a people, filled with His goodness, to acknowledge Him thankfully in everything!

Because that is God's will concerning us, He comes to us with this word, "In everything give thanks." This is possible only by the grace of God! It is possible only because everything is for our good and salvation. Nothing can be against us! God withholds no good thing from us. All things work together for our good. This is the will of God for us in Christ Jesus.

Really it all comes down to this: we have one thing for which to give thanks, our salvation by grace in Christ Jesus.

But, this one thing is everything!

Regardless, then, of our circumstances . . . no matter what the Lord in His wisdom and grace sends us, we say, "Thanks, Lord! Thanks for everything. Thou art good!" Joyfully, full of hope, in the confidence of faith, we live new, holy lives of thanksgiving to God's praise. In everything!

One day soon we will be giving thanks in everything in glory! That will be glory, indeed! □

Editorially Speaking . . .

■ We like to have the young people read our magazine; and we like to have college and university students take into account in their education what *The Standard Bearer* has to say. Besides, we know from experience the proverbial poverty of the college student. Therefore, we are offering to send *The SB*, with our compliments, to those college and university students who are living away from home (we trust that those living at home are reading their parents'

copy). Students, send us your address in care of the Business Manager, P.O. Box 6064, Grand Rapids, MI 49516. Or the parents might see to it.

■ By the time this issue appears, the political elections in the United States will have been conducted; and most of the readers of this magazine will have a new president-elect, as well as other office-holders. We have planned a special issue of *The Standard Bearer* for December 1 on the Reformed

view of civil government, including the relationship of church and Christian citizen and the State. Regardless of the outcome of the election, whether a Democratic or Republican "victory," these truths stand fast: Our God sovereignly raises up the rulers as part of His ordaining of government; and the calling of the Reformed Christian is to submit to the rulers for conscience sake. □

-DJE

Well-Grounded Thanksgiving

A national Day of Thanksgiving notwithstanding, giving thanks is not everybody's business. Not even giving thanks for food, freedom, and family is everybody's business. For this intensely spiritual (and rare!) activity, sound doctrine is necessary. The ground from which thanksgiving grows is not a fertile field of wheat, but a heart plowed, cultivated, and watered by the Holy Spirit with the Word of God. Many a farmer in the United States whose acreage and livestock produced abundantly this past season will miserably fail to give thanks to God next week (as many a Canadian counterpart failed to do last month), while some whose fig trees did not blossom, whose vines were fruitless, whose fields were barren, and whose flocks diminished rejoice in the Lord God.

Thanksgiving — precious fruit to God of His own labor of salvation! — depends squarely upon good, solid, Reformed doctrine.

None gives thanks to the true God except the man or woman who believes creation. "The earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof" (Psalm 24:1). Rain and sunshine, food and drink, health and job, marriage and government are creatures of

God, made and upheld by the triune God, as the Belgic Confession says, "for the service of mankind." The Creator deserves thanks for our use and enjoyment of His bounties. Denying creation, the evolutionist has no reason to give thanks, and no God to thank; for him, Thanksgiving Day is a day for self-congratulation, or a day to keep his fingers crossed. No small part of the iniquity of those in Reformed churches presently gutting the (Biblical) truth of creation is their destruction of the Reformed life of thankfulness with regard to earthly things.

The truth of creation promotes thanksgiving by enabling the believer freely to use and wholeheartedly to enjoy "the earth and its fulness." The various elements of earthly life in this world, as creatures of God — beef, wine, music — are good, not evil; the getting and enjoying of them — work, business, money, eating, attending the concert — are lawful, not illicit; the ordinances of human life — marriage, family, labor, government, are to be received by the Christian, not shunned. A thankful use and enjoyment of all things earthly is the rule for the Christian life, not abstinence for them, in which case, of course, there could be no thanksgiving for them.

The error of a gloomy renunciation of earthly things and "fleshly" pleasures, parading itself as superior holiness, has plagued the church down the ages. The apostles had to contend with it, as is evident in I Timothy 4:1ff.: "... seducing spirits ... forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused" The early church fell into it, regarding marriage with suspicion and disdain and extolling the virtue of the ascetic life of the monk. Always there is found in the church the mentality that is fearful of the enjoyments of earthly life; that nervously calls the membership to abstain; and that condemns those who eat and drink as gluttons and winebibbers. Luther resisted this error; and he did so on the basis of the doctrine of creation:

If our Lord is permitted to create nice, large pike and good Rhine wine, presumably I may be allowed to eat and drink. Similarly, Calvin, foe of all intemperance and champion of self-discipline that he was, refused to honor austerity as the Reformed way of life:

If a man begins to doubt whether he may use linen for sheets, shirts, handkerchiefs, and napkins, he will afterward be uncertain also about hemp; finally, doubt will even arise over tow. For he will turn over in his mind whether he can sup without napkins, or go without a handkerchief. If any man should consider daintier food unlawful, in the end he will not be at peace before God, when he eats either black bread or common victuals, while it occurs to him that he could sustain his body on even coarser foods. If he boggles at sweet wine, he will not with clear conscience drink even flat wine, and finally he will not dare touch water if sweeter and cleaner than other water . . .” (Institutes, III, XIX, 7, Battles edition).

No minor matter, this! The error, Paul damns as a “doctrine of devils” (I Tim. 4:1). Teaching the truth that “every creature of God is good” is the mark of a good minister of Jesus Christ (I Tim. 4:6). Reformed preachers do well to put the brothers and sisters in remembrance of this truth on Thanksgiving Day. In so many respects, the doctrine of creation is fundamental to the Christian’s faith and life.

But the fall of man into sin may not be ignored! Thanksgiving is grounded also in the doctrine of the fall. Believing the fall, a man lives in the consciousness of his complete unworthiness to receive any good thing of the Lord, whether political freedom, or health, or his next breath of air. Receiving these things, though in the barest amount necessary to sustain life, he is grateful. Nothing is more destructive to thanksgiving than the popular, but profane, notion that men and women have a right to the earth and its fulness. Lacking anything, they are resentful; possessing everything in abundance, they are arrogant; never are they thankful.

The sinner’s right to this earth is precisely the same as his right to heaven: the grace of God in

the blood of Jesus Christ. Basic to thanksgiving — thanksgiving for earthly necessities and physical comforts — is the doctrine of redemption. The atoning death of the Son of God gives me the right, through faith, to a slice of bread (indeed, to the universe), as it gives me the right to the Bread of life eternal. The unbeliever has no right to any of God’s creatures. When he eats and drinks, soaks up the sunshine, avails himself of the protection of the State, or embraces a wife, he is a thief, stealing the goods of the Owner of all — the Creator-God. Redemption brings the believer his daily bread with God’s blessing, so that he can eat and drink in good conscience before God. Without this blessing, not even God’s gifts can profit a man, as the Heidelberg Catechism puts it in Question 125.

Creation, the fall, redemption — in these great truths embraced with a believing heart is gratitude rooted. From these doctrines the afflicted saints take courage to join in the giving of thanks. Not all Christians observe Thanksgiving Day in circumstances of prosperity. The past summer brought drought to many parts of the United States and Canada. This has meant disappointment and hardship to Christian farmers and their families; not only rain and sunshine, but also floods and droughts come to believer and unbeliever alike. Farmers who began this spring by calling upon God at the Prayer Day service have lost their investment in seed and cattle; their labor has been fruitless; their payments on land and machinery continue. Other men have lost their job, through no fault of their own, or have seen their business collapse. The burden of debt and of supporting the family weigh heavily on the man; his wife struggles to make ends meet.

Can they unite their hearts with the church at the Thanksgiving Day service to pray, “Father, we thank Thee for harvests and wages and return on our investments”? Can they lift up their voices to sing, “Give thanks to God for good is He/ His grace abideth ever/ Each creature’s need He doth supply/ His grace abideth ever”? If thanksgiving has its wellspring in an abundance of earthly things, they cannot. But because thanksgiving wells from hearts that believe that the Creator governs all that befalls them (for creation implies providence) and that He rules their life in the love that gave Jesus for them, so that drought as well as rain, poverty as well as riches, adversity as well as prosperity come to the people of God by the Fatherly hand for their good — because distressed saints believe this, they can give thanks.

Thanksgiving takes form in prayer and song.

Genuine thanksgiving will be the living of a life: no gluttony, no drunkenness, no immoderate use of the earth, certainly no idolizing of the creatures, whether field, or factory, or family; but devotion of our things and selves to the glory of God, “Who giveth us rightly all things to enjoy” (I Tim. 6:17). One specially important aspect of this devotion to God will be the use of our goods to help the poor. The deacons play a vital role in the thanksgiving of the church.

“It is a beastly way of eating,” Calvin wrote in his commentary on I Timothy 4:5, “when we sit down at table without any prayer, and, when we have eaten to the full, depart in utter forgetfulness of God.”

Thanks be to God for the doctrine that delivers us from such “beastly” eating, and such “beastly” living! □ -DJE

The Distinctive Traits of True Godliness: Love for the Church

In His Fear
Rev. Arie denHartog

Many professing Christians today would not count love for the church as one of the distinctive marks of true godliness. Many such professing Christians are not even members of the church. Others who have their names on the membership roles of some church seldom if ever have much to do with the church. They have little concern with what the church is doing. They attend the worship services of the church only irregularly, if at all. Yet they imagine themselves to be devout and serious Christians. Still others, though they attend church quite regularly, really care very little for her. They reveal very little love for the church. Many of the above described people will seek to justify their lack of love and concern for the church. They severely criticize the church. The church is full of hypocrites. The church is a dead institution. She does not minister to the needs of man. She is not relevant to our modern society. She does not address herself to the pressing

social problems of our age and busy herself with seeking to solve them. Many of these critics satisfy themselves by belonging to what is vaguely called the body of Christ. They say there is no need for a formal institution called the church and for formal membership in her. All Christians are members of the body of Christ. That is sufficient. Maybe we can gather together in small groups for Bible study and fellowship. More than that we do not need. All this reasoning however is defective. It does not square with the clear teaching of the Word of God.

The truth of the holy catholic church is clearly taught in the Scriptures. It is true that the church is more than merely a human and earthly institution. She is greater than the local church found in a city and on a street. She is in her spiritual essence the glorious and beautiful body of Christ. Yet the truth of the church as a living spiritual organism may not be separated from the truth of the church as a divine institution. God Himself willed that the church be gathered and established in the world and be governed by definite office-bearers in a local institution. Our Lord sent out His apostles and their helpers to

establish institute churches in every city. The New Testament simply assumes that every Christian is a member of the church as institute. Many of the letters of the apostles were written to local institute churches. According to the purpose of God, His church is gathered and preserved throughout the world in the institute church. The Heidelberg Catechism has one of its most beautiful articles expounding the doctrine of the church. It speaks of the meaning of one of the articles of Apostles' Creed, the confession of the church of all ages.

What believest thou concerning the holy catholic church of Christ? That the Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends and preserves to Himself by His Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith; and that I am and forever shall remain, a living member thereof.

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 21

The Belgic Confession, in article 28, states concerning the church "that no person of whatsoever state or condition he be, ought to withdraw himself, to live in separate state from it; but all men are duty bound to join and unite themselves with it." This is clearly the teaching of God's Word. God's Word knows nothing of a Christian who lives

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independent from the church. The godly men and women of the Bible all loved the church of God.

We are to love the church because the church is God's. God has chosen her from before the foundations of the world. He Himself has set His love upon her. He has determined her everlasting salvation and glory. His purpose of salvation is greater and more glorious than merely that of saving a number of individuals who live here and there in the world and who are unrelated and independent one from another. His glorious purpose of salvation is to redeem a church unto Himself for His glory and to save His people as members of that church. We are to love the church because she is the bride of Christ. He gave His life to redeem her. He gathers and defends and preserves her. He counts her precious in His sight. He delights to dwell in her midst. He has given His blessed Word of salvation to her and made her to be the pillar and ground of the truth. Words would fail to describe the glory and blessedness of the church of Jesus Christ. It is a sad day when so few of God's people know of the glory and blessedness of the church and so many have little love and regard for her.

It is proper to say that the church has existed from the beginning of the world. The church was already present in the old dispensation. Her form then was different from what it is today. She was identified with the nation of Israel. She was limited by the types and shadows of those days. Her glory was not yet fully manifest at that time. She went by the names Jerusalem, city of God, temple of God, Mt. Zion. David, the man after God's own heart, loved the church as few men ever have.

How often in the Psalms he speaks of love for the church. It is evident that fervent love for the church was one of the predominant characteristics of the inspired Psalm writers. Think of such Psalms at 48, 84, 87, 122, 132, and many more. We could quote at length from these Psalms to show how they speak of love for the church. Christians of the New Testament age may and ought to sing those Psalms, with the understanding that the Psalms speak of the church as she is also in the new dispensation.

Love for the church does not of course mean love for any local manifestation of the church. It does not mean love for any and all institutions that in the world call themselves church. There are "churches" that are false and that are not worthy of the name church. Apostate churches are not to be loved at all. God's people in those churches are by God's Word called to come out of them and be separate from them. The false church that preaches false doctrine and tolerates all manner of ungodliness in her midst is an abomination in God's sight. We must not be deceived by her apparent glory, her stately buildings and cathedrals, her large numbers, and her great boastings. All of that means nothing. We must love the true church of God known by the threefold marks of the pure preaching of the Word, the proper administration of the sacraments of the Lord, and the faithful exercise of Christian discipline. Love for that true church of God moved the great Reformers of the Protestant Reformation to separate from the apostate church of Rome in order to form the church anew. That was possible exactly because the church of Jesus Christ is not bound up with one institution in the world. Christians today who

love the church must be spiritual followers of the Reformers. If they find that the church to which they belong has turned from the Lord and is preaching false doctrine or tolerating evil practices in her midst clearly contrary to the Word of God, they must separate themselves from such churches and join the true church where the threefold marks are found. And if that church cannot after diligent searching be found, they must join together with brethren of like precious faith and form the church anew. Such action may involve large sacrifices and may involve leaving the church of our ancestors. It may involve leaving a large and prestigious church to join a small and despised one. This is love for the church.

Love for the church means that we love her for the truth that she stands for and preaches. It means that we love her for the great task she is called to perform in the world, the glorious work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the preaching of the gospel and the extension of His kingdom in the earth. We love the church when we join her and are actively involved in her life and work. It means that we take great interest in her work, support her, pray for her, and make financial sacrifices to help maintain her and promote the task which the Lord has given to her. Love for her means that we seek her unity in the faith and doctrine of the Lord and promote her peace and prosperity. In order to maintain that church in the midst of this wicked and sinful world the saints of God must contend together for the faith. They must strive for the truth of the gospel in her midst. When men tolerate all sorts of false doctrine and evil practices in the church this must not be taken to be evidence of love for the church. Such toleration will only bring about the

destruction of the church and bring the displeasure and wrath of God upon her. Love for the church means that the saints of God stand steadfastly together to maintain the truth even if that means that the ungodly in the church are offended and leave the church. True love for the church requires this.

Love for the church means that we have a high regard for the office-bearers that God Himself has ordained in the church to preserve and keep her and to care for the souls of the members of the church.

Love for the church certainly means that the Christian is faithful in attendance of the worship services held by the church. God calls His people to come together on the Lord's Day. He is

pleased by His Word and Spirit to dwell in the midst of His saints gathered in the church. He is praised and exalted by the worship of His saints. The true Christian is not and may not be satisfied with only private and family worship, as important as these are in themselves. He feels constrained to gather with fellow saints to sing the praises of God and hear the Word of God, to confess His name, and to bring offerings before Him. Those who find it sufficient to attend church only once on the Lord's Day are lacking both in proper understanding of the purpose of the Lord's Day and in love for the church.

Love for the church implies being actively involved in the whole of her life and ministry. God has given gifts to every one

of His saints. Those gifts must be used in the midst of the communion of the saints and for the benefit and edification of the whole church. God's people must be zealous to use their gifts to the praise and glory of God in the midst of the church. To do this God's people have to be willing to make large sacrifices. They must not make themselves so busy with their secular occupation that they can find no time to be involved in the life and work of the church during the week. This is a sin against love for the church and will inevitably make God's people carnal and worldly-minded. We do well to examine our own lives constantly to consider whether we are walking in love for the church of Jesus Christ. □

Decency and Order

Rev. Ronald Cammenga

Novices

"Preachers without fixed charge, or others who have left some sect, shall not be admitted to the ministry of the church until they have been declared eligible, after careful examination, by the classis with the approval of synod." *Church Order*, Article 9. **BACKGROUND TO ARTICLE 9**

The original Article 9 is quite different from its present form in our *Church Order*. The original article read:

Rev. Cammenga is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Loveland, Colorado.

Novices, priests, monks, and others who have left some sect, shall not be admitted to the service (ministry) of the church, except with great carefulness and caution, and after a definite period of probation.

Our present article, a result of the revision of the *Church Order* by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of 1914, has dropped the reference to "novices, priests, and monks" and in its place has inserted the phrase "Preachers without fixed charge." The revised article requires a classical examination and approval by the synod, whereas the original article simply

required that "great carefulness and caution" be exercised.

The revision of 1914 has departed from the spirit of the original article in at least two instances. First, the revision has dropped any reference to "novices." This really is the heart of the article. Article 9 is a warning against ordaining novices. A novice is a recent convert to the Reformed faith. The main thought of the original article is: "Novices . . . shall not be admitted to the service of the church, except with great carefulness and caution, and after a definite period of probation."

Secondly, whereas the revision of 1914 makes the application of the article only to those who seek the office of the ministry, the original article was broader and had application to all the offices in the church. The original article warned against the admittance of novices "to the service of the church" generally, that is, to all the offices of the church, elder and deacon as well as minister.

Article 9 is closely connected to Article 8 of the *Church Order*. The purpose of Article 8 was to insure that only those who are adequately qualified be admitted to the office of the ministry. Reformed churches have always insisted that ministers be trained and educated. They also insist that candidates give evidence of their qualifications by submitting to a thorough examination. Just for this reason, Article 9 goes on to warn the churches against ordaining novices. The article fences the office of the ministry in the Reformed churches, and by implication the other offices as well. It fences the offices especially against enthusiasts who come to the Reformed faith from outside who desire, for one reason or another, a place in the office of the ministry.

THE HISTORY BEHIND ARTICLE 9

The restriction of Article 9 became necessary after the Reformed churches became established and recognized by the government. At this time many flooded into the Reformed churches who did not any longer have to fear persecution or reprisal. At the same time, many former priests and monks who had served in the Roman Catholic Church sought a place in the ministry of the Reformed churches.

Early on it became evident that many who sought office in the Reformed churches were insincere, poorly trained, seeking only economic advancement, or overly enthusiastic. Decisions were soon taken to protect the churches from these "novices." The Synod of Dordt, 1574, already decided: "Those former monks or Papists who desire to proceed to ministry in the churches, shall not be permitted except they be examined by the Classis." This became the basis for the incorporation of this article in the *Church Order* by the Synod of Dordt, 1618-'19.

ARTICLE 9 CONCERNS "NOVICES"

By novices the original article referred to those who were newly converted to the Reformed faith. The term is derived from I Timothy 3:6 where, in connection with the qualifications for elders, the Apostle says, "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." Here "novice" refers to a convert from heathenism to the Christian faith. The meaning in the *Church Order* is slightly different — a recent convert to the Reformed faith.

The article forbids the ordination to office in the Reformed churches of those who are novices. The novice knows but little of the life and doctrine of the Reformed church. He is inexperienced and unproved. Rather than to be placed in a teaching position, he himself is in need of further instruction.

There are not only dangers for the church in ordaining a novice, but dangers for the man himself. Given man's sinful nature, such an action could easily result in the man's being lifted up in pride, and so fall into the condemnation of the devil (I Timothy 3:6). This regulation not only has the good of the church in view, but also the good of the novice.

Besides the passage in I Timothy 3:6, there are other Scriptures that apply. In I Timothy 3:10 the apostle Paul insists that before a man is appointed to church office he must be proved. In I Timothy 5:22 the Apostle warns Timothy, "Lay hands suddenly on no man." This is just another way of saying, "Don't quickly ordain a man to office."

THREE TYPES OF NOVICES

The original article specifically mentions three types of novices: "priests, monks, and those who have left some sect."

Priests were those who actually did hold office in the Roman Catholic Church. With great care and only after a period of testing were former priests to be permitted to hold office in the Reformed churches. It is worth noting, by the way, that the Reformed churches did recognize the office of the priests in the Roman Catholic Church. Reordination in the case of priests was not insisted upon, but only installation to office if a former priest were granted a place in the ministry in the Reformed churches. The Reformers themselves had, for the most part, been ordained in the Roman Catholic Church, and after their withdrawal from Rome continued as officebearers.

The case of the monks was different. In the Roman Catholic Church the monks belong neither to the clergy nor to the laity, but form really a third class of members of the church. They were a special class of men who bound themselves by certain ascetic vows and who often dedicated themselves to special types of service in the church. Monks were not ordained to office by Rome, and consequently were not recognized either by the Reformed churches.

There were also those “who have left some sect.” By this phrase the original article had in mind especially former Anabaptists. The word “sect” is used in the article less technically than we use it today. By a sect we refer to a religious group that has no connection to mainstream Christianity and that denies the fundamentals of the Christian faith, such as the trinity and the deity of Christ. “Sect” is used in the article of any group that is neither a part of the Roman Catholic Church nor of the Reformed churches. This applied particularly to the various groups of Anabaptists. In many instances, Anabaptist preachers were self-appointed and unordained. These the Reformed churches, for the most part, did not recognize as lawful office-bearers.

PREACHERS WITHOUT FIXED CHARGE

The present article has been revised so that it refers now to “preachers without fixed charge.” This phrase refers to ministers not of our Protestant Reformed Churches, but some other denomination, who for one reason or another have severed their relationship with their former denomination and who seek the ministry in our denomination. In the past this article was applied to ministers who came to America from the Reformed churches of the Netherlands.

The procedure that this article calls for is the examination of such applicants for the ministry by the Classis. The Classis must conduct a “colloquium doctum,” that is, a theological discussion. This will be an examination of

the applicant’s knowledge of the Reformed faith, qualifications for the ministry, and personal godliness. The guidelines for the “colloquium doctum” would be the examination of candidates outlined in Article 4. The delegates *ad examina* must be present at this examination.

Following the “colloquium doctum” conducted by the classis, the applicant’s request must also be approved by the Synod. The applicant would then be declared eligible for a call from one of our churches.

The original article called for a period of proving which, although not specifically mentioned in our present article, might still be decided advantageous by the Synod. This period of proving might also include some work done at our Seminary. □

Walking in the Light

Prof. Herman Hanko

Homosexuality (2)

Some who have come to the defense of current views on homosexuality have made use of a distinction which we must consider in this article.

The distinction is between the actual act of homosexuality and the *tendency* towards homosexual behavior. The former is the actual engaging in homosexual behavior; the latter is an inborn

tendency towards homosexual behavior which does not necessarily result in performing homosexual acts.

The distinction is very common.

John R.W. Stott calls attention to this distinction in an article in the November 22, 1985 issue of *Christianity Today*. He writes:

Second, we distinguish between homosexual orientation or “inversion” (for which people are not responsible) and homosexual practices (for which they are). The importance of this distinction goes beyond

the attribution of responsibility to the attribution of guilt. We may not blame people for what they are, though we may for what they do. In every discussion of homosexuality we must be rigorous in differentiating between “being” and “doing” — that is, between a person’s identity and activity, sexual preference and sexual practice, constitution and conduct.

In *Clarion* Rev. J. Geertsema refers to a book by Dr. J. Douma entitled *Homofilie* in which the same distinction is made. Rev. Geertsema writes:

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Now it is also known among those who sincerely confess the name of Christ some have had to cope with a homosexual inclination, even until the end of their lives . . . Just as one can find kleptomania (the urge to steal) among Christians, so one can have people who feel attracted to a person of the same gender. We must not condemn those with a physical and/or mental problem. They need helping support in their struggle against sin; in their struggle to overcome in the way of faith. Let us not forget that many have to carry a burden and struggle with it — just as the lack of a partner can be a burden for a heterosexual single, for a widow or widower, or for someone who has to cope with a broken marriage. The burden may be different, but each has to bear his/her own and to struggle the struggle of faith; and they need helping support.

Referring to the same book, Rev. W. Pouwelse, in another issue of *Clarion* writes:

Prof. Dr. J. Douma, professor in ethics at the Theological College of the Reformed Churches in Kampen, The Netherlands, gives the following definition: Homophilia is the condition in which people do not have the natural sexual desire but are largely or solely attracted to people of their own sex. Homosexuality is a sexual activity in which sexual acts with people of the same sex take place.

This definition shows that there is not only a distinction, but even a principal difference between the two. The difference can be as great as the difference between fighting against sin or giving in to sin.

In an article which appeals very strongly to the emotions, *Christianity Today* (August 9, 1985) speaks of a young girl who faced the struggle with homosexual tendencies.

From all outward appearance, Mary (not her real name) is an evangelical Christian. She was reared in a fundamentalist tradition, and holds a degree from a respected evangelical college. Mary believes in the Trinity and acknowledges without reservation that Jesus Christ

is the only Savior and Lord. She believes that all people are fallen and can be saved only through God's grace. She believes the Bible is God's Word and that Christians should strive to understand and obey it. She studies Scripture and prays regularly.

But unlike most other young Christian women, for as long as Mary can remember, she has had a sexual interest only in other women. Mary has hated herself for most of her life. "I don't want to be gay," she says, "not because it's terrible, but because of the discrimination we have to endure. If I knew how to change, I would. I have prayed about it. I've sought counseling; people have tried to cast demons out of me.

"God has helped me to see that I'm okay. I can't believe he wants me to feel the pain and confusion that comes from thinking homosexuality is a horrible sin," she says. "I realize the Bible teaches that homosexuality is wrong, and I don't take that lightly. Nobody wants to live in sin. But I'm prepared to accept judgment for how I am living. I've gone to God so many times and pleaded with him to take it away. I don't know what else I can do."

This distinction between a homosexual "tendency" and an overt act of homosexuality brings up another interesting question: If a homosexual tendency is indeed something with which some people are troubled, what is the origin of it? How does one explain that some people have this tendency and others do not? Where does the tendency come from?

To this question various answers have been given.

At one time homosexual tendencies were considered an illness — although a "mental disease." But in 1973 The American Psychiatric Association voted to remove homosexuality from the category of mental illnesses, and one does not hear very much of that idea any longer.

Now the great controversy is over the question whether a

homosexual is such because of genetics or because of environmental factors; that is, whether one is born with this tendency or whether it is "learned behavior." John Jefferson Davis writes in his book *Evangelical Ethics* (pp. 110, 111):

The question of the causes of homosexuality is hotly debated in research circles. It has been suggested that some persons are predisposed toward homosexuality by genetic and chromosomal factors for which they can be assigned no personal responsibility . . .

Imbalances in the sex hormones have also been suggested as a possible cause for or contributing factor to homosexual behavior . . .

After citing tests which tend to disprove this, Davis writes:

The clear implication of these results is that sexual preference is predominantly a socially learned response, not an orientation fixed from the outset by genetic or hormonal factors . . .

Family psychopathology has often been suggested as a possible cause of homosexuality. There is some evidence to suggest that the combination of a domineering mother and a father who is detached or hostile can contribute to this condition. It should be noted, however, that evidence does not appear to indicate that such a constellation of factors is either a necessary or sufficient condition for the genesis of homosexual behavior. Some homosexuals do not have such family backgrounds, and persons with such family pathologies do not necessarily develop homosexual tendencies . . .

One can say, from a biblical perspective, that the genesis of homosexuality is not a matter of "nature" to the exclusion of "nurture," or vice-versa, but rather a combination of both. Man brings a fallen human nature into a social environment that itself bears the marks of sin, and homosexuality is one of the distortions that can result from that interaction. The Bible has no illusions about the perfection of either human nature or the social environment, but it does hold man morally responsible for the way he interacts with his world.

It is quite obvious from all that we quoted above that if genetic and/or environmental factors explain the homosexual tendency in some people, then, on the one hand, those who have such tendencies are not responsible for their conduct; and, on the other hand, such homosexual tendencies can never be changed. Davis speaks of current views on this matter:

Regarding treatment of homosexuality, it is sometimes argued that such sexual orientations are innate and not subject to change.

This is understandable. If homosexual tendencies are innate, they are to be explained no differently than the blue eyes which one baby has and the brown eyes which another has. A person cannot help having these tendencies any more than he can help having the facial features of his father.

But the question is: Is this the teaching of Scripture? Surely such a view removes all personal responsibility from an individual. He is born a homosexual. That is all there is about it. He cannot help it. He is just made that way. Nothing anyone does is going to change it. But then too one cannot blame him for being that way.

Scripture teaches something quite different. □

Bible Study Guide

Rev. Jason Kortering

Judges — Jehovah Delivers His Unworthy People (2)

We concluded in the previous article that God chastised His people through the heathen whom Israel had failed to exterminate as commanded by God. As soon as they were thus disciplined, Israel repented and returned unto Jehovah. We should observe that this took place repeatedly, and that it is for this reason that we speak of the cycle of the judges. Prior to the appearance of each of the judges there was a time of prosperity in which Israel had peace and all went well. This changed as Israel forgot God and turned to idols, usually under the influence of the heathen around them.

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This tells us something, namely, that material prosperity is spiritually dangerous. It is during such times that we with Israel are most inclined to turn to idols and forget God. When Israel did this, God moved one of the heathen nations to war upon Israel, to trouble them in some manner. This went on for years and usually brought great hardship.

This too is the working of God throughout history. His hand of discipline is used to correct the church. For, when they suffered, they were forced to examine their lives and ask, "Why, what is wrong?" They learned then to see their sin and to repent from their sin and to cry to Jehovah for deliverance. This, then, becomes typical of the cry of the church for Jehovah's mercy in Jesus Christ, the Deliverer. God would raise up a judge either to drive away their enemy or to

free Israel from the burden of oppression. This took place through the personal intervention of the judge. After such deliverance, the land would be at peace once more, and, since there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in his own eyes, the people sooner or later reverted back to idolatry and the entire cycle would be repeated.

Such a situation could only come to an end when the theocracy was established typically in David and Solomon, types of our Lord Jesus Christ. Associated with such is the institution of the prophetic office and the speech of God to His people. While we deal with this history, we do well to search our hearts to learn the lesson of heartfelt repentance and sincere desire to serve God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has overcome sin and death for us. There is

both warning and comfort for us in this history.

A BRIEF OUTLINE

The book of Judges can be divided into three main sections. The first deals with introductory material (1:1-3:6); the second gives details on each of the judges (3:7-16:31); and the final section is an appendix which cites two examples of the terrible evil which existed during this period (17:1-21:25).

1. The first section presents introductory information (1:1-3:6). After the death of Joshua, the children of Israel inquired of the Lord who should be the first to fight the Canaanites that still resided in the portion of land that each had received by lot (1:1). The Lord instructed Judah to be first, which in turn asked Simeon to help (1:2, 3). They fought the Canaanites and Perizzites especially at Bezek. The king, Adonibezek, was captured. After they cut off his thumbs and great toes, they took him to Jerusalem where he died (1:4-7). Jerusalem was also smitten and burned, though the Jebusites remained (1:8, 21).

Next Judah turned to the mountains, the southlands, and valleys and conquered the enemies there. This included Hebron (formerly Kirjatharba), Debir, and Kirjathsepher. In connection with the last-named city, Caleb offered his daughter as wife to the captain who would conquer it. Othniel, son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took the city and he received Achsah for wife. She received from her father land as well as springs of water (1:9-15). The Kenites, children of Moses' father-in-law, decided to live in the wilderness south of Arad (1:16). Judah joined Simeon and fought Zephath, also called Hormah (1:17). After this they went into Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron and conquered them,

though they could not clear the valleys, since the inhabitants had chariots of iron (1:18, 19). Hebron was given to Caleb as Moses promised (1:20).

The house of Joseph smote Bethel (formerly Luz). The spies offered mercy to a man coming out of the city, if he would show them the entrance. He did and he and his family were let go, while the entire city was slaughtered. In turn he went and started another city in the land of the Hittites which he named Luz (1:22-26).

Besides the failure of Benjamin to destroy all the Jebusites in Jerusalem (1:21), Manasseh did not kill all the inhabitants of Bethshean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, and Meggido, but made them pay tribute (1:27, 28). Neither did Ephraim completely succeed over the inhabitants of Gezer, nor Zebulun over the people of Kitron and Nahalol, nor Asher over Accho, Zidon, Ahlah, Achzib, Helbah, and Rehob; nor did Naphtali drive out all the inhabitants of Bethshemesh and Bethanath, but made them pay taxes. Also Dan was driven into the mountains by the Amorites, though they were able to make them tributaries (1:29-36). From the appearance of an angel of the Lord at Bochim, we learn that the failure of Israel to kill all the inhabitants, and their making tributaries of them instead, was wrong. God warned the people that these people would be thorns in their sides and their gods a snare unto them. The people wept and sacrificed in response to this severe warning (2:1-5).

Joshua dismissed the people and they went each to his inheritance. Mention is made of the fact that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and the elders that outlived him (2:6, 7). Joshua died, being a hundred and ten years old, and the people

buried him in the mount of Ephraim (2:8, 9).

We now have a summary of what took place during the period of the judges. A new generation arose that knew not the Lord, nor the works which He did. They turned to Baalim and the other gods of the nations round about them, including Baal and Ashtaroth (2:10-13). Jehovah responded with wrath and judgment. He delivered them into the hands of the spoilers as He had said (2:14, 15). Even after they cried for help and He had delivered them by the hands of judges, they still went after other gods, even worse than before (2:16-19). Now Jehovah informs the people that, since they disobeyed Him in not driving out these enemies, from now on He will not drive them out, but use them to prove Israel whether they will obey the Lord or not. Even in this God is sovereign in His purpose (2:20-23).

A list of the nations that remained in the land of Canaan is now given: the five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, Sidonians, and Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon (3:1-4). The children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. They even intermarried with them (2:5, 6).

2. The accounting of each of the judges (3:7-16:31).

The first one mentioned is Othniel. The children forgot the Lord and served Baalim and the groves. Chushanrishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, prevailed over Israel for eight years. The Lord raised Othniel, son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, to prevail over the king of Mesopotamia, and the land had rest for forty years (3:7-11).

The next judge which the Lord raised up was Ehud. Since the people did evil in God's sight, He raised up Eglon, king of Moab,

who took with him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and came and possessed the city of palm trees (Jericho) for eighteen years (3:12-14). The Lord raised Ehud, son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed. He went to the king of Moab with a present. Disguised beneath his raiment, on his right side, was a double-edged dagger. We are told that Eglon was a very fat man. After Ehud had presented the gift to Eglon, Ehud said he had a secret mission and the people were dismissed, whereupon Ehud thrust the dagger into the body of Eglon. Since Eglon was so fat, Ehud could not draw the weapon out. Secretly he locked the doors of the parlour and fled through the porch. The servants became afraid and finally opened the doors with a key and found their king dead. Meanwhile, Ehud fled to Ephraim and called for their help. With an army he met the Moabites at the fords of Jordan and slew ten thousand men of Moab. The land had rest for eighty years (3:15-30).

The third judge was Shamgar, son of Anath, who slew 600 Philistines with an ox goad and delivered Israel (3:31).

The fourth judge was Deborah, with the help of Barak. When the children of Israel did evil, the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, who lived in Hazor. The captain of his army was Sisera. He had at his disposal 900 chariots of iron, and he kept Israel in subjection for 20 years. Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lapidoth, judged Israel at this time. She dwelt beneath the palm tree between Ramah and Bethel, and Israel came out to her (4:1-5). She went to Barak, son of Abinoam, and urged him on the command of the Lord to take 10,000 men of Naphtali and Zebulun and draw Sisera to the River Kishon in battle. He said he would go if Deborah would accompany him. She consented, though she warned him that Sisera would fall into the hand of a woman (4:6-9). Having raised the army, they went together to face Sisera. With the help of

Heber the Kenite, Sisera learned that Barak had gone up to Mt. Tabor, the vicinity of the River Kishon. He gathered his 900 chariots of iron and his army and prepared for battle (4:10-13). Deborah assured Barak this was the day of victory, so he took his army of 10,000 from Mt. Tabor and met Sisera. The Lord discomfited Sisera and his army with the edge of the sword of Barak and his men. Sisera fled from battle and his soldiers fell upon the edge of the sword, and there was not a man left. Sisera himself was killed by Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, when she drove the tent nail through his temples after he came to her tent for protection. When Barak came, Jael met him and showed him the corpse of Sisera. After that the children of Israel prospered and they even destroyed Jabin, king of Canaan (4:14-24). □

Guided Into All Truth

Rev. Charles Terpstra

Tertullian and the Gnostic Heresy (2)

In our first article we began to treat the subject of the church father Tertullian (circa A.D. 160-220) and the heresy over against which he was called to defend the orthodox faith, namely, Gnosticism (you may want to go back to that article and refresh your memory). Tertullian

certainly was not the only church father to battle this heresy. Irenaeus and Hippolytus were also on the forefront against the Gnostics. But we single out Tertullian because of the positive developments he made in his work against this pernicious error. He is in fact referred to as

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the “founder of Latin theology” (i.e., the doctrine of the Western church, which is our tradition), and even the “forerunner of Augustine” (Fisher *History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 90).

Who was Tertullian? We know very little about the personal life of this church father. He was born around A.D. 160, the son of an unbelieving centurion, in Carthage, North Africa where he also did the majority of his work. In early life he was educated in the pagan culture of Carthage, becoming well acquainted with the humanistic philosophies of his time. He was trained in law and rhetoric and entered the career of a lawyer. He was converted in mid-life, married a Christian wife, and became active in the church at Carthage. It is unclear whether he labored as a presbyterian (elder) in the church or simply as a prominent teacher and catechist. Sadly, Tertullian left the church later in life and joined the sect of the Montanists, known for their strict ascetic life-style. This may have been a reaction against the immorality that had once characterized his life as an unbeliever.

It must have been only shortly after his conversion that the Spirit of truth guided Tertullian to take up his pen against the Gnostic heresy, for his writings roughly cover the period from 196-212. He directed several of his writings against the Gnostics: a general work entitled “The Prescription Against the Heretics”; and, more specifically, three works against the noted Gnostics of his day: Marcion, Hermogenes, and Valentinus. From his writings he is known as an uncompromising, vigorous, and fervent supporter of true Christianity.

How did Tertullian meet the attack of Gnosticism? First of all, he rejected the Gnostic attempt to mingle the Christian faith and pagan philosophies and heathen mysticism. The Christian faith according to him is not the “best” religion because it is a combination of teachings from man-made religions. Instead he posited that the Christian faith is the *only* true doctrine and religion precisely because it is *revealed* truth. It is not based upon human wisdom but upon the wisdom of God Himself, who has given us the truth concerning Himself and all things in His holy and infallible Word. It is from this Scripture that the church has arrived at the true doctrine, following the “rule of faith,” i.e., the right interpretation of the Scriptures according to the tradition of the apostles and their successors.

Writing in his “Prescription Against Heretics,” Tertullian expressed himself strongly on this matter. Said he, “These (i.e., heresies, CJT) are ‘the doctrines’ of men and ‘of demons’, produced for itching ears of the spirit of this world’s wisdom For philosophy it is which is the material of the world’s wisdom, the rash interpreter of the nature and the dispensation of God. Indeed heresies are instigated by philosophy” (which he then goes on to prove in detail), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, p. 246.

And so he concludes: “What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the church? What between heretics and Christians? Our instruction comes from ‘the porch of Solomon’ Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic composition! We want no curious disputation after possessing Christ Jesus, no inquisition after enjoying the gospel! With our faith, we desire

no further belief. For this is our palmary faith, that there is nothing which we ought to believe besides” (p. 246).

We can see from this how the Spirit used Tertullian’s previous education in these very philosophies to prepare him to do battle against them. We should also learn that this argument of Tertullian is a critical point, and one which we must bear in mind in dealing with modern-day heresies and cults. Almost without exception they are the result of an attempted compromise between and commingling of Christianity and humanistic philosophy. Over against this we hold that the faith of the church is exclusively derived from and based upon the holy Scriptures. Such was the general way in which Tertullian answered his foes.

From this fundamental starting point Tertullian rose up to the defense of the biblical doctrine concerning God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Against the Gnostic teaching which denied that the supreme God can be known and that He created the world, Tertullian set forth that God, while He is indeed supreme and transcendent, is the God who has made Himself known by His Word and works. He is the one God revealed both in the Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures, and He is the sovereign Maker of the universe and all it contains.

In a section of “The Prescription Against Heretics” in which he gives a brief summary of the faith of the church, Tertullian states this concerning God: “How with regard to this rule of faith . . . it is . . . that which prescribes the belief that there is one only God, and that He is none other than the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing through His own Word . . .” (*Fathers*, p. 249).

Tertullian in fact found it incredible that these heretics denied the doctrine of creation. In another section of his "Prescription" he writes that this was a doctrine which had always been accepted and never before attacked as it was by the Gnostics. After referring to all kinds of other heretical teachings, he says, "And yet we find amongst so many various perversions of truth, not one school which raised any controversy concerning God as the Creator of all things. No man was bold enough to surmise a second god" (p. 259). That ought to sound a warning to those within the church who currently deny the orthodox doctrine of creation. Such a denial has its origin in these second century heresies.

It was in dealing with the doctrine of God that Tertullian defended and developed the truth of the Trinity. Attacking the Gnostic idea of a series of divine beings ("aeons") emanating from the supreme God to the world, one of whom was Christ, he set forth the truth of the unity of God, namely, that God is only one divine Being or Essence. Hence, there are no other divine beings beside Him. Yet at the same time he taught that there are three distinct Persons in the Godhead, each of Whom shares equally in the fullness of the one divine Being, these being the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Christ therefore is not an "aeon," a subordinate being to God, but the divine Son of God, of the same substance of the Father and equal to Him as a distinct Person.

Thus Tertullian could write in another of his works, "We . . . believe that there is one only God, but under the following dispensation, . . . that this one only God has a Son, His Word, who proceeded from Himself, by whom all things were made, and

without whom nothing was made . . . Who sent also from heaven from the Father . . . the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the sanctifier of those who believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost" ("Against Praxeas", *Fathers*, p. 598).

It is to this church father that the Western church owes the beginnings of her concepts and terminology concerning the truth of the Trinity. Tertullian was in fact the first to use the term "Trinity." And it was his concepts of "substance" and "person" that were later incorporated into the Nicene Creed in A.D. 325.

Furthermore, in his fight against the Gnostics Tertullian also defended the true doctrine of salvation in Jesus Christ. He rejected first of all their explanation of the origin of evil and instead maintained the biblical account of the Fall on the part of Adam and Eve in paradise. Sin came on account of Adam's disobedience, which also brought death upon the whole human race. Salvation, then, according to Tertullian, is not that Gnostic idea of the release of the soul from the evil body and ascension into the world of pure spirit, but it is deliverance of both soul *and* body from the misery of sin and death.

Secondly, Tertullian taught that it was for this purpose that Jesus Christ came into the world and became man. Because the Gnostics denied that Christ assumed a real human flesh, Tertullian went out of his way to stress the reality of Christ's Incarnation and His full humanity. The Son of God truly became man and took on the complete human

nature while retaining the fullness of the divine nature. He directed a special work to this subject, entitled "On The Flesh of Christ." We do not have room to quote from it, but it is an excellent treatise on "the Word become flesh."

Finally, in connection with the doctrine of salvation, Tertullian set forth the truth that it was in this human nature that Christ accomplished deliverance for His people by His suffering, death, and resurrection. Christ's death is the sacrifice for and payment of sins. By His perfect obedience as the second Adam He atones for the first Adam's disobedience.

Even though the doctrine of the atonement of Christ was not very well developed yet, Tertullian contributed to its development by applying legal terminology to the work of salvation. His ideas of God as Lawgiver and Judge, and of sin as guilt which demands satisfaction through punishment, were later applied to Christ's redemptive work. We can see from this too how the Spirit of truth used Tertullian's background for the progress of the faith, in this instance his previous labors as a lawyer.

This brings us to the end of our first subject on Tertullian and the Gnostics. From our perspective now I believe that we can more fully appreciate the work of the Spirit of truth in leading the church into the truth through men such as Tertullian. Moreover we can learn that this heresy of Gnosticism is a heresy which is still applicable for us today. And therefore the way in which Tertullian defended the Christian faith is an example for us too in our dealings with such errors. May the Lord remind us of our calling to be "valiant for the faith" in this age of apostasy and doctrinal indifference. □

All Around Us
Rev. Gise VanBaren

Parents: Must You Be Licensed?

Mechanics need a license in many states. Doctors and lawyers need a license to practice. Beauticians and barbers are licensed. So are teachers in most of the states. Would it not make sense to require the same to be a parent? Is it not more important that the state verify and affirm that one will be a good parent than to declare that one is capable of cutting hair properly? Some think so.

Is the very thought of licensing parents a bit frightening? Is it absurd? Would any one ever propose such foolishness? It appears that in prestigious legal magazines the idea of licensing is seriously proposed. In the *Chalcedon Report*, October, 1988, the following is presented:

An attorney writing in the American Bar Association's Family Law Quarterly has breathed new life into an eight-year-old proposal for government licensing of all parents.

The law review analysis and action-call is the latest and most far-reaching step in a growing campaign to use the specter of child abuse as the excuse for total state control over society's basic building block — the family.

Rev. VanBaren is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.

The article, "Licensing Parents: How Feasible?" was authored by Claudia Pap Mangel, an associate of a Washington, D.C., law firm, with the acknowledged guidance of Judith Areen, associate dean and professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center. The article develops a thesis proposed in 1980, and defended a year later, by Hugh LaFollette, writing in the journal Philosophy and Public Affairs.

LaFollette based his original treatise on the presupposition that state regulation is the required response to any activity which is potentially harmful to others and which requires a demonstrable degree of competence for safe performance. LaFollette argued that "parenting" is an activity with potential for harm so deep and wide that it unquestionably qualifies for such regulation.

LaFollette insisted that his goal was merely to protect children and circumscribe only "very bad" parents, not to "punish" all parents with sanctions or red tape. He thus proposed that unqualified and therefore unlicensable parents simply be required to give up their children for adoption. Alternatively, unlicensed parents might be subjected to continued surveillance by state "protective services." To encourage licensable behavior, he proposed tax credits for parents who qualify for licenses.

Ms. Mangel says LaFollette's scheme is theoretically desirable, but to be feasible it hinges on the state's ability to conduct accurate and

reliable licensing tests. She claims such tests have already been devised, including demographic profiles (with suspect factors such as "social isolation") and "family stress checklists." The key test, developed in the past six years from a "comprehensive review of the literature" on child abuse, is a 160-item questionnaire with a third-grade "readability level." It takes a parent no more than 20 minutes to complete and is called the Child Abuse Potential Inventory. Like all of the devices and instruments Ms. Mangel cites, this test is based on the notion that certain descriptive factors applicable to a given parent are capable of reliably predicting abusive behavior. She says this test is so precise that it can pinpoint only those parents who are certain to be or become, not just neglectful or marginally inadequate in their parenting, but clearly abusive — the "very bad" who are targets of LaFollette's scheme.

Scary? I would say so. Even those proposing this idea recognize the potential for great harm. "Big Brother," the state, would be able to dictate what is done within the home. The article indicates that where this licensing is used, the government has dictated even the religious practices a family may follow.

In gross understatement, Ms. Mangel notes that parental licensing schemes "may appear an outrageous intrusion by the state into family privacy." But she points out, with chilling accuracy, that various forms

of case-by-case licensing already are being widely practiced by social service agencies and the courts. She argues that a comprehensive administrative plan of licensing covering all parents and potential parents would just be more efficient and less costly

Though insisting that licensing could be tuned to focus sanctions only on the clearly abusive parents, Ms. Mangel is unmistakably aware of the broad implications of a comprehensive, bureaucratic licensing scheme. She notes, for example, that many parents "would fear that a licensing scheme could be intentionally abused by those who administered it and used against parents whose ideas of child-rearing and family life are not in line with community standards."

In today's prevailing and dominant secular-humanistic climate, most Christian families would likely fall into such a category. As Ms. Mangel acknowledges, "where the values of a community are grounded in an identifiable cultural or ethnic background [she avoids "religious" background], parents in the community who are not members of the dominant cultural group would fear that a parent licensing program would be used to pressure them into conforming to community standards of child-rearing." . . .

Those who believe there would be no sanctions for "insubstantial reasons" might well examine

Sweden's history of tight family regulation, where children have been summarily removed (without appeal opportunities), when, for example, Christian parents insist on their children's church attendance. Furthermore, it is not a great leap into incredibility to foresee even more sinister applications, such as forced abortion for prospective mothers who fail to meet licensing tests based on community standards. Incentives already are on the horizon

The article also states, "Claudia Mangel . . . argues that fears could be allayed by what amounts to semantic deception: 'Perhaps choosing a different term, such as parent certification instead of parent licensing would make the whole idea of state regulation of parenting more palatable.' Such suggestions propose a deliberate use of disinformation to hide a totalitarian enterprise, and thus closely parallel or exceed anything Soviet authorities now practice."

Would you believe that this is written in prestigious journals of law in this land of "freedom"? It would not at all be difficult to imagine some of the questions which could be asked. "Do you believe the requirement of the Bible that disobedient children can be spanked?" Or: "Do you

believe it to be necessary to require your children to attend church with you?" Or: "Do you insist that your children pray with you?" The questions are not far-fetched. After all, children are also supposed to have "rights," including the "right" to determine for themselves if and how they will serve God. To compel them to do that which is contrary to their wishes is to violate their "human rights." Such would indicate the inability to be a "good" parent according to the standards set up by the state.

Will we soon come to that time when the state requires a license in order to take care of the children God has entrusted to our care? This might seem impossible — but in light of present-day developments, perhaps it is not as impossible as it sounds. And it is chilling to think that the whole concept is given serious consideration by those who seek to form proper legal positions in our land. Is this a clear sign also of the approaching anti-Christian world power, ruled by the anti-christ himself? □

From Holy Writ
Rev. George Lubbers

Exposition of John 21:1-14

Rev. Lubbers is a minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

It is a very important and fruitful endeavor to make a little study in depth of the various "manifestations" of Jesus to His disciples during the period be-

tween His resurrection and His ascension to glory.

Most of us know that there were ten such manifestations of the risen Lord. These are called

in Acts 1:3 “many proofs.” In each of these appearances as the living Lord He “showed himself alive” to them. He is indeed the one who says in Revelation 1:17, 18, “Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

Yes, He is the one who stands between the golden candlesticks, seven in number: I am the Son of Man of the prophecies, who was lifted up, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so that every one who believes in him shall not perish but shall have eternal life!

And what was the subject of which Jesus spoke each time He manifested Himself to His disciples, the “twelve”? The subject was this: the things *concerning* the kingdom of God!

There was advancement in this teaching. Jesus was the heavenly pedagogue!

These manifestations to His disciples were the following:

1. The first Sunday evening (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25).

2. The second Sunday evening (John 20:26-29).

3. At the sea of Tiberias (John 21:1-23).

4. On the mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18; I Cor. 15:6).

5. The disciples in Jerusalem and Olivet (Luke 22:44-53; Mark 16:19, 20; Acts 1:1-11). See A.T. Robertson W.P. at Acts 1:6.

From the foregoing it is rather obvious that, when John says that Jesus “manifested himself again” here at the sea of Tiberias, this was the third such manifestation to the inner circle of His disciples. As we have seen, there were five in all.

It is also of the utmost importance that we notice that Jesus manifested *Himself* to them. They must notice that this is the very

Son of God, who was called Jesus. It is He and no one else. And each time also He is their very own Lord, this Jesus. Later we read “that no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.” This too we must never lose sight of, not even for one moment. They who do not speak in the Holy Spirit can only say, “Jesus Anathema” (I Cor. 12:3).

Hence, we should shy away from seeking to find the central thought in this manifestation in one or all of the disciples, and focus our attention instead on the One who is manifesting Himself here for the third time. And to be sure we do have here no mere carbon-copy of the former appearance at all!

THE SCENE HERE AT THE SEA OF TIBERIAS (21:1-3)

Once more the disciples are at the sea of Galilee. These Galilean men (Acts 1:11) are now “home” again. It is here that Jesus had called them, commanding them to “follow me,” adding the promise that He would make them “fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19; Mark 1:17). Jesus will make them “become = *genesthai*” fishers of men. It was not a mere earthly change of vocation in life, but a being taken radically out of the earthly calling, and earthly industry, into a calling of being the official witnesses of the Christ. Peter had finally come to see, as had all the others, that this meant that this was a singular office and calling, as he says in the house of Cornelius, “not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead” (Acts 10:41).

We have to place this Galilean scene in proper focus, do we not? We must see that this fits in the plan and purpose of God. These men were before chosen by God.

They were, so to speak, hand-picked by the God of heaven and earth. These were indeed separated to be witnesses of Christ’s death and resurrection and ascension in a very special sense. Some of these men were future “secondary authors” of New Testament books of the Bible. Perhaps they were all martyrs for the faith of the gospel.

But in a sense they are “home” once more — at least as “at home” as they could be. The reason was that God, who chose (handpicked) them, was directing their path. That they were here at all in Galilee was their obedience to the repeated word of Jesus, “Behold, I go before you into Galilee; there shall ye see me.” It is rewarding to look up and study such passages as Matthew 26:32; 28:7, 10, 16; Mark 16:7; Luke 24:6. Surely it was no mere happenstance, nor just some private decision to return to Galilee, but in the two previous visits with the disciples they had become thoroughly convinced that ere long they would come to the point where they were full-fledged official witnesses of the gospel of the cross and resurrection of their Lord!

Surely, in faith, they could know that the Lord Jesus Himself was preceding them to Galilee. And where, pray, would they think of going in Galilee but their familiar home by the seashore, where they had been by trade fishermen. Perhaps Jesus did not appear on the third Sunday to them. Although He hovered near them, He waited till the proper God-appointed moment for this third manifestation.

This time He must have the exact proper historical point of contact; it must be befitting the message which He would this time convey to them concerning the kingdom of God. Besides, as we shall see later, there is the

unfinished business of reinstating Peter into the office of being an undershepherd of the Chief Shepherd of the sheep, the flock of God. Here there must be one fold and one Shepherd!

EARLY IN THE MORNING (John 21:4)

That Jesus' manifestation was early in the morning is really quite significant. The former two times Jesus appeared to the disciples in the evening. The first time He showed Himself unto the disciples while they were partaking of their evening meal. It was, so to speak, supper-time. In fact, Jesus partook of that supper too, and ate a piece of broiled fish as a "proof" that they had not beheld a spirit when they suddenly saw Him. But, and this is our point, Jesus there appeared at the end of a great and eventful day. Here in this manifestation it was not "thus." It was in a different setting altogether. It was in the morning, early in the morning, at the beginning of a new day. And this early dawn was the transition-point between their former calling to ply a trade, and future calling to be full-time preachers of the kingdom of heaven (or, if you will, the kingdom of God)!

It does not seem that, when Jesus had earlier multiplied the fish, it was so emphatically part of the symbolism that it was early in the morning; it was at that time not yet emphatically the start of a new day. Great multitudes had already gathered to hear Jesus preach, so that Jesus went into the fishing ship of Peter to preach the gospel of the kingdom. But now there are no multitudes present, and Jesus does not enter the boat to preach, but stands rather on the shore a lone "stranger," who had built a little fire and who was to be the host of these seven disciples that morning. And the menu was to be the fisherman's

diet of bread and roasted fish.

This early dawn evidently meant to indicate that these disciples were to eat in preparation for their task of preaching the gospel in the day of Christ! For this they will need the nourishment of heaven and earth! It was an early morning breakfast, planned and prepared wholly by the Lord. In fact, it was to be part and parcel of Jesus' self-manifestation of His being the one who was bringing them into the last stage of their being made fishers of men. He is making them "*become* fishers of men." Here they must say farewell forever to the past, and turn resolutely to the future.

THE POINT OF CONTACT (21:5, 6)

There is some deep and profound psychology here in the manner in which Jesus arrests the attention of the seven disciples!

In the first place, we ought to notice the tender and loving address here on the part of the speaker. He calls these seven men "children." No, he does not call them "my little children," as does John in his first epistle to the churches (1 John 2:1, 12, 18). But the term Jesus employs suggests very strongly a loving and familiar relationship, a relationship which was one between the Teacher and His beloved disciples. Furthermore, it must also suggest that the "learners" have still a bit more learning to do. They still have some maturing to do before they will arrive to spiritual adulthood. Now who

in all the world would, this early in the morning, come to these seven disappointed and frustrated fishermen, except someone who knew them so well that He rightly calls them "children," except Jesus?

Yet, they did not recognize Him. Why not? Because He did not manifest Himself "thus." On the day of the resurrection Jesus disclosed His identity to Mary Magdalene by simply saying, "Mary" (John 20:16).

This was here not the point of contact which caused the scales to fall from their eyes. It took place in a different way. And this manner of manifestation we ought not to fail to see; nor should it be glossed over. Jesus asks here a very arresting question: "Children, you do not have anything to *add to the meal*, do you?" The term in the Greek text is only used once in the Bible. The term is "*prospagion*." The Dutch translation renders this Greek term with one word, namely *toespijs*. It is in the KJV that this word is translated simply "meat." The American Version renders it "ought to eat." None of these translations convey the unique thought expressed in the Greek term. For the term which Jesus uses suggests very strongly that He desired to add of the fish to the meal, the early morning breakfast. And for this the disciples did not have one fish. Evidently they had intended to make their own breakfast from their fish, which they did not catch. Now, as it became evident, they will be adding from Jesus' supplied fish to the breakfast which Jesus was preparing. They eat as guests at Jesus' table.

And here is the beginning of the *point of contact*!

The curtain rises of the self-manifestation of the risen Lord enroute to His glorious ascension at God's right hand. □

(to be continued)

Give a gift subscription to a friend or relative!

Report of Classis East

Jon Huiskens

September 14, 1988
Byron Center Protestant
Reformed Church

Classis East met in regular session on Wednesday, September 14, 1988 at the Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church. This marked the first time in years that a meeting of classis was held

in Byron Center. The delegates enjoyed touring the beautiful new sanctuary and meeting rooms which the congregation of Byron Center just recently dedicated.

The business of classis was routine. There were reports from the Stated Clerk and the Classical Committee and from the synodical delegates *ad examina* of their visit to Classis West concerning the organization of a new congregation in Lynwood, Illinois.

Faith and Holland requested classical appointments. The following schedules were adopted: FAITH: September 25 - Key, October 9 - Woudenberg, October 16 - Joostens, October 30 - Kamps, November 13 - Van Baren, November 20 - Slopsema,

November 27 - Key, December 4 - Kortering, December 11 - Slopsema, December 18 - Joostens, January 8 - Gritters, January 22 - Kamps, January 29 - Woudenberg; HOLLAND: October 2 - Van Baren, October 16 - Slopsema, October 23 - Kortering, November 6 - Gritters, November 13 - Woudenberg, November 20 - Joostens, December 4 - Kamps, December 11 - Gritters, December 18 - Van Baren, January 8 - Flikkema, January 15 - Kortering, January 29 - Key.

The expenses of classis amounted to \$1004.00. Classis will meet next on January 11, 1989 in Holland.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon J. Huiskens
Stated Clerk

News From Our Churches

Benjamin Wigger

November 15, 1988
CONGREGATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

On Sunday, September 18, the congregation of our Southwest Church in Grandville, Michigan met for the first time in their new sanctuary. The congregation was informed of one change that was to take place. After Rev. Kamps had pronounced the closing benediction, the congregation was asked to remain standing for a moment of meditation or silent prayer until Rev. Kamps and the consistory had left the sanctuary.

Mr. Wigger is an elder in the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.

The Adult Bible Society of our church in Doon, Iowa has chosen for its after-recess program this year to study the history of the church from A.D. 100-590 using a syllabus by Prof. H. Hanko.

The congregation of our Immanuel Protestant Reformed Church in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada was called to a divine worship service at 10:00 A.M. on October 10 to celebrate the annual Thanksgiving Day in Canada. The offering on that day was for the churches and saints in Jamaica who suffered the loss of much in the recent hurricane. I mention this because in about a week those of us in the U.S. can

gather with our families in the knowledge that "in everything we are to give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us" (I Thess. 5:18).

Upon the suggestion of a member of the congregation and after much investigation by the council of our Southeast Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the church has installed two new telephone lines for the use of shut-ins. These phone lines will enable one who is unable to come to church to call the church immediately before the worship service begins, and listen to the entire service by means of a speaker attached to their phone.

The Hope Heralds, an all-male singing group from Hope P.R.C. in Walker, Michigan, gave their annual concert at our church in Kalamazoo, Michigan on Tuesday, September 20. For a number of years now Kalamazoo has started their society season with this concert.

On September 28, Rev. D. Kuiper, pastor of our Immanuel P.R.C. in Lacombe, Alberta, gave

Harvest

by Suzanne Looyenga

The blaze of noontime sun has
passed
And golden fields, sun-blest, lie
waiting —
Waiting for the harvesting —
Their bronze and amber undulating
As the quickening autumn breezes
blow.
Soon comes the snow.

Already do the shadows tell
The hasty circuit of the sun
And the time is ever creeping
forward
To the day man's work is done:
When winter blasts with cruel chill
And all lies cold, lies cold and still.

Where are the strong men now?
Where are the sinewed arms to cut
and bind

And gather in this bounteous
yield?

New labourers are hard to find
As faithful harvesters go to their
rest.

The sun sinks ever deeper in the
west.

A glorious harvest yet awaits this
day.
Pray to the Lord of Harvest. Pray.

Suzanne Looyenga is the wife of Dr. David Looyenga, mother of six children, and a poet. With her family, she is a member of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois. The poem is based on Luke 10:2.

an inspirational address to begin the catechism and Bible Study Society season. The speech was entitled, "Adding to Faith . . . Knowledge."

The Building Committee of our First P.R.C. in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada has come to an agreement with St. Barnabas Anglican Church to purchase the requested furnishings for \$5,000.00, including pews, chairs, piano, and organ.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

On Monday, October 24, a Reformation Day Lecture was scheduled by our congregation in Randolph, Wisconsin. Their pastor, Rev. den Hartog, spoke on "The Reformation and the Authority of the Word."

On October 27, the Protestant Reformed Lecture Committee, along with our church in Grandville, Michigan, sponsored their annual Fall Lecture. Rev. Jason Kortering, Grandville's pastor, spoke at the South Grandville C.R.C. on the topic, "Reformed Church Government — a Reformed Church Heritage."

Tapes of Prof. H. Hanks's lecture entitled, "I believe in God the Creator" are now available at a cost of \$3.00 from Southeast Protestant Reformed Church, 1535 Cambridge S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506.

The Reformed Witness Hour Radio Choir began meeting back in October. Thirty-seven people from seven churches in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area signed up this year, although there is still a need for a few good men to sing tenor and bass.

MISSION ACTIVITIES
Pastors Key and Kortering left on Thursday, October 6, for the mission field in Norristown, Pennsylvania. Their mandate on behalf of the mission committee was, among other things, to evaluate the situation on the field and to meet with the people there.

In conjunction with the Bible Studies in Fort Wayne, Indiana, there was a public lecture at the Carlton Motel in commemoration of Reformation Day on Thursday, Oct. 27. Missionary Ronald Van Overloop spoke on "Justification By Faith Only."

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Covenant Christian High School had their groundbreaking for the Phase I construction on Saturday, October 8.

The Ladies' Circle of our Loveland Protestant Reformed School in Colorado held a hot dog roast September 17 at the school. There was volleyball and softball planned. People were encouraged to bring their lawn chairs, blankets, Psalters, and flashlights for the sing-along afterward.

Hope Protestant Reformed School in Walker, Michigan held a School Bazaar on November 2 entitled "Treasures from Granny's Trunk."

The P.T.A. of Adams Street School in Grand Rapids, Michigan met November 3. The members of the school board and their principal gave a joint presentation on their duties and responsibilities in running the school and how they carry those duties out.

Final thought from *Across the Aisle* from First Church in Grand Rapids:

"There are two ways to reach the top of an oak tree — you can climb it, or sit on an acorn and wait." □

"IN THE BEGINNING . . ."

A series of 6 sermons, preached in 1988, on Genesis 1-11, in the light of the New Testament witness to the fundamental "beginnings" recorded there. Occasioned by the bold advocacy of theistic evolution in evangelical and Reformed circles, these sermons proclaim the historical reality, as well as

the doctrinal and practical significance, of "Creation" (Heb. 11:3); "Adam" (I Cor. 15:45-49); "The Fall" (Rom. 5:12-21); "The Flood" (II Pet. 3:5-7); "Babel" (Acts 17:26); and "Christ" (Col. 1:15-20). Although their main purpose is to instruct all Christians in the vital truths of Biblical creation, they make clear to Reformed Christians the issues at stake in the rejection of the historical reality of the events recorded in Genesis 1-11. They will be particularly helpful to high school and college students. 3 high-quality cassette tapes in an attractive album, for \$15.00. By Prof. David J. Engelsma, former Pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church, South Holland, IL.

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE
Protestant Reformed Church
16511 South Park Ave.
South Holland, IL 60473

NOTICE!

Grandville Protestant Reformed Church of Grandville, Michigan is requesting funds to help finance the construction of their new sanctuary.

Those interested in loaning money for periods of 3 years or more at an interest rate of 8.0% are requested to contact:

John Gise Van Baren
6487 Sunflower Drive
Byron Center, Michigan 49315
Phone (616) 530-9233

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On November 24, 1988, D.V., our parents, MR. AND MRS. R. TEITSMA, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. We

are thankful to our covenant Father for the blessings bestowed upon them and us these many years. It is our prayer that God may continue to guide them on their earthly pilgrimage so they may experience that "the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations" (Ps. 100:5).

There grateful children & grandchildren

Homer and Kathy Teitsma
Gerard and Libby Teitsma
Ken and Ellen Teitsma
Rick Teitsma
Jay and Jone Kuiper
10 grandchildren
2 great grandchildren

NOTICE!!!

The Theological School Committee rejoices with Professor David Engelsma and his family, remembering that he, in October 1988, has completed 25 years in the Ministry in the Protestant Reformed Churches. "Keep that which is committed to thy trust" (I Tim. 6:20).

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Society of the Doon Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. James H. Blankespoor and her family in the death of her mother, MRS. ALIDA NIEUWENDORP.

May she and her bereaved family be comforted in the certainty that in life or death we are not our own, but belong to our faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. Rev. R. Dykstra, Pres.
Nancy Zeutenhorst, Sec'y.

INSTRUCTION FOR ELDERS

The Protestant Reformed Seminary will sponsor four meetings in January 1989. Purpose of these meetings is to give instruction regarding the Office of Elders in the Church. Invited to attend are: Elders - present and past, Deacons - present and past, plus other men who are interested in this instruction.

RESERVE THESE MONDAY EVENINGS — January 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th.

NEW BOOK!

RFPA announces the publication of *Show Me Thy Ways*, Grade 4, by Gertrude Hoeksema. The student textbook is hardcover and consists of 366 pages. The workbook is stapled and has 68 pages. The series is organized so that students study three text lessons and do one workbook lesson each school week. The book starts with Genesis and ends with David's anointing as king. The lessons are written in sentence outline form. The cost of the textbook is \$15.95 and the workbook is \$4.95. Book-club members may order this at a 10% discount rather than the usual 30%.

RFPA is planning to publish books for fifth and sixth grades over the next two years.

For more information, or to order, write:

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