

THE STANDARD BEARER

*A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine*



Rev. Arie denHartog (Classis West), Elder Darrel Huiskens (Classis East)
in Synod 1989.

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Inside this issue . . .

PRC Synod 1989.

Was it a conservative Synod? Was it a Synod with what is often referred to as "vision"? Was it a mission-minded Synod? Did it have an eye always to the budget? Was it a *time-conscious* body — i.e., interested more in being quick than in being careful?

It is no doubt true that a certain mentality can be said to characterize a deliberative body. And, every year, after Synod is over, those who care about the decisions made by our churches' broadest assembly will analyze the work of that body and draw conclusions as to what kind of spirit must have prevailed there. This year is no exception. And judgments have not always been favorable. Different individuals have different views, of course — but that is to be expected, for, ". . . whose ox is being gored" applies here too. Whatever the case, the truth is that some of us may be inclined to see this year's Synod as having been somewhat negative.

Now, if one means by that, that a fair share of the decisions were "nays" rather than "yeas," then "negative" is at least close. But if we refer to the spirit or mentality of Synod . . . that's something else. As a member of the Mission Committee, which has had to struggle long and hard all year with the knotty problems which led to some of the proposals which came to this year's Synod, I must admit to having been disappointed by Synod's treatment of some of them. But then I read again the exhortation of Rev. Van Baren in his pre-synodical sermon. Not merely is it our task here, he said, to *observe* Zion's defenses, but to *maintain* them. I have no doubt but that every delegate at Synod was motivated by a desire to do exactly that. That was the spirit which prevailed. More importantly, we must remember that "*Jehovah* is the defense of Zion." Synod (and that means the votes of the delegates on every issue) "is but a tool in His hand to accomplish His glorious purpose." With that, we can be content. Thank you Rev. VanBaren. (Read "A Survey of Zion's Defenses" and "Synod 1989.") □ —D.D.

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Meditation
Rev. Gise VanBaren

A Survey of Zion's Defenses

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following."

—Psalm 48:12-13

This sublime Psalm asserts the wonders of the work of our God in Zion. Zion was the religious as well as political center of Israel. In Zion God was pleased to reveal Himself, and there He would fellowship with His people. It was the place for all Israel to worship and sacrifice.

The Psalmist acknowledges that Zion is the majestic work of God. He can hardly say enough concerning this omnipotent act of God. Zion was not just another city, nor just another temple — but the place where God revealed His care over His people. So marvelously did God provide for this city, that the heathen observed it — and in fright hastened away.

God has revealed this in order that His church might contemplate His work: "We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple."

So we are called to meditate again on this remarkable work of our God. The Synod of our churches must have Zion, this creation of God, in mind as it makes its decisions.

The concern of the church is not merely to *observe* Zion's defenses. Rather, the church is, first, to *maintain* the defenses of Zion; secondly, to see to it that our children are taught to know its strength as well. That is specifically the task of our Synod again this year.

The name "Mt. Zion" is used first as that stronghold in Jerusalem which ran southeast from Mt. Moriah (upon which later the temple was built — II Sam. 5:6-9). It had deep valleys on three of its sides and was supplied by a spring of water — an ideal fortress indeed! Later, the area of the temple itself was identified as "Mt. Zion" (Is. 8:18). But often, especially in the Psalms, Zion is identified with the whole of Jerusalem (Ps. 102:21). Zion was the great city of God where He was pleased to receive the worship of His people — and where He would provide protection for them.

Zion's defenses were something to behold! When the kings of the earth observed them, they hastened away in great fear (vs. 5, 6). Zion had its towers, bulwarks (ramparts), and palaces (citadels). The towers, located at strategic points along the walls,

served as watchtowers as well as strong defensive positions. The bulwarks or ramparts are identified by some as the ditch or space before the walls. The palaces were not merely beautiful homes for the noble, but a final stronghold against the enemy. Combined, this all presented the picture of a mighty city, strong enough to withstand the attack of any enemy.

We have here a portrayal of the strength of God's Zion, the church, today. Many claim that the church can not endure because of its smallness and its lack of physical defenses. These clamor for union of all churches — for, so it is said, "in unity there is strength." There is the readiness to compromise on vital issues of doctrine in order that the church can increase numerically.

Even the world views the church with scorn. It considers the church to be that which can at any time be destroyed with ease. The world mocks the church. Often the wicked have martyred its members.

But with the eye of faith we see the true strength of Zion. Its strength is found not in human weapons but in the Word which is the Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6). Even the devil can not prevail against this weapon. That sword must be the primary weapon for the Synod of our churches too. The Synod can not resort to

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

human philosophizing but must ever search out God's holy Word, using it to determine the right and condemn the wrong.

The strength of the church is found too in its earnest, fervent prayer. There is truly power in prayer. In prayer we have direct access to God's throne of grace. He has promised to hear and answer the godly prayer. When the wicked threaten, the church is found on its knees.

There is also the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter Whom Christ promised before He ascended into heaven. The Spirit has guided the church into all the truth even as Christ said — directing holy men of God to write infallibly the Word. The Spirit has also led the church to compose the Creeds, including our three forms of unity, which set forth the teachings of Scripture in a systematic way against the heresies which have arisen. This which the Spirit provided for God's church is part of its glorious strength.

With that kind of defense, Zion is secure. We firmly believe that, also in our own day of apostasy. The saints have been safe through the ages — and are now. Though the church has been troubled by sins within and attacks from without, God has always preserved His remnant.

We are commanded to observe the defenses of Zion carefully. The Psalmist requires it: *walk* about Zion, *tell* (count) the towers thereof, *mark* her bulwarks, *consider* her palaces. The command means that one is to make careful evaluation of Zion. There is to be no superficial glance at it, but a thorough study of that which makes her strong.

This exam is not made to find and emphasize all of her faults. One may never, of course, close his eyes to doctrinal error nor to godless walk. But we must not examine Zion in order to find all

the flaws and problems which we can repeat to her hurt. Instead, we must examine Zion to see her great strength — to behold what God has accomplished in her. Zion exhibits the powerful, sovereign work of Almighty God!

We see all of this, of course, by faith through the spectacles of Holy Scripture. Then we confess: What hath God wrought!

The conclusion? It is not man, it is not a Synod, who makes Zion strong. Man is not indispensable in maintaining the church. It is not man who must first act before God establishes. But God has placed Zion upon His holy hill. God establishes her (vs. 8). No wonder that the Psalmist begins with that wonderful shout in the very first verse, "Great is Jehovah . . ."

The duty of the church is to convey this strength of Zion to the youth especially. In Israel God repeatedly commanded the fathers to tell their children of the mighty works of God in the church. So today it is urgent that

the generation following know the wonderful works of our God.

The task of the Synod, in all decisions taken, is above all to maintain with all of its vigor this Zion of God's creation. To do this, the Synod must hold to the full revelation of Scripture as confessed historically by the church. There must be no turning away from those great defenses.

At the same time, the deep concern of the Synod must be that the truths of Scripture be taught faithfully to the generation following, for God's Zion continues in the line of generations.

Therefore Synod must make decisions for the well-being of the churches and especially the proper preaching of the Word within them. For this reason some of the major decisions of each Synod deal with our Seminary. Through the Synod, the churches must provide for the education of those whom God has called to the ministry, so that the Word may be faithfully preached to us and to our children.

Synod makes decisions too about missions and seeks contact with like-minded churches across the globe. In everything, the Synod must be concerned above all else with God's Zion. She must understand well that Jehovah is the defense of Zion — and the Synod is but a tool in His hand to accomplish His glorious purpose. May her fervent desire be to tell all of this to the generation following — that they too may continue in the faith until Jesus returns. □



Pre-Synodical Sermon:
Rev. Gise VanBaren

Editorially speaking. . .

On Monday, July 17, 1989, Professor Homer C. Hoeksema died at the age of 66 years. He lived only 3 months after cancer was discovered. Professor Hoeksema held a prominent place in the Protestant Reformed Churches for many years. A minister in these churches for 40 years, he served the denomination as professor of theology for 30 years. For 24 years, Professor Hoeksema was Editor of this magazine.

We are asking his long-time colleague in the Protestant Reformed Seminary, Professor Herman Hanko, to write a memorial article for a future issue of *The Standard Bearer*.

The staff of *The Standard Bearer* expresses its Christian sympathy to the widow and family, praying that you are comforted by the promise of the gospel, that "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him (Jesus)" at His coming (1 Thess. 4:13-18). □ -DJE

The Protestant Reformed Synod receives some attention in this issue. The meditation is the

sermon preached by Rev. Gise Van Baren at the worship service of the Hull, Iowa congregation the evening before Synod convened, which service is attended also by the synodical delegates. Professor Robert Decker writes the guest editorial on the highlights of Synod 1989. And our acting managing editor, Mr. Don Doezema (himself a delegate of Synod), sprinkles the pages with pictures that he took of Synod in action.

The complete account of Synod's decisions will be available later this summer in the official "Acts of Synod." This publication includes the yearbook of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Copies are distributed without charge to the members of the PRC through their consistories. Others who desire a copy can order it from the Stated Clerk of Synod, Rev. Meindert Joostens, 2016 Tekonsha Road SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506. The cost is \$2.00 per copy.

Professor Robert Decker, Professor of New Testament and Practical Theology at the Protes-

tant Reformed Seminary, has prepared a series of four speeches on the office of the elder in the church. This study deals with the office generally; qualifications for the office; church government; and such duties of the elder as family visitation and visitation of the sick. The speeches have been given at conferences in Grand Rapids, MI and Loveland, CO with enthusiastic response. Audio cassette tapes and video tapes of the conference in Grand Rapids are available from the Protestant Reformed Seminary, 4949 Ivanrest Ave., SW, Grandville, MI 49418 (telephone: 616-531-1490). The audio tapes consist of four tapes in a case and can be bought for \$15.00. The video tapes can be borrowed for \$10.00. Both audio and video tapes include Prof. Decker's presentations and the question-and-answer sessions that followed each speech. These classes will be profitable to individuals, consistories, and Bible-study groups. □ -DJE

Editorial

Synod 1989

The annual Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches convened June 13, 1989 in the Protestant Reformed Church in Hull,

Iowa. Rev. Gise VanBaren, president of the Synod of 1988, led in opening devotions and chaired until the new officers were

elected. Rev. Van Baren also preached an appropriate sermon on Psalm 48:12-13 entitled: "A Necessary Survey of Zion's

Defenses," the night previous at the Prayer Service.

The officers of this year's Synod were: President, Rev. James Slopsema; Vice-president, Rev. Kenneth Koole; First Clerk, Rev. Dale H. Kuiper; and Second Clerk, Rev. Jason Kortering. Rev. Slopsema, serving as president for the first time, gave the Synod excellent leadership, allowing time for ample discussion of the issues yet keeping the Synod moving toward a consensus.



President: Rev. James Slopsema
First Clerk: Rev. Dale Kuiper

After the agenda of Synod was distributed to four committees of pre-advice, the Synod adjourned at noon on Tuesday to allow these committees to draft their advice.

Synod reconvened at 9:00 AM on Wednesday and spent that entire day dealing with matters from the Committee for Contact with Other Churches. Noticeably absent was Prof. H.C. Hoeksema, gravely ill with terminal cancer. Synod adopted a letter to Prof. Hoeksema expressing the appreciation of the churches for his faithful labors in our churches and Seminary and committing him and his family to the gracious care of our God.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CHURCHES

Our churches are becoming increasingly busy in this important area of the work of the church. Fraternal greetings were received from the Protestant Reformed

Church of Wellington, New Zealand. The Stated Clerk was instructed to convey the greetings of our churches to the Wellington PRC via letter.

The Contact Committee reported that monies collected from our churches had been sent to the Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore for its church building. Synod received a letter of appreciation for this donation from the pastor of the church, Rev. Jaikishin Mahtani.

The First Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore, pastored by Rev. Lau Chin Kwee, together with her daughter congregation, Covenant ERCS, have formed a contact committee. They informed Synod that they are planning to send delegates to the Conference of Sister Churches scheduled for 1990 and that they are working towards establishing a theological school in Singapore. Synod responded to the latter proposal by expressing "... that although it approves strongly of a theological school in Singapore in principle, and would encourage the ERCS to work toward this goal, we do advise the ERCS to proceed carefully and deliberately." Synod also expressed its desire to help the ERCS achieve

this goal by sending them a professor or senior minister for a year or so. This, in spite of the shortage of ministers in our churches, is something our churches ought to do if at all possible. Synod sent a letter of fraternal greeting to the ERCS as well.

Collections taken throughout our churches for the small Measbro Dyke congregation in Barnsley, England were sent to them. Synod also invited its pastor, Rev. Philip Rawson, to attend the conference in 1990.

Synod was informed that the consistory of our Norristown, PA church has agreed to release its pastor to work with the Covenant Reformed Fellowship in Larne, Northern Ireland for six to nine months. Rev. Kenneth Hanko plans to leave for Northern Ireland sometime in July. Synod instructed the Contact Committee to invite delegates from the CRF to attend the conference in 1990.

Synod received a lengthy report from its delegates (Profs. Hanko and Hoeksema) to the Synod of the Evangelical Presbyterian Churches in Australia, which synod met in the fall of 1988. Synod also approved the request of the Burnie congregation for ministerial supply from



Committee Work: pre-advice.

our churches for the coming year. This is the congregation in which Prof. Hoeksema labored from September, 1988 until his incapacitating illness forced his return to the States in May of 1989. Synod nominated a trio of Revs. Arie denHartog, Jason Kortering, and Thomas Miersma. The consistory of one of these men will be asked to release its pastor for one year to work in Burnie, Tasmania. Synod instructed the Seminary to offer its services to ministerial students from the EPC of Australia.



Coffee breaks . . .

Synod was informed of the fact that the Contact Committee is privileged to distribute large amounts of our Protestant Reformed literature to interested groups, churches, and individuals in many places of the world. May God continue to bless this work and may it be fruitful toward a witness to the Truth of Scripture to the glory of His Name!

Synod approved the detailed program for the Conference of Sister Churches submitted by the Contact Committee. The Conference will be held, D.V., June 12, 13, and 14 in the First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. Those invited are: the ERC of Singapore (a sister-church), the PRC of Wellington (also a sister-church), the EPC of Australia, the Covenant Reformed Fellowship of Northern Ireland, and Rev. Philip Rawson of the Measbro Dyke congregation of Barnsley, England.

Speakers and their topics are as follows: Rev. Charles Terpstra, "The Holy Spirit: His Word in the Economy of Salvation"; Rev. Chris Coleborn (EPC of Australia), "The Holy Spirit: And the Error of Pentecostalism"; Prof. Robert Decker, "The Holy Spirit: And the Call to Mission Work"; Rev. Jaikishin Mahtani, "A Reformed Theological Seminary in the Pacific Area"; Rev. Rodney Miersma, "The Promotion of More Meaningful Sister-church Relations"; Rev. Lau Chin Kwee, "The Acceptance of Baptisms from Other Churches"; Revs. Miersma, Philip Burley (EPC of Australia), Lau, and Rawson will speak at two evening sessions on the work of their respective denominations and congregations. The Conference will end with a banquet on Thursday evening, during which Rev. Rawson will briefly speak on the topic, "The Beauty of Christian Fellowship."

MISSIONS

Synod approved of the Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) of our churches cooperating with the ERC of Singapore in the work of missions. The FMC and the



. . . are used for drinking coffee . . .



. . . but they're used as well for things of more importance . . .

Domestic Mission Committee asked Synod to change their constitutions so that the areas of labor of these committees are divided along geographic lines. This proposal was placed in the hands of a study committee consisting of Revs. D. Kuiper and T. Miersma and Elders H. Nieuwenkamp and J. Wierenga. This committee will report to the Synod of 1990.

Synod rejected a proposal from the Mission Committee that an elder co-worker be called for Jamaica until a second ordained missionary can be obtained. Synod reaffirmed decisions of past synods that two ordained ministers be called to labor in Jamaica. In the light of the shortage of ministers in our churches this decision will likely mean that we will wait a long time before we can resume the work in Jamaica. It may even mean that the field will have to be closed. Synod expressed its appreciation to Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma for his faithful and dedicated labors in Jamaica for the past several years. Rev. Bruinsma will be assuming the pastorate of First Church, Holland, Michigan sometime in August.

Three new congregations were organized during the past year. Synod approved the organization of the Norristown Mission

(January 27, 1989) and the organization of the N.W. Chicago Mission (March, 1989). Both of these congregations called their missionaries to be their pastors, and both missionaries accepted. Rev. Kenneth Hanko is pastor of the Norristown PRC and Rev. Ronald VanOverloop is pastor of the Bethel PRC in Elk Grove Village, Illinois. South Holland Church organized a daughter congregation in Lynwood, Illinois. This is the Peace PRC. We



rejoice at this evidence of God's faithfulness and blessing upon our churches. Our denomination is growing numerically. Our fervent prayer is that while the churches grow numerically they may also grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Lord continues to give us "open doors" in home missions. Work will continue in the Denver area and in the Bradenton-Venice area of Florida. Pulpit supply will continue for the Reformed Bible Church of Alameda, California as long as this church will allow our pastors to preach according to the Confessions and their ordination vows.

Synod rejected the Mission Committee's proposal that we have a missionary-at-large.

THE SEMINARY

Prof. David J. Engelsma will be teaching a full complement of courses beginning in the fall of 1989. He will also be writing his thesis for the Master of Theology degree. He expects to receive the ThM from Calvin Seminary in May of 1990. May God richly bless our new professor and grant him much grace that he together with the rest of the faculty may "commit the truth to faithful men who shall be able also to teach others" (II Timothy 2:2).

Leonard Holstege of our Byron Center PRC (Michigan) was admitted to our Seminary. May God bless this student as he begins his work next fall. The need for students continues. We are thankful for several young men who are pursuing pre-seminary work in various colleges and universities. Let us heed the words of Jesus and pray the Lord of the harvest that He may send forth reapers.

Mr. Donald Doezeema was appointed as Registrar of the Seminary, and his wife, Judi, was appointed as Secretary for the faculty. Mr. and Mrs. Doezeema bring a great deal of expertise and dedication to these positions and we are thankful to God for them. May God strengthen and bless them.

Synod approved several proposals concerning the curriculum brought by the Theological School Committee. Among these is that a Bachelor level (B.A. or B.S.) degree from an accredited college or university is now required for entrance into the Seminary.

OVERTURES

Lynden, Washington PRC presented two overtures. The first proposed a change in the wording of the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons. Synod adopted this change provisionally. The words: "and ye

poor . . . avoid murmuring" will be replaced by: "And ye who are in need, look unto God in your need and thank him, who by his Holy Spirit makes the church willing and able to supply your needs." The second proposal of this overture, re the omitting of the reference to Ephesians 4:28 in the Ordination Form, Synod rejected. The second overture of Lynden concerning an addition to the Form for Public Confession of Faith was rejected by Synod. An overture from Mr. Frank VanBaren (Loveland, Colorado PRC) concerning our liturgy was rejected on the grounds offered by Classis West.

Synod also rejected the overture from South Holland concerning the reading of the Synodical Agenda.

The overture from Southeast PRC (Grand Rapids) concerning redefining the classical boundaries and creating a third classis was placed in the hands of a study committee. This committee consists of Revs. Ronald Van Overloop and Charles Terpstra and Elders Donald Lotterman and Garret Flikkema. All of our consistories are asked to submit their reactions to this overture to the study committee by January 1, 1990. The committee will report to the Synod of 1990.

It became obvious to the Synod that the Lord is giving us open doors in missions as well as many contacts with others of like precious faith with us, both in this country and throughout the world. May God grant the churches grace faithfully to "hold forth the Word of life" in these latter days to His glory. □ -RDD

A Reader Asks...

During the past several decades the listeners and viewers of radio and television have had the opportunity to expand their knowledge of religious topics and biblical teachings by means of religious talk shows, interviewing Bible "experts" attempting to answer difficult religious questions heretofore unanswered and unknown. By means of radio and television many churches, both local and far away, invite the public to "attend" their worship services, available to us all hours of the day and days of the week. Now with all this broadcasting of talking religion and preaching — whatever the case may be — religious broadcasting is big business. How should we understand the teaching of the Apostle Paul when he instructs the Philippians in the first chapter and the verses 14-18?

This task to which the Apostle addresses himself is so near at home. Many pulpits in the Grand Rapids area (also known as Jerusalem) are majoring in psychology, and theology becomes minor. They attempt to prove scriptural truths by quotations from writings of secular authors, and they roam far from the selected text. Now with all this "talking" religion available to our listening, how should we understand the words of St. Paul "... whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice..." (vs. 18).

Thank you for an explanation of the text in question.

Henry Doorn
Kentwood, MI

Answer:

The main thought in Philippians 1:15-18 is that Paul's imprisonment in Rome had not been a hindrance, but rather served "unto the furtherance of the gospel."

First of all, the fact that Paul was imprisoned, not for some misdeed, but because he preached Christ, had become commonly known, not only in Caesar's household, but also throughout Rome (vs. 13). The apostle was allowed visitors during his imprisonment. For a period of two years soldiers had stood guard over him day and night, and therefore had heard him witness of the gospel to them and to others. Both the soldiers and the visitors could not help but be impressed by Paul's self surrender and contentment, even in his chains. And many who heard his witness were drawn by the power of the gospel (Phil. 2:4).

Moreover, many of the brethren waxed confident in the Lord because of his bonds. Although at first the thought of their beloved apostle's imprisonment for his preaching, and the concern about him and the threat upon their own lives may have caused them to be reluctant to confess Christ openly, they now saw how Paul was sustained and comforted even in his bonds, and therefore were "much more bold to speak the Word of God without fear" (vs. 14). They realized that not Paul but the gospel was under attack, and that

gospel they stood ready to defend.

Besides that, there were still many who preached Christ even while the apostle was confined. "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (vss. 15-18).

There were those who were honest and sincere in their preaching, motivated by good will toward Paul and by love for the Lord Jesus Christ. There were others who preached Christ even of envy and strife, not sincerely, but supposing to add affliction to his bonds. Whatever may have been the motive of those who preached Christ, the fact that the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ was preached, even proclaimed far and wide (as the word for preaching in the original expresses it), was reason for great joy in the heart of the apostle while in prison.

The reader asks, "How should we understand the word of the apostle Paul, 'whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached, and therein do I rejoice'" This question is raised in the light of all the present day pseudo-preaching or "talking" religion available to our listening.

There were those in Paul's time who preached the gospel of Jesus Christ in sincerity, but there were also those who preached out of a wrong motive.

Rather than seeking the honor and glory of God, the latter sought their own vain glory. They were likely envious of those who had received more talents and saw greater fruits on their labors. They found fault with others, criticizing them. Possibly they wanted to outdo Paul in drawing a larger following, or even in trying to draw followers of Paul unto themselves, thus, as they thought, adding to Paul's affliction.

Calvin writes in his commentary on this epistle to the Philippians, page 37, "It is asked, however, how such preaching could be injurious to him. I answer that many occasions are not known to us, inasmuch as we are not acquainted with the circumstances of the times. It is further asked, 'Since the gospel cannot be preached but by those that understand it, what motive induced those persons to persecute the doctrine which they approved?' I answer that ambition is blind, nay, it is a furious beast. Hence it is not to be wondered if false brethren snatch a weapon from the gospel for harassment of good and pious pastors. Paul, assuredly, says nothing here which I myself have not experienced. For there are living at this day those who have preached the gospel with no other design than that they might gratify the rage of the wicked by persecuting pious pastors."

The evil preachers Paul refers to in the passage under consideration did not present a false or heretical teaching concerning Christ. This the apostle would have strongly condemned, as he does in Galatians 1:8: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." These evil preachers did preach the full and pure gospel of salvation. The

fault lay not in the content of their preaching, but in their motivation. They were motivated by selfishness and evil intent. The apostle holds no serious resentment against them, even though they sought to add to his misery, but rejoices in the fact that Christ is preached. That is what counts for Paul! As he says in II Timothy 2:9, "Wherein I suffer trouble, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound."

Although the evil of strife and contention is, no doubt, also present in our day, another evil presents itself, namely, the lack of confidence in the preaching of the Word. To draw people and to create interest, especially among the young people, all kinds of gimmicks, forms of entertainment, and even philosophical and psychological contrivances are introduced, as if the power of persuasion must be sought in man rather than in the power of the gospel. Scripture teaches most emphatically that God has instituted the preaching of the Word as the chief means of grace, that is, the means whereby the Holy Spirit applies the grace of God to the heart of the regenerated sinner. In I Corinthians 1 Paul speaks of the preaching of the Word as foolishness to those perishing, but *the* power of God unto salvation for all who believe (vss. 22-24). In Romans 10:14, 15a we read: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they be sent?"

We must take note of what the apostle says. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" And, even more significantly, "how shall they hear without a preacher?" By grace we are saved through faith, and that not of us (Eph.

2:8). The Holy Spirit works God's grace in our hearts, but He chooses to do that only through that chief means of grace, the preaching of the Word. The Word preached is the power of God unto salvation!

We must also take notice of that last statement of Paul: "How shall they preach unless they be sent." There are in our day many self-appointed preachers, who by means of radio or television seek all sorts of contrivances to play upon the emotions of their audience. The question is often asked, "Where are all those converts they are supposed to have made?" They seek the honor and glory of man rather than the glory of God. Just recently some of them have been publicly exposed in their wrong doing. It is still true today, "How shall they preach unless they be sent?" The apostle Paul is a plain example of that. Even though he was personally stopped and called of God on his way to Damascus, and even though he spent some time under the instruction of God, he did not venture out on his own, but waited until God called him, by the church in Antioch, to minister the Word to the gentiles (Acts 13:1-4).

Another evil is committed by those who preach "another gospel" (Gal. 1:6-9). What a tremendous responsibility rests on the shoulders of those who tamper with the Word, denying its infallibility, giving more credence to science than to the Word of God, denying the wonder of creation, which can be accepted only by faith (Heb. 11:2), and introducing heresies, thereby deceiving many.

We can rejoice with thanks to God when a full-orbed gospel is preached, when the full and rich Christ is proclaimed. But woe to them who preach another gospel and make merchandise of men's souls. □

-Rev. C. Hanko

Walking in the Light

Prof. Herman Hanko

Lying (2)

Lying is always wrong, and the fierce anger of God rests upon the man who lies. Lying must be cut out of our life, and our children must not only be constantly instructed in their calling to tell the truth, but they must be severely reprimanded and reproved for lying and warned of the wrath of God which comes upon the liar.

Lying is rooted in our sinful nature. The depravity of our nature is such that lying is "natural." It is the natural thing to do, the "instinctive" thing. It is exactly what we will always do apart from the sanctifying power of God's grace. Lying takes no effort and requires no learning. Telling the truth is the hard and difficult part of life, for it goes contrary to all we are in ourselves. The only hope of escape from such slavery is the cross of Christ, where the believer bows in sorrow of heart and repentance, and where he alone can find the strength to resist his natural tendency to lie and to speak the truth always and under all circumstances.

For he is called to speak the truth. He is called to do this always. The circumstances make no difference whatsoever. Whatever may be the situation, whatever may be the circumstances in which he finds himself, whatever may be the conse-

quences of telling the truth, the truth is what he is called to speak. For he is anointed with the Spirit of Christ his Prophet, and he speaks always in Christ's name. A prophet tells the truth.

The Heidelberg Catechism, in discussing the ninth commandment, not only tells us about the terrible sin of lying, but speaks also of our calling to speak the truth always: "What is required in the ninth commandment? That I bear false witness against no man, nor falsify any man's words; that I be no backbiter, nor slanderer; and I do not judge, nor join in condemning any man rashly, or unheard; but that I avoid all sorts of lies and deceit, as the proper works of the devil, unless I would bring down upon me the heavy wrath of God; likewise, that in judgment and all other dealings I love the truth, speak it uprightly and confess it; also that I defend and promote, as much as I am able, the honor and good character of my neighbor" (Q. & A. 112).

To determine whether one must lie or tell the truth by the circumstances in which one finds himself is really to destroy God's commandment and to set up our own wisdom and judgment as the criterion of what is right and what is wrong. If a lie is justified, when telling the truth would in my own judgment endanger the life of another (as Rahab lied to attempt to save the life of the spies), then it also follows that I may set myself against God Who disapproves of the lie in many

passages of Scripture and Who does so without qualification. It is the same as saying that I may judge for myself when God's flat disapproval of lying does not apply. Then I may alter God's law to suit what I consider to be circumstances where lying is required. This is to reduce all God's law to man's subjective judgment. It is principally what moralists today do in situation ethics when they claim that the situation itself determines what is right and what is wrong. We lose God's law as the objective standard of right and wrong and we make ourselves the final court of appeal.

Scripture does tell of saints who lied. And Scripture does not, in these passages, condemn those lies in so many words. Rahab lied to the police of Jericho when the spies were hidden on her housetop and she sent the police on a wild goose chase to the Jordan. The midwives lied when they told the servants of Pharaoh that the Israelite women delivered their children before the midwives could get to them to assist in the delivery. The woman of Bahurim lied when she sent the messengers of Absalom away in search of Hushai's messengers when in fact they were hidden in her well. Scripture does not, in these passages, condemn these lies. The motives in every case were good. The people who lied did so because their thoughts were for the cause of God and His covenant. But the lies were sins for all that.

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Although it is true that Scripture, in these passages, does not specifically condemn these lies, the many passages in other parts of Scripture clearly teach us that the lie is always wrong, and that without qualification. It is as if God says to us in these passages which tells us of the lies of Rahab, the midwives, etc., "I do not have to say anything here about the wrong of these lies; the rest of My Word is clear enough that you can judge these matters for yourself."

A lie, when told by a believer, often arises out of a weak faith. Rahab did not, apparently, think that God could care for the spies. The midwives did not believe that God could provide for the safety of the male babies born in Israel. The woman of Bahurim was evidently convinced that if she did not take matters into her own hands, God would surely allow disaster to come on David as he fled from Absalom. This lack of faith is the womb in which the lie is born. If Rahab had told the truth and the roof was searched, God could have saved the two spies by other means. God made the sun and moon to stand still so that Joshua could destroy Israel's enemies. He made the walls of Jericho fall so that this unconquerable city was easy prey for the soldiers of Israel. God blinded the eyes of all the Syrian soldiers when they were about to capture Elisha in Dotham. Is it so hard to believe that God could have saved the spies by whatever means He would choose?

You argue and say, Yes but God used these lies to deliver His people. That is true, but even that line of argumentation cannot be used to justify the lie. Scripture is replete with examples of God's mercy towards His people in using even their sins for good. But the sins are not, on this account, to be condoned. David's

adultery with Bathsheba, and his murder of Bathsheba's husband Uriah, were so serious that the sword never departed from David's house; but from that union of David and Bathsheba Christ was born. And the greatest of all these wonders is the cross; for wicked men crucified the Lord of glory, but through it God accomplished everlasting salvation.

Usually lying is born out of sinful motives: lack of faith, cowardice, desire to save ourselves from punishment or ridicule, an effort to destroy our neighbor so that we may climb on his destroyed reputation to new heights of self-honor. But sometimes lying is born out of good motives: to save children alive who are threatened, to protect a downed pilot who is hiding in our house. The motive makes no difference as far as the lie itself is concerned. God may hate the motive if it is evil and love the motive if it is good. But the lie is always sin and brings God's judgment.

We are called to speak the truth. Scripture enjoins this upon us in many places. But in Ephesians 4:15 Scripture tells us that the truth must be spoken *in love*. This qualifying phrase is a crucial point and ought not to be misunderstood or forgotten.

To speak the truth surely means, first of all, to speak the truth of God's Word as He reveals that truth to us in Jesus Christ. The truth is that glorious and blessed Reformed faith which is our heritage and our salvation. That truth must be *spoken*; that is, it must always be confessed in the midst of the world. And it must be confessed in such a way that we earnestly seek the salvation of those before whom we make our confession of the truth. It is this principle which dominates in our calling to tell the truth no matter what the cir-

cumstances of our life may be.

Perhaps a few illustrations will make this clear.

It is sometimes argued that we must lie to people who are desperately sick because the truth concerning their condition will be more than they can bear and will threaten their physical well-being. God certainly does not command us to tell such a patient everything the doctor has told us any more than every little detail must always be told in every circumstance. But we must tell the truth in love. That is, we must tell the truth in such a way that the patient not only knows his physical condition, but also is assured of God's grace to sustain him in his affliction and is admonished to put his trust and hope only in the Lord Who does all things well.

I do not know what I would do if a fugitive came to me for hiding during time of war. I hope I would be able to tell the truth, for this is what God demands. I pray that no lie could ever be found in my mouth. But I know how weak we can be. Nevertheless, in such circumstances too, one must speak the truth in love. Love demands the truth as well as the welfare of the one we are hiding. How these can be balanced off must be left to the judgment of the individual believer who is called to love his neighbor and tell the truth.

Perhaps we could use the illustration of a fellow saint fleeing persecution and seeking a hiding place with us. What could a saint do under such circumstances? Perhaps something like the following would be possible. We would tell such a fleeing saint that we will surely hide him in our home, give him shelter and food and provide for his needs. But at the same time we would tell him (and, surely, he would understand) that we may not and would not lie if the authorities

should come seeking him. We would be able to discuss our mutual obligations with respect to the truth while both of us saw the need of bowing before God's holy commandments. If someone should come seeking the person we have hidden, our duties would not end with simply informing the authorities that indeed we are hiding such a one with us; but to speak the truth in love would require of us that we give testimony to those who come knocking at our door that they sin when they persecute and harass the saints of God, that they must repent of their sins, and that they too must join with us in living a life of obedience. If this would make no impression upon them but only increase their hatred, we would have to commit ourselves to the care of our heavenly Father Who is able to care for His own and Who will save His people to the end.

Does all this seem impossibly difficult? Indeed it does. But the difficulty arises out of the tendency of our sinful natures to lie.

And the power to tell the truth rests in the power of grace worked by the Holy Spirit.

In other words, the calling to speak the truth in love means surely that we always do nothing but speak the truth. But the deepest motive for telling the truth must always be our love for God and our love for our neighbor. Our love for our neighbor is not a love only for those who are God's people, heirs with us of the grace of life; but it is also a love for those who walk in darkness. That love of those who are not a part of the fellowship of the saints comes to ultimate expression in our desire to see their salvation. And we speak the truth with that salvation of the wicked as our goal and purpose.

It is possible to speak the truth in hatred. Anyone who knows anything about the ninth commandment knows that the commandment forbids speaking the truth with evil intent. Our fellow saint may have committed a great sin. To tell others about

this sin, even if we adhered strictly to the truth, would be sin for us, for we would, though speaking the truth, seek the greater downfall of our fellow saint. It is in love that we are called to speak the truth. And love requires that sometimes we remain silent.

As the world grows darker in sin and the lie, the calling to live an antithetical life comes with increased urgency to God's saints who are the light of the world. The day is coming when speaking the truth will end in suffering and persecution. But speak the truth we must, for God's sake. And to learn to do that now when the pressures of persecution are not great will enable us to speak the truth when suffering will be the result.

Never may the circumstances of our life justify the lie. This is to take the law of God in our own hands and make it suit our own sinful purposes. Always the truth alone must be found on our lips that God may be glorified through us. □

Guided Into All Truth

Rev. Charles Terpstra

Augustine and the Pelagian Heresy (3)

Our readers will recall that in these articles on the great church father Augustine we are focusing on his defense and development of the doctrines of grace over

against the heresy of Pelagianism. In our last segment we saw how the Spirit of truth specially prepared Augustine for this, and how Augustine began his work by confronting this error of Pelagius with the biblical teaching concerning the sinfulness of natural man. He overthrew the Pelagian figment of salvation by man's freewill and

posited instead the utter helplessness of the sinner because of his guilt and total depravity in Adam. This set the stage for Augustine to set forth the truth of God's sovereign grace in the salvation of the sinner. This "theology of grace" as set forth by the "Doctor of grace" we wish to examine in this last article on Augustine.

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THE NATURE OF GOD'S SAVING GRACE

The general principle from which Augustine viewed the work of God's grace in saving the sinner was the *absolute sovereignty* of God. Standing solidly on the truth of the Scriptures — especially the epistles of Paul — Augustine held that it was God alone Who saves, not man. Without God man can do nothing, and any good that man does do is of God alone. One of Augustine's favorite lines from the New Testament Scriptures was the question raised by Paul in I Corinthians 4:7: "... And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" Referring to this often in his writings, Augustine demonstrated that all that the saved sinner had and was is due to God; the sinner had and was nothing of himself. For Augustine, salvation is from start to finish the work and gift of the sovereign Lord and His sovereign grace. In his own words, God's sovereign grace was "that by which alone men are delivered from evil, and without which they do absolutely no good thing, whether in thought, or will and affection, or in action" ("On Rebuke and Grace," *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. V, p. 472; all future references will be from this volume, CJT). Such was Augustine's position, from which none of the wiles of the Pelagians would shake him.

More specifically, and in the first place, Augustine taught that God's work of grace in saving the sinner was *internal* and not merely external. You will recall that when Pelagius spoke of God's grace he did so only in terms of external helps, such as the law, the gospel, and the example of Christ; there was no sovereign work in the heart, no renewal of the will, no opening of the mind. But Augustine held that, in order for man to be saved, God must

work internally. And this is what He does.

For proof of this we need only refer to the first anti-Pelagian work of Augustine, "On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins." In one section Augustine argues from the analogy that just as man did not become a sinner by mere imitation, as Pelagius asserted, so man is not saved by mere imitation of Christ. While it is true that the saints must imitate Christ, this does not explain the "how" of their salvation. Accordingly he writes, "But besides this imitation, His grace works *within* us our illumination and justification" And then he adds that Christ, "besides offering Himself as an example of righteousness to those who imitate Him, gives also to those who believe on Him the hidden grace of His Spirit, which He secretly *infuses* even into infants" (pp. 18-19, emphasis mine, CJT). In a later work, "On the Grace of Christ, and On Original Sin," Augustine was equally insistent. After referring to a passage of Scripture he addresses the Pelagians thus:

Let them therefore read and understand, observe and acknowledge, that it is not by law and teaching uttering their lessons from without, but by a secret, wonderful, ineffable power operating within, that God works in men's hearts not only revelations of the truth, but also good dispositions of the will (p. 227, emphasis mine, CJT).

In the second place, it was Augustine's teaching that the work of God's grace in the sinner is *first*, i.e., it precedes any response and activity on the part of man. Over against the Pelagians, who held that by the power of his free will man was first and last in the doing of righteousness, and over against the Semi-Pelagians, who taught that, though God was first in the operations of grace, man was just a step behind, helping and assist-

ing God, Augustine maintained that it is God Who works first and throughout in salvation. With the conviction that the natural man is spiritually dead in sin, Augustine taught that without God's grace the sinner not only cannot *do* the good, but also cannot even *desire* to do the good.

In a passage from his treatise "On the Spirit and the Letter" Augustine applies this teaching to saving faith. He raises the question whether faith is in the power of the sinner, that is, "whether the will by which we believe be itself the gift of God, or whether it arise from that free will which is naturally implanted in us?" (p. 108). His answer is plain:

. . . This will is to be ascribed to the divine gift, . . . because God acts upon us by the incentives of our perceptions, to will and to believe, either externally by evangelical exhortations, . . . or internally Since God, therefore, in such ways works upon the reasonable soul in order that it may believe in Him . . . , it surely follows that it is God who both works in man the willing to believe, and in all things prevents (i.e., precedes, CJT) us with His mercy (p. 110).

In another passage from a different treatise Augustine speaks of the grace of God in the life of the believer as both preceding and following our activity, thereby showing that our salvation is from beginning to end of God. He writes:

. . . No doubt, we do ourselves, too, work; but we are fellow-workers with Him who does the work, because His mercy anticipates (i.e., precedes, CJT) us. He anticipates us, however, that we may be healed; but then He will also follow us, that being healed we may grow healthy and strong. He anticipates us that we may be called; He will follow us that we may be glorified. He anticipates us that we may lead godly lives; He will follow us that we may always live with Him, because without Him we can do nothing ("On Nature and Grace," p. 133).

Finally, in the third place, Augustine taught that the saving work of God's grace was *irresistible*. Because this work of grace is the *divine* power to save, no man can withstand God when He comes by His Spirit to save him. No heart is so hard that it cannot be broken; no will is so stubborn that it cannot be made pliable; no mind is so dark that it cannot be made to see. Augustine sets forth this irresistible power of God's grace in a passage from his work "On the Predestination of the Saints." He is explaining John 6:37, that the Father by His grace draws the sinner to Christ in faith, but that this grace is invisible to our eyes. And then he writes:

It is true that that grace is exceedingly secret, but who doubts that it is grace? This grace, therefore, which is hiddenly bestowed in human hearts by the Divine gift, is rejected by no human heart, because it is given for the sake of first taking away the hardness of the heart. When, therefore, the Father is heard within, and teaches, so that a man comes to the Son, He takes away the heart of stone and gives a heart of flesh . . . (p. 505).

In connection with this truth of God's grace Augustine refuted the oft-repeated charge that it makes a man a "stock and a block." The idea of God dragging the sinner down the road of salvation kicking and screaming or else totally inactive was utterly repulsive to him. Rather did he set down the biblical teaching that God's irresistible grace makes the sinner a willing, working new creation. Further, he taught that the irresistible power of God's grace does not destroy man's free will. God's sovereign grace sets man's will free from the bondage of sin, so that he might willingly serve God in all righteousness. God's grace establishes, not destroys, man's free will.

THE FRUIT OF GOD'S GRACE

Given his understanding of the truth of God's sovereign grace, Augustine also went on to teach that the grace of God is always *effectual*; it always has as its fruit the *salvation* of the sinner. Where God by His Spirit works in the hearts of sinful, spiritually dead men, there is always produced a living, believing, obedient child of God. When God implants life in the heart, the sinner becomes alive unto God; when God implants faith, the sinner believes in Christ; when God infuses holiness, the sinner becomes holy and walks in good works. Always God's grace accomplishes what God intends, namely, the deliverance of the sinner from his sin and death. That this was Augustine's position is evident from the references we have already made.

What we do wish to point out, however, is that along with this Augustine taught the preservation and perseverance of the saints. For him it was clear: if God's grace is effectual, then it also saves the sinner all the way to the end, so that none is lost and perishes. And this is the truth that he found in the Scriptures too. He dealt at length with this truth in two of his works: "On Rebuke and Grace" and "On the Gift of Perseverance." In the previous work Augustine argues that the rebukes of the Word are necessary for believers in order that they may be spurred on to persevere in obedience. But at the same time he shows plainly that this perseverance is God's gift and is the fruit of His sovereign grace in the believer. Thus he writes:

. . . We are not able to deny, that perseverance in good, progressing even to the end, is also a great gift of God . . . For if we should say that such a perseverance, so laudable and so blessed, is man's in such

wise that he has it not from God, we first of all make void that which the Lord says to Peter: "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." For what did He ask for him, but perseverance to the end? And assuredly, if a man could have this from man, it should not have been asked from God (p. 475).

And thus God willed that His saints should not — even concerning perseverance in goodness itself — glory in their own strength, but in Himself, who not only gives them aid . . . without which they cannot persevere if they will, but causes in them also the will; that since they will not persevere unless they both can and will, both the capability and the will to persevere should be bestowed on them by the liberality of divine grace (p. 487).

It is also worth noting that Augustine grounded the perseverance of the saints in God's sovereign election of them. Having quoted from Romans 8:28ff., Augustine stated with powerful logic:

Of these (i.e., the called, justified, and glorified) no one perishes, because all are elected. And they are elected because they were called according to the purpose — the purpose, however, not their own, but God's . . . If any one of these perishes, God is mistaken; but none of them perishes, because God is not mistaken. If any one of these perish, God is overcome by human sin; but none of them perishes, because God is overcome by nothing (p. 477).

That leads us to consider our next point.

THE FOUNTAIN OF GOD'S SAVING GRACE

The final point we must consider yet in Augustine's "theology of grace" is his teaching on the doctrine of predestination. He taught that the fountain of God's saving grace is His sovereign good pleasure in *eternal election*. This is, of course, the logical point to which one is driven when he takes the view of God's grace described above. If salvation by grace is entirely of God, then it is also clear that God is

the One who determines in His eternal decree who receive it and who do not. And this is the point to which Augustine was led too — not merely by the force of logic, but by the Spirit of truth through the Scriptures and through his controversy with the Pelagians.

Augustine early in his work against the Pelagians faced the question why some only and not all receive the grace of God to believe. In his work "On the Forgiveness of Sins" he answered this briefly but with the conviction that this too is due to the sovereign will of God which is always merciful and just. Thus he wrote:

As to the reason why He wills to convert some, and to punish others for turning away, — although nobody can justly censure the merciful One in conferring His blessing, nor can any man find fault with the truthful One in awarding His punishment, . . . yet, after all, the purpose of His more hidden judgment is in His own power (p. 57).

But it was later in life, after he had battled long with the Pelagian heresy, that Augustine came to a fuller understanding and setting forth of the truth of predestination. In fact, one of his last works was "On the Predestination of the Saints," a work which represents his mature teaching on this truth. In this treatise he grounds the salvation of the saints in God's sovereign, free choice of them in Christ from before the foundation of the world. The saints are God's vessels of mercy, before prepared for glory. This predestination is "the preparation for grace, while grace is the donation itself" (p. 507). Hence, God's election is the source of all that the saints receive in this life.

And that means that also this election is entirely of grace and not of merit and works, a truth Augustine defended tenaciously. In a series of passages in this

treatise he refutes the Pelagian idea that God's predestination is based on His foreknowledge of who would believe and be righteous, proving from the Scriptures that God elects His people not because they believe and are holy, but in order that they might believe and be holy. A quote from the conclusion to this section shows the fulness of his teaching:

Therefore God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, predestinating us to the adoption of children, not because we were going to be of ourselves holy and immaculate, but He chose and predestinated us that we might be so. Moreover, He did this according to the good pleasure of His will, so that nobody might glory concerning his own will, but about God's will toward himself. He did this according to the riches of His grace, according to His good will, which He purposed in His beloved Son, in whom we have obtained a share . . . (p. 516).

In connection with this, it should be stated that Augustine also set forth the truth of reprobation, that some men according to the decree of God do not receive the grace of salvation and the benefits of Christ. He was a *double*-predestinarian, following the truth of Scripture, especially that of Romans 9ff. In this too, Augustine taught, God is sovereign and just, and no man has the right to question God's eternal purposes.

All of this meant for Augustine that the saints' boast cannot and must not be in man but in God: "For this reason it is that we cry that no one should glory in man, and, thus, not in himself; but whoever glorieth let him glory in the Lord, that he may be for the praise of His glory" (p. 516).

CONCLUSION

This then is the great contribution the Spirit of truth has given us through Augustine. We will recognize it as the faith of our

Reformed fathers, that glorious heritage rediscovered in the Reformation of the 16th century. Let us love dearly this truth, and continue to uphold it even over against the present-day attacks of Pelagianism. In so doing let us take heed to this final word from the "Doctor of grace":

Let no Christian then stray from this faith, which alone is the Christian one; nor let any one, when he has been made to feel ashamed to say that we become righteous through our own selves, without the grace of God working this in us, — . . . resort to any subterfuge on this point . . . ("On the Spirit and the Letter," pp. 96-97). □

Hasten, Reapers!

Patient reapers of the harvest

Toiling in the burning heat,

Falter not nor cease thy labor

In the field of ripened wheat;

Hear the promise He hath given —

"Be thou faithful" — in the strife —

"Unto death, and I will give thee" —

Hear ye Him — "a crown of life."

Hast thou been since early
morning

At thy labor in the field?

Weary not nor be discouraged,

Fruit at last shall be revealed.

"He that shall endure" — 'tis written

In His word — "unto the end,

Shall be saved." Not all this

meaning

Canst thou, reaper,

comprehend.

Labor on a little longer

Adding to thy precious store,

Ere the sun now bright in heaven

Shall go down to rise no more.

Then with all the happy reapers

Trooping homeward one by

one,

Thou shalt have the Masters'

welcome,

At the setting of the sun.

—Chas. H. Gabriel

S.B. July 1, 1928

The Day of Shadows

Rev. John Heys

The Man of Sin Foreshadowed (1)

What folly it would be to deny that the shadow before you is proof of the fact that the object which casts it exists. There are no shadows where there are no objects. Objects do not always cast shadows. But when there is a shadow, there is an object between the light and that shadow.

Therefore the flood which God sent to destroy the whole ungodly world reveals to us the undeniable fact that He is coming in judgment at His own appointed time. That judgment speaks of the judgment to come when Christ returns upon the clouds of heaven.

Let it also be clearly seen that when the ungodly tried to build the tower of Babel, and God confused their speech and scattered the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and did not allow them to establish the antichristian worldwide kingdom that they wanted to realize, this event is a shadow of what lies ahead of us. The worldwide kingdom of the antichrist is not far away. Likewise God's mercy and grace, revealed in the halting of that antichristian movement which was foreshadowed there, speak of a coming work of that mercy and grace.

There is a book written by an American who ran for president but was not elected. That book has the title, "One World." It reveals what the world has in mind and wants. Man wants to go back and rebuild that tower of Babel. This time he is going to get farther than the ungodly did before God confused man's speech. Then already the seed of the serpent sought to crush the head of the seed of the woman by establishing such a worldwide kingdom. In fact the intent of the world in that day was to crush the head, rather than the heel, of the seed of the woman. But God keeps His promises. Even as they failed at the tower of Babel, they will fail when the antichristian worldwide kingdom comes into being and persecutes the church severely for a time. They will not succeed this time, even as they failed then. The head of the seed of the serpent is going to be crushed, and an end will come to all sin on this earth.

What we must see and consider carefully is the fact that God told the devil that HE would put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The elect children of God will hate the ungodly children of the world. This will not be a work that they begin. That enmity will be there in the hearts of the elect because of the gift of God's sovereign grace realized by a rebirth with life out

of heaven. Satan already hated righteous Adam and Eve, because they were created loving God and serving Him faithfully for a brief time. He soon got them to hate God; and now God in that sovereign grace restored love in the seed of the woman.

Because of that enmity the seed of the serpent tried to build the tower of Babel; and the world will once again try that in the days of the coming antichristian kingdom. The truth of the mother promise of Genesis 3:15 must not be denied. Neither must we deny and fail to expect a repetition of the world's attempt to rebuild the tower of Babel presented in Revelation 13. Even as we must not be so-called theistic evolutionists and make this event, which is in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, which those so-called theistic evolutionists call fiction rather than fact, so we must not ignore and deny what we are told in Revelation 13 in regard to the coming antichristian kingdom.

The shadow of that antichristian kingdom is all around us today. In our so-called Christian nation prayer is forbidden in the world's schools. The vast majority of the citizens in our nation want only one kind of people: atheists and evolutionists. They actually want an antichristian nation rather than a Christian nation. They reveal this not only by a majority vote as to what may

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

be taught in their schools, and therefore deny the right to have God's word about the creation of this world, and man's calling in this life taught to their children. For a time yet, in God's mercy and sovereignty, we may have our own schools. But we can be sure, according to Revelation 13, that this is also soon going to be denied us. Look once at the Sabbath day, not only in other countries but also here in our land that still has coins which state, "In God we trust." Murder of abortions is defended and financially supported by our government. The law of God means nothing, except wherein it makes life safer for the flesh. The first table of the law is not only not kept but despised. And he who does not want to keep the first table of the law does not want in love to keep the second table either. In love for his flesh he may see some good in that law. But one cannot walk in love to God according to the second table without walking in love to Him according to the first table.

As we are taught in Revelation 13, the whole world is going to build the city of Babel with its tower. We read in Revelation 13:7, 8 that the coming man of sin, as he is called in II Thessalonians 2:3, was given power "over all kindreds, and tongues and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundations of the world."

But notice that in the first part of verse 7 we read, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." Here too we have the whole human race divided into two kinds of people, even after the confusion of tongues which divided and separated them at the tower of Babel. From a spiritual point of view the world

still has only two kinds of people: the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The majority, as we read literally in Revelation 13:8, worship the man of sin. A small remnant, the seed of the woman, worship God.

The awesomeness of the day in which we live is that we are so many steps closer to the day when the worldwide kingdom of the antichrist is established, and all the nations, tongues, and tribes will be united, as man strove to have it at the tower of Babel. And if it looked difficult in the day when John wrote this book of Revelation, it looks far less difficult today that such a one-world kingdom can come into being. The church of God is in a frightening situation, as far as the flesh is concerned.

When John was given the vision and wrote about the coming antichrist and his kingdom, it did look difficult for one to unite all these nations, tongues, and tribes in Asia, Europe, and Africa. But after Columbus discovered America and man became aware of the vast Atlantic and Pacific oceans that separated those countries from the Americas, it must have looked far more difficult, if not even impossible then for a one-world antichristian kingdom to come into being.

Can man nullify God's work? He divided the human race into various nations, tongues, and tribes so that no antichristian kingdom would come forth and His church would not be wiped out and off the face of this earth. Can man overcome this awesome work of God and realize the one-world antichristian kingdom of Revelation 13? Is Satan going to succeed in his devilish work of wiping the church of God from off the face of this earth? Will the seed of the serpent crush the head rather than the heel of the seed of the woman? Is the tower of Babel, and the division of the

human race into different nations, tongues, and tribes, slipping out of God's control? Or should it encourage the church of God to see this shadow at the tower of Babel as revealing to us that the victory which God promised His church most assuredly will be ours?

We do well to go back again to that mother promise as we stand by that tower of Babel, and take note of the fact that men now cannot live together — not simply because they cannot understand each other's language, but because their likes and dislikes are so very different, their political viewpoints clash with each other. They do not even like to dress as those in other nations dress; and they delight in foods that other nations would not want to touch.

Take hold of that one-letter word of the mother promise. God says, "I," get that, "I will put enmity between those two seeds." He is also the one Who gave the descendants of Shem, Hem, and Japheth different tastes and distastes, likes and dislikes, different colors for their skin, and even their different statures. That man does return to this intent and activity of rebuilding the tower of Babel is not because God begins to fail to put enmity between these two seeds. Would He give John this vision and use him to inform us of His failure and Satan's victory? No, that tower of Babel is a shadow of the tower of the coming antichristian one-world empire which GOD eternally decreed would come into existence. Read then what He also wrote in the thirteenth chapter of the book of Revelation. In the last verse we read, "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six." It may look that way to

us, but the seed of the serpent will not reach that number of perfection, that is, number seven, which is three plus four and means the triune God living in covenant fellowship with man in the new creation.

The coming antichristian kingdom is not a shadow of that tower of Babel. That tower of Babel is a shadow of the coming antichristian one-world kingdom that already is beginning to appear more fully. The Lord willing we shall next time reveal the undeniable evidence that such a worldwide kingdom is not only possible but is also coming into being; and even as far as man's flesh is concerned it must be established, if man is going to continue to live on this earth.

Consider also the fact that, when a shadow disappears, this does not always mean that the object which cast that shadow no longer exists. The light can go out, or be moved to where it does not cast the shadow in the

same place. All morning the sun may cast the shadow of the house on the western side of the house. In the afternoon that is gone, and the shadow of the house is on the eastern side of the house. It often happens also that the shadow of a larger object falling on a smaller object prevents the shadow of a smaller object near that larger object from being there. The clouds above may minimize the strength of the light of the sun so that no object beneath these clouds casts a shadow.

Therefore when several nations formed the League of Nations — which did not include all the nations of this world — and much later, because that league failed to insure peace, formed a United Nations, which so clearly reveals the strong conflict between the nations that send their representatives to the meetings, it might seem as though that antichristian one-world nation is far away, or even perhaps cannot be realized. But by all means never

draw that conclusion, when Revelation 13 does present that coming united nations.

As we plan to present next time, God is giving us undeniable signs that such an antichristian kingdom can come, and will be here soon. Not only is it becoming plainer to man that his flesh needs such a one-world kingdom, but it pleased God to present this truth to us so that when it comes we will have confidence and peace of mind, even though there will be that awesome war between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Revelation 13 is written not simply for our knowledge but also for our comfort. It declares to us that all is well for the church, and that Christ is coming to establish His holy kingdom of covenant fellowship with God on the new earth which God eternally designed for us. The prayer Jesus taught us will be fulfilled: Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. □

Guest Article

Rev. Kenneth Hanko

Jacob's Wrestling with God

Jacob is returning from his Uncle Laban's house in Padan-Aram, and is about to re-enter the land which had been promised to him by God. More than twenty years have passed since he deceived Isaac and obtained the birthright.

Rev. Hanko is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church in Norristown, Pennsylvania.

Through all those years God has been with him, blessed him, and protected him from the avarice and cunning of Laban. God has sent him back to Canaan with the promise, "I will be with thee" (Genesis 31:3), and God has shown him the host of angels who encamped round about him (Genesis 32:1, 2). But Jacob is afraid. He is worried that Esau will still be angry, and he sends messengers ahead (Genesis

32:3-5) to bring Esau a conciliatory message. "I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants." I have no need of the double portion of our father's goods which I got from you by trickery and deceit. You may have it. "Thy servant Jacob saith . . . I have sent to tell my lord . . ." I will not lay claim to that which was promised to me: rule over my brethren. ". . . that I may find

grace in thy sight." Please don't kill me.

And it seems that Jacob's fear is justified, for the messengers have returned to him to tell him that Esau is coming with four hundred men.

In response Jacob does three things. First he divides his flocks and people unto two bands, so that, if Esau attacks one, the other can escape unharmed. Next he prays, reminding God of His promise to do him good, and asking to be delivered from the hands of his brother. But, not yet satisfied that God will take care of him, he sends a large present, and another conciliatory message, hoping (not unreasonably) that generosity and abject humility will overcome his brother's anger.

That night, in response to Jacob's prayer, God came to him and wrestled with him until daybreak. The response cannot be a simple, "I will be with thee," for Jacob's faith is very weak. It must be instead an emphatic lesson in the necessity of faith, the necessity of believing the promises of God and going out in that strength to do God's will.

It has sometimes been argued that the wrestling described here was not an actual physical wrestling. The passage indicates that it was. "There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."

Though we are not told it at the beginning, and though Jacob himself may not have known it until the man touched the hollow of his thigh, that man was God. God came to Jacob in the form of a man, and wrestled with him. Therefore Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face."

There were two rounds in this wrestling match. The first round lasted all night; the second only a few minutes. During the first, which is recorded in Genesis 32:24, 25, Jacob wrestled in

weakness; during the second (verses 26-29) in strength. In the first God prevailed over Jacob; in the second Jacob prevailed over God.

We read in verse 25, "when he (God) saw that he prevailed not against him" We must ask why God did not prevail. Was it because He could not? Or was it perhaps because He would not force Jacob against his will? Obviously not. God showed, when He touched Jacob's thigh, that He could prevail by a touch or a word. And at that moment too God did prevail, though Jacob was unwilling. We must conclude therefore that God did not prevail through all those hours of wrestling because He did not want to. He held back His own strength, and strengthened and upheld Jacob so that the wrestling match would go on for hours.

In order to understand why God initiated and prolonged this wrestling we must look at Jacob's life up to this point. It is not difficult to see that one of Jacob's chief sins was that he always relied on his own cunning, his own ability, and his own strength to get what he wanted. Jacob knew that the birthright had been promised to him by God himself, and that God needed no help from Jacob to see that Jacob got it. But Jacob was not content to wait for God: he first bought the blessing from Esau for a mess of pottage, and then deceived Isaac. The history of his stay at Uncle Laban's house is disgraceful. He would not trust God to enrich him, but used every sort of trick he could think of to enrich himself at Laban's expense. That he was up against another of his own kind, a cunning, deceitful, and grasping man, only made him the more urgent in achieving his goal. The same lack of faith is very evident in his return to Canaan. Having re-

ceived a commandment to go, he will not face Laban, but slips away quietly while Laban is out shearing sheep. When Esau comes with four hundred men he puts himself in God's hands, and then quickly contradicts the expression of his own faith by denying his claim to the birthright and taking his safety into his own hands. He always has an answer, and the answer is always that Jacob is sufficient unto himself. He cannot really trust God to fulfill His promises. He does not live by faith.

But now Jacob is up against something which may be too big for him. He has done all he could, but he is not sure that it is enough. It may be that Esau will kill him in spite of the gifts and conciliation. He is afraid.

Now is the time for him to learn that his own strength and cunning are futile. God comes to him, and all night long shows him exactly that. I am sure that Jacob, stubborn as he was, exerted all his strength, and tried every trick and every move he knew to throw his adversary off balance. At every point he found himself blocked. God did not exert His own strength to throw Jacob, nor show superiority in any way. He simply blocked every effort, evaded every trap, frustrated every trick, until Jacob had exhausted all his resources. Through all that long night of wrestling Jacob accomplished not one thing. He found himself, for once, unable to help himself. The lesson which Jacob learned was that he could not obtain the blessing of God by his own efforts. He ought to have learned it before. He had tried to obtain the birthright by his own cunning, but he had only brought on himself exile from the land of promise and a situation in which he was forced to give up his claim to it. But he has not. He needs another lesson, and this

time a harder one.

In order to drive the lesson home, and in order to give Jacob a permanent reminder of it, God made him lame. He took away his strength, broke him, and conquered by a touch of His hand.

It was at that very moment, when Jacob fell at the feet of God, that the tide of battle turned. Through God's victory Jacob became strong. Now we see Jacob, broken and helpless, rising as it were in towering, overmastering strength, rising endowed with the strength of God Himself, to prevail with God: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

It seems at first and at best to be the pathetic attempt of a defeated man to cling to some last remnants of pride. At worst it seems a ghastly impudence. It is neither. It is faith.

Now suddenly God cannot get away from Jacob. Jacob's hold is too strong. Jacob has prevailed. That's what God Himself says: "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

Why?

Certainly it is not because Jacob has suddenly discovered in himself a last well of strength which even he did not know existed. No, Jacob has been well and truly defeated, and he knows it.

But, knowing it, he has turned away from self to God. He has taken hold by faith on the promise of God. God had sworn by Himself to bless Jacob. Jacob believes, and holds God to His promise: "I will not let thee go until thou bless me." If God now denied Jacob what he sought, He would be breaking His promise and denying Himself.

Faith prevails with God. And faith has such strength because it is a taking hold of God's promises. It is a denying of self and a trusting in God. It is a recogni-

tion that our blessing must come from God as a gift, not by our efforts or as wages for our works. Jacob, having been deprived of his own strength, has been forced to take refuge in the promise, and there he has found security and victory. And even that is God's work. God destroyed Jacob's faith in himself to make him believe in God. God broke Jacob's strength in order that God's strength might be perfected in weakness. God prevailed over Jacob in order that Jacob might prevail over God. There is nothing here of Jacob. It is all of God. The lesson that Jacob has learned is that salvation, along with faith and all its fruits, is of the Lord.

Therefore God blessed him. The nature of the blessing is indicated by the change of name. By that God assured Jacob that he had obtained and would obtain that which he sought in faith: the fulfillment of God's promise to be with him and to bless him. God comforted his fears concerning Esau, and gave him the strength of faith he needed to re-enter the land of promise and to claim his proper inheritance. He would prevail. But we must also note that this blessing was not a blessing of physical strength to obtain earthly things. It was the blessing of spiritual strength, the blessing of the power of faith, to obtain spiritual things. Jacob's inheritance was not primarily the earthly land of Canaan, but the city which hath foundations. And the inheritance of that city was tied to the coming of the promised seed, Christ.

Here then we have a vivid illustration of the meaning of prayer. It is an act of worship first. When we pray we humble ourselves before God and strip ourselves of every last remnant of pride and self-reliance. We come to him needy, naked, and broken. We turn away from self

and throw ourselves on His promises and on His mercy in Christ. When we pray we also exercise great boldness, for we, who are dust and sin, come to the Majestic and Holy One and ask, even demand, His blessing. But this boldness is the boldness of faith. We dare thus to ask because He has given us His promise. We can ask because He has given us His strength.

Yet we must be careful. Such boldness becomes impudence and wickedness if we come to God to satisfy our carnal and fleshly desires. God has not promised to give us all that we would like. If He did He would be a very poor Father. God has promised to give us salvation and all the blessings of salvation in Christ. Those things we may ask with all boldness saying, "I will not let thee go until thou bless me." Our name is Israel, Prince with God. But when we ask for things God has not promised to give we must say, "Not my will, but thine be done." Then we must come with a measure of hesitation, knowing that we may be asking something we ought not to have. Then we must be ready to submit to God's refusal. He once said, "No" to His own Son. He will also say it to us if we ask contrary to His will and our good.

Here also we have a powerful lesson in living by faith. Jacob said that he believed. He also prayed and worshiped God like other believers. He even was seeking to do what God had told him to do. He was in fact a believer. But he was not, at this moment, living by faith. His fear gave him away. He was trusting in self, rather than God. He did not really believe that God would take care of him, and fulfill His promises. And, in his doubt, he failed to obtain the promise. When he believed he obtained and was blessed.

Finally we have a lesson in the love of God. He will sometimes be severe with us, as He was with Jacob. This is not because He delights in severity, but

because our stubbornness, or self-reliance, or whatever, has made severity necessary. He must sometimes break us in order to

save us. Whatever is necessary He will do. He will not let us pursue a course of sin to destruction. He is faithful who promised. □

Book Review

COMMENTARY ON ROMANS, by Robert Haldane. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1988. pp. 1-668. \$21.95 (paper) (Reviewed by Prof. R. D. Decker)

Robert Haldane (1764-1842) spent the first half of his ministry in Scotland where several congregational churches were established as a fruit of his preaching. In 1816 at the age of fifty Haldane moved to Geneva. Under his ministry and teaching several great nineteenth century

theologians were trained. Among these were the church historian, Merle D'Aubigne, and Louis Gaussen, the author of *Theopneustia*, a book on the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture.

This is a fine commentary, a classic on the Epistle to the Romans. Haldane was a careful expositor. He was a Calvinist who never hesitated to expose the errors of Pelagianism and Arminianism. In addition one finds

in this commentary a warm, pastoral emphasis. His exposition of chapter 1:16-17 is worth the price of the book. Haldane correctly interprets Romans 7 as referring to Paul after his conversion. One will find nowhere a better exposition of Romans 13:1-7 than in this book.

Not only will preachers find here solid exegesis for sermon preparation, but lay persons as well can benefit from this commentary. Highly recommended. □

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

August 1, 1989

CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Just because it's summer, that doesn't mean that all our churches take a break from society meetings. During the summer months the congregations of some of our churches continued to meet in active society life.

The members of Covenant P.R.C. in Wyckoff, New Jersey

met as a combined society three times. The topic considered was the doctrine of creation, using the seminar series of Prof. Hanko as the basis of discussion.

Rev. D. Kuiper, pastor of our Immanuel P.R.C. in Lacombe, AB, Canada conducted a class on the subject of the Covenant during the summer months. Text for the class was the book, "Believers and Their Seed," by Herman Hoeksema.

The Men's Society of the Kalamazoo P.R.C. in Kalamazoo, MI intended to continue meeting through the summer months. Their members invited as many

men as possible to participate in these meetings. They spent the summer studying I Timothy.

And the Church Extension Committee of the Lynden P.R.C. in Lynden, WA sponsored a summer Doctrine Class, which was intended to be open to the public, on three successive Tuesday evenings at Dutch Mothers in Lynden. The group met in June and studied the truth of the Inspiration of the Scriptures.

Way back in May, an informal meeting of those interested in forming a society for Protestant Reformed education was held in Lacombe, AB, Canada. There was

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

a good turnout. A committee was appointed to do some preliminary work, including a proposed constitution. Watch the S.B. for further information in this important regard.

And one more late item from Lacombe. The consistory evidently conducted a survey earlier this spring to try to determine the congregation's feelings on erecting a new church building. The results of the survey taken regarding their own church property were inconclusive. And since no clear direction was indicated, the consistory does not plan to pursue this actively at the present time.

The Young People's Societies of our Southwest P.R.C. in Grandville, MI sponsored a slide presentation on Australia and New Zealand by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Brands, members of Southwest, at their church on June 16. Proceeds were for the 1989 Y.P. Convention.

During these summer months the congregation of the South Holland P.R.C. in South Holland, IL is busy preparing a pictorial church directory. Pictures were scheduled to be taken in July and August.

The building committee of the First P.R.C. in Edmonton, AB, Canada "invited" their congregation to get together and paint the church and parsonage exterior and the church basement. Volunteers were asked to come whenever and for as long as they could. I just wish it was that easy to get the exterior of my house painted. Any volunteers?

MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

To help assure a warm welcome for Rev. and Mrs. Bruinsma and their family, the congregation of our First P.R.C. in Holland, MI held a grocery shower for them. The Consistory also made plans to move the Bruinsmas possessions into the parsonage on July 4.

The Jamaica Committee of First Church in Grand Rapids, MI was also busy arranging for a farewell program for Rev. Bruinsma. It was tentatively scheduled for Friday, July 14. It was hoped at that time to be able to give to the Bruinsmas a token of appreciation from First Church for the five years they labored on their behalf in a foreign mission field.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

On May 8 the annual Essay Awards Luncheon of the Economics Club of Grand Rapids, MI was held. Twelve students from local high schools were presented with awards for their winning essays; six of them were from Covenant Christian. The judges for the contest chose the winning papers solely on the basis of their content, without knowing what schools the authors represented.

MINISTERIAL CALLS

Our Faith congregation in Jenison, MI called Rev. Koole; Peace Church in Illinois called Rev. Van Baren; Rev. Ron Hanko has declined the call from Pella, Iowa and is considering the call to Isabel, S.D. □

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Society of the Doon Protestant Reformed Church expresses its Christian sympathy to Mrs. Henry Van Oort and Mrs. Joawn Van Oort and their families in the death of MR. HENRY VAN OORT.

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." (Psalm 27:14)
Rev. R. Dykstra, Pres.
Nancy Zeutenhorst, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory and the congregation of the Loveland Protestant Reformed Church express their heartfelt Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert

Griess and family in the death of his brother, MR. OSCAR GRIESS. May the bereaved be comforted in the knowledge of the truth that "... all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28)

Rev. Ron Cammenga, Pres.

Mr. Robert Brands, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Lynden Protestant Reformed Church extends its sympathy to Mrs. Johanna Scheele and to Mr. and Mrs. Bernie Worst and family in the death of our beloved brother and former elder, MR. DINGMAN SCHEELE on May 31, 1989.

"The same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel — and said: Lord now lettest Thy servant depart in peace, According to Thy Word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." (Luke 2:25, 29, 30)

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of the Lynden Protestant Reformed Church expresses its heartfelt sympathy to our sister, Mrs. Johanna Scheele in the death of her husband, MR. DINGMAN SCHEELE. May the Lord shelter her under His wings and comfort her with His promise ... "Thou shalt guide me by Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory." (Psalm 73:24)

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Bible Study of the Lynden Protestant Reformed Church wishes to convey its sympathy to our sister, Mrs. Rena Worst, in the death of her father, MR. DINGMAN SCHEELE. We rejoice with her in the spiritual heritage which is hers and commit her to Jehovah God "under whose wings thou art come to trust." (Ruth 2:12)

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On July 15, 1989, our parents, MR. AND MRS. GUS STREYLE, celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. We rejoice with them and give thanks to our heavenly Father for these years they have shared with each other and with their family. We pray that God will continue to bless them in the years to come.

"Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." (Psalm 32:11)

John and LeAnn Streyle
Kathy, Adam and Grant
Mike and Elaine Rau
Nathan and Benjamin

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On August 2, 1989, the Lord willing, our parents and grandparents, MR. & MRS. TUNIS JANSMA, will celebrate their 40th anniversary. Rejoicing with them in His faithfulness, we thank God for their Christian instruction and constant love in bringing us up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is our prayer that God will continue to grant them good health and all spiritual blessings according to His good pleasure.

"I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever: with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations." (Psalm 89:1)

David and Diane Bonestroo
Daniel, Doreanne, Dean,
Darren, Devin
Robert and Marlys Brands
Randall, Angela
David and Rachel Griess
Stefan, Megan
Terrance Jansma

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Doon Protestant Reformed Church expresses sincere and heartfelt sympathy to one of its members, Deacon Howard Bonestroo, and to the Klein family in the loss of a husband, father and grandfather, CLARENCE KLEIN.

May this family find comfort and strength in God's Word knowing that God's grace is sufficient to bear this burden of grief.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him." (Psalm 103:17)

Rev. R. Dykstra, Pres.
Peter Van Den Top, Clerk

NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Doon, Iowa, on Wednesday, September 6, 1989, at 8:30 a.m., the Lord willing. All material for the Agenda is to be in the hands of the Stated Clerk, 30 days before Classis convenes. All delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the Clerk of Doon's Consistory using the forms provided for that purpose.

Rev. R. Hanko, Stated Clerk

ADVANCE NOTICE!!!

Fall Conference, **HAVING A HEART FOR GOD**, Friday evening to Saturday mid-afternoon, September 22 & 23, South Holland Protestant Reformed Church. Speeches, workshops, Bible study, fellowship, and good food. Plan now to attend. Details to follow.

ATTENTION S.B. SUPPORTERS

Reserve Thursday, September 21, 8 PM for attending the R.F.P.A. Annual Meeting at Southwest Protestant Reformed Church. A most beneficial evening is being planned. More information at a later date.

NOTICE!!!

Classis East meets in regular session on Wednesday, September 13, 1989 at First Prot. Ref. Church, Grand Rapids. Material to be treated at this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least three weeks prior to the convening of this session.

Jon J. Huisken, Stated Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

Herewith the Board of the R.F.P.A. (*Standard Bearer*) and its Association members extend its most sincere sympathy to the wife, children, and grandchildren of Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema, whose earthly sojourn ceased on Monday, July 17, 1989.

May the Scriptural truths he taught and preached, and those he wrote on the printed page of the S.B. as its former Editor, be their comfort and peace.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (II Timothy 4:7, 8)

John J. Dykstra, President
Peter Koole, Secretary