

**A Reformed  
Semi-Monthly  
Magazine**

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# *THE* **STANDARD BEARER**

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. . . If we hunger and thirst for righteousness, we want to be right in our doctrine and our life. We cannot hold to any doctrine unless we are sure it is in harmony with the Word of God. We cannot practice one thing unless we know it is divinely approved.

See "Hungering After Righteousness"  
— page 459

# Contents

September 1, 1990

Meditation – Rev. Jason L. Kortering <b>HUNGERING AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS</b>	459
Editorial – Prof. David J. Engelsma <b>FEMINISM ENTRENCHED IN THE CRC</b>	461
<b>LETTERS</b>	463
The Day of Shadows – Rev. John A. Heys <b>THAT WONDERFUL COVENANT (1)</b>	465
Search the Scriptures – Rev. Gise J. VanBaren <b>THE AMAZING EXAMPLE OF CHRIST</b>	467
When Thou Sittest In Thine House – Mrs. Mary Beth Lubbers <b>THE REFORMED WIFE: MOTHER (2)</b>	469
Special Article – Rev. Philip Rawson <b>THE WORK OF THE MEASBRO DYKE CONGREGATION</b>	471
Church and State – Mr. James Lanting <b>FEDERAL EQUAL PAY AND MINIMUM WAGE LAWS APPLIED TO CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS</b>	474
Taking Heed to Doctrine – Rev. Bernard Woudenberg <b>ETERNAL ADOPTION</b>	475
<b>BOOK REVIEWS</b>	477
<b>NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES – Mr. Benjamin Wigger</b>	479

## IN THIS ISSUE...

In a further interruption of his series on the covenant, the editor uses his editorial space in this issue to analyze the significant decision of the Christian Reformed Church at her synod this summer, opening the offices of minister and elder to women. He makes it clear that issues of the utmost gravity were at stake in this decision: the authority, clarity, and sufficiency of Scripture; the headship of the husband at home; the headship of Christ over the church; and the church's calling to be separate from the world. Prof. Engelsma, incidentally, attended the sessions of the CRC synod at which the matter of women-in-ecclesiastical-office was debated and decided.

There have been it seems, many occasions of late to interrupt, not only series, but also regular rubrics, which have therefore appeared with notable irregularity. We are sorry about that, but glad for the opportunity to be able to learn, still, for example, something of the history and work of the Measbro Dyke church in England, from the speech delivered by Rev. Philip Rawson at the International Reformed Conference. Look for that in this issue as a Special Article.

In the rubric dealing with the Reformed Family, Mary Beth Lubbers addresses again the role of the mother in the home. Accompanying the manuscript which she submitted for this issue was a short note in which she offered a further service to our readers. She writes:

"Some women find relaxation from the rigors of homemaking and motherhood by swatting a tennis ball around. Good therapy! But for those women, like myself, who would rather hit the books, I have prepared a sheet of worthwhile books for their perusal.

"Anyone who is interested in obtaining this recommended list should send a self-addressed and stamped envelope to:

Mary Beth Lubbers  
16535 Elm Ct.  
South Holland, IL 60473"

–D.D.

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## Meditation

Rev. Jason Kortering

# Hungering After Righteousness

*"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled".* (Matt. 5:6)

The Lord Jesus tells us in this brief verse that it is blessed to be hungry and thirsty for righteousness.

It is blessed, mind you, to be hungry and thirsty! For the happiness of the child of God is not simply in being filled. That, to be sure, is most blessed; but even the hunger pangs and dire thirst itself are most blessed.

We have to be spiritually-minded to understand this.

From the natural point of view, our lack of food and drink is not occasion for joy, but bitterness of soul. The only conceivable blessedness in such a situation is that we may be filled. Spiritually, however, it is different.

Why is this?

Hungering and thirsting is the first sign of spiritual life. A spiritually dead person has no hunger or thirst for the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven. He may well be likened to a corpse that is washed on the shore of the sea. Such a dead body has no life, hence no need for food or drink. The body may come ashore near a picnic area with tables laden with the best of food and drink. It means nothing to such a dead corpse, for

the need and desire for food and drink have long gone. The same is true for a spiritually dead person. He has no spiritual life; hence he has consumed no spiritual food or drink and he has no hunger pangs for more. If, however, you hunger and thirst after righteousness, you are most blessed, for the hunger itself and thirst itself is proof that you are alive and seek after refreshment which Jesus provides.

Jesus makes this point at this important juncture in His sermon.

This is now the fourth beatitude. In each of these statements of spiritual blessedness, Jesus describes a certain spiritual quality of each of the citizens of the kingdom. The order is significant. Basic to our understanding of ourselves is the fact that we come to terms with our own worthlessness. "Poor in spirit" is Jesus' way of saying, we do not have what is necessary to be in the kingdom. When we stand before the majesty of God, and the Spirit of Christ works in us, our proper response is, I am nothing, I am spiritually bankrupt. I am in debt and can never pay. We are not indifferent to this spiritual lack; rather we cry to God by reason of our need, we cry to God for mercy and seek forgiveness of our sins. Hence, we "mourn." All boasting and self-advance are gone, we are "meek," we acknowledge that we cannot attain unto divine approval. The only hope is that God will deal mercifully with us. Hence, when Jesus comes to this spiritual quality, we begin to see the opening at the end of the tunnel. We have come to appreciate that righteousness is the way that we can be accepted in God's sight. We hunger and thirst

for it. This is the great guarantee, all who hunger and thirst *shall be* filled. There is no doubt about it.

O, that God may give to each of us an awareness of the lack of righteousness that we have in ourselves, and grant us a hunger and thirst for the provision that we have in Jesus.

May we be as David, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps. 42:1, 2).

Why is righteousness so important in the kingdom of heaven?

The word itself means to be straight, upright. To use the language of the carpenter, it is to be plumb.

God is righteous, and anyone who will have fellowship with Him must himself be righteous. "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. 32:4). This applies to God's very Being. He is three Persons in one Being. The three Persons of the Godhead all express themselves righteously. This means there is no sin in God. The thoughts of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are in perfect agreement with His own standard of right. The law which He maintains for Himself is that He lives in the sphere of holiness and truth. Even God's sovereign desires are perfect expressions of that which is right in His own eyes. This applies equally to His works. God's righteousness is expressed in His eternal counsel and good pleasure. He manifests His righteousness in the

Rev. Kortering is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan.



creation of His hand and in the salvation of His people.

This standard of right and wrong is communicated to us His creatures. It is not so that we do not know what the righteousness of God is all about. Through His dealings with the saints of both the Old and New Testaments, He revealed His sense of right and wrong. These were recorded for us in the Holy Scriptures.

If we want to know what is right or wrong in God's eyes, we need but study His Word and know His law.

The righteousness of the kingdom of heaven is clearly set forth.

Do you hunger and thirst for such righteousness?

If you do, you confess that you do not have it in yourself. Such spiritual awareness is exactly in harmony with God's description of man. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Or from the New Testament, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18). We will then understand clearly that the ungodly man cannot live a good life in the sight of God. Even his so-called civic good is not evidence of righteousness before God; for he cannot even use the glimmerings of natural light aright, not even in things natural or civil (Canons of Dordt, Head III and IV, Art. 4). Neither can the child of God who is saved by grace ever contribute toward His righteousness before God by doing good works, for even the best of our works are polluted with sin and cannot contribute towards our righteousness with God (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 24).

The only righteousness that God reveals to man apart from Jesus Christ is the due reward for sin, which is the curse of God temporally and eternally.

The Lord Jesus anticipated His work on the cross as He instructed His disciples and His beloved church in those words: "Blessed

are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness." The righteousness which is in Jesus is rooted in the eternal election of God: "According as He has chosen us in him, that we should be holy and without blame before Him" (Eph. 1:4). Or listen to the words of II Corinthians 5:21: "For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." If you ever ask, where is righteousness to be obtained, then gaze upon that cross. God gave His Son to obtain righteousness for us. This Jesus did by His willingness to bear the penalty for our sins and make payment before the Father. He kept the law perfectly by descending into hell as an act of perfect love.

The righteousness that flows from Jesus is twofold.

There is in Him imputed righteousness. This is a legal term which means simply that God received the perfect work of Jesus as payment for the sins of His elect and credited the account of each of His own so that the payment of Jesus became their own. Canceled debt lays the foundation for loving friendship.

There is also infused righteousness. This refers to the work of the ascended Jesus, Who from His glory in heaven sends forth the gospel through the Person of His Holy Spirit, and works a spiritual transformation in the hearts and lives of His people. By this work, we more and more hate sin and begin to walk in the way of obedience. We become spiritually alive. We struggle against our sins and seek the blessed life of obedience. In this way we enjoy loving friendship with the ever blessed God.

This work of God makes us hungry and thirsty for righteousness.

Are you really hungry and thirsty for this righteousness?

Physical hunger and thirst is a matter of pain. The body cries out for nourishment, and the throat is parched and dry. Most of us have not experienced this in the extreme. Some children of God have. The lack produces pain!

Are you so sensitive toward God that His righteousness and holiness produces a deep sense of unworthiness and lack? Does your soul crave for this supply? Do you have a ravenous appetite which drives you to seek this necessary supply?

My dear brother and sister, you need not guess. Do not say, "I think so." Be sure that your answer is a resounding, "Yes!"

We can tell when our inner soul longs to be right with God. We are well aware that the Bible is the revelation of God. In it He tells us what is truth and error, what is obedience and disobedience. If we hunger and thirst for righteousness, we want to be right in our doctrine and our life. We cannot hold to any doctrine unless we are sure it is in harmony with the Word of God. We cannot practice one thing unless we know it is divinely approved.

At the same time, hungering and thirsting for righteousness drives a wedge between ourselves and the world around us. We cannot be the friends of the world and a friend of God. We cannot love the world and love God. Righteousness requires spiritual separation.

The more we practice this daily, the more our hungering and thirsting for righteousness will bring us to the house of God faithfully on the Lord's Day. It will not be a question of being forced to attend church regularly, we will recognize the need for ourselves and our families.

This hunger and thirst will cause us to pray daily and seek His direction through the open Word of God.

The filling is guaranteed in that way.

As guilty sinners we repent and receive forgiveness at the cross. As stumbling saints, we receive strength by the grace provided.

What a day that will be when we will be completely filled. "When I in righteousness at last thy glorious face shall see, when all the weary night is past and I awake with thee to view the glories that abide, then, then, I shall be satisfied."

The white robes will be an everlasting testimony of our righteousness in Jesus. □



# Feminism Entrenched in the CRC

How deep the division is between the Protestant Reformed Churches and the Christian Reformed Church became painfully evident this June with the decision of the synod of the CRC opening the offices of minister and elder to women.

The decision was to "permit churches to use their discretion in utilizing the gifts of women members in all the offices of the church."

It was a major decision.

The CRC broke with the long tradition of Reformed churches going back to Calvin that reserved the special offices in the church for qualified men. Indeed, this has been the tradition in the church from the earliest post-apostolic church. She did this even though she herself acknowledged that she had no clear, compelling biblical basis for breaking with her own, and the catholic church's, tradition. The grounds for the decision to open the offices to women do not include a single biblical reference.

By the decision, the denomination rebels against the sovereign Lordship of the Head of the church with regard to the spiritual policy by which the true church must be governed. As the creed of the CRC, the Belgic Confession, states in article 30, the Lord teaches this policy in I Timothy 2 and 3. The will of Christ for the government of His church is that the church be ruled by bishops, whose qualifications include that they are men (I Tim. 3:1-7; cf. also Titus 1:5-9). He forbids women to teach or to exercise dominion over the man at church, re-

quiring the female members of the congregation to learn there in silence with all subjection (I Tim. 2:11ff.). This includes the prohibition against women leading in public prayer in the worship services of the church. Only men may lead in prayer in the services of divine worship (I Tim. 2:8).

By thus setting aside the will of the Lord for the government of His church, the CRC challenged the headship of Christ. It was significant that the issue of women in the offices of pastor and elder was decided in connection with a synodical report on headship — the headship of husbands over their wives and the headship of Christ over the church. So inextricably does the Bible bind together the exercise of authority at church with the headship of the husband over the wife and with the headship of Christ over the church that to pronounce on the first necessarily involves saying something also about the last two matters.

Permitting women to hold office in the church is a direct challenge to the headship of Christ in two ways. First, the church disobeys the command of Christ in Scripture that women not be permitted to teach or to exercise authority at church. This is a challenge to Christ's headship just as is a child's defiant disobedience to an order of his parents. Second, because the Bible relates the man's rule at church to the husband's headship over his wife, the church that allows women to hold office must also deny the headship of the hus-

band over his wife. But Scripture makes the closest comparison between the husband's headship over his wife and Christ's headship over the church, especially in Ephesians 5:22-33. Thus, denial of the headship of the husband carries with it denial of the headship of Christ.

The way in which this has been done in the CRC, in the interests of women in office, is the reinterpretation of headship as merely "source" or "origin." The husband is merely the source of the wife. He is not the authority over her. How I could ever be conceived to be the source of my wife is a mystery to me. Ephesians 5:22ff. very plainly means by the headship of the husband his authority over the wife. For the fitting response of the wife to the headship is that she submits (vss. 22, 24) and that she reverences him (v. 33). But the astounding, inescapable implication of this reinterpretation of the headship of the husband is the stripping of authority also from the headship of Christ, for the husband is head of the wife *even as* Christ is the head of the church (v. 23).

Although the challenge to Christ's authority is the more grievous evil, the attack upon the headship of every husband in his marriage and family is no minor matter. With the introduction of rule by the wife at church, the authority of the husband at home is lost, including the authority to "give direction," as those desperately trying to preserve something yet of the genuine, full-blooded headship of the Bible weakly put it.



This is a daring assault upon the fundamental structure of marriage and the home as ordained by the Creator. The practical consequences of a headless, or of a two-headed, home will be calamitous.

The possibility of the decision to open the office of women is a view of Holy Scripture different from the creedally Reformed, indeed Protestant, view of Scripture as the inspired Word of God. The CRC decision on women in office expressed a view of Scripture that can reject the authority of explicit apostolic commands for church and home on the ground that the commands reflect the limitations of the time and culture in which the apostle gave them. The decision charged Scripture with obscurity in critically important areas of church and family. And it permitted the Holy Spirit to lead the church into truth in these areas, not only apart from the written Word, but also in direct conflict with it.

Put simply, the issue, women in office, is not whatsoever the issue of male and female, but the issue of the doctrine of Holy Scripture and therefore the issue of the headship of the Lord Jesus in and over His church.

A synod that can open the preaching and ruling offices to women in the face of the plain prohibition of the Bible can also decide anything at all that a determined group in the church fights for over a period of years. Scripture no longer functions in the church as the infallible rule of faith and life (Belgic Confession, Art. 7). The people see this and become skeptical about the Bible. This is the price that the CRC synod will pay among its people. It will not be that the people leave the church, as was the obvious fear of the victorious majority. History teaches that the people stay. But it will be the far more expensive price of the loss of trust that Scripture is the Word of God. The cynical will laugh at the ability of the theologians to make the Bible say whatever contemporary society dictates. The more devout will conclude, at the very least, that they cannot understand the Bible.

Contributing to this decision of the CRC was her decision sixty-six years ago adopting the doctrine of common grace. I do not mean by this that there lurks in the terminology of that decision some hitherto overlooked phrase suggesting women elders. But the doctrine of common grace opened the CRC up to the unbelieving world. It was intended to do this. The party that stood for the antithesis — the spiritual separation from the world of ungodliness — was rejected and expelled.

The drive for women in ecclesiastical office is one aspect of a movement. The movement is feminism. Feminism did not originate in the church, but in the world. It is not a Christian movement. It is the revolt of the female segment of the ungodly world against the will of God for the woman as His will was expressed in creation and as it is made known more fully in the revelation of His Word. The world regards subjection to a husband, marriage, and the work of a mother in the home as slavery. To escape all this is liberation. To this movement, the CRC has opened herself. Sixty-six years of viewing the world as good, of seeking accommodation with the world, and even of regarding the world's wisdom as regulative for the church, under the influence of common grace, has assisted in bringing this about.

I doubt that the synod of 1990 will be the last synod to deal with matters of "women's liberation." Feminism has made clear that it considers the "patriarchal" Bible to be a book full of male chauvinism; that it regards Christianity as a major cause of the oppression of women; and that it will be satisfied with nothing less than the radical overhaul of the doctrine of the Being of God and of all traditional theology. The CRC will have its hands full with feminism for a long time.

The PRC must take heed! Not nervously, not suspiciously, not in a reactionary fashion, so that they try to curtail the legitimate use of the gifts of women in the office of believer. But they must be watchful in this area nonetheless.

I say this, not because there is any feminist agitation in the PRC, but because the feminist movement is a real and powerful force today. It is an aspect of the mighty spirit of the age. Already in 1914, in his book, *De Eerepositie Der Vrouw* (*The Honorable Status of the Woman*), referring to the feminist movement, Abraham Kuyper warned, "The spirit of the age is such an almost irresistible force." He added, "Also in our own circles, whoever does not take a very firm stand (*wie niet zeer vast in zijn schoenen staat*) is easily swept away with the movement."

It will not do to laugh the movement off, putting down the quest by women for the office of preaching with the witticism, "God made roosters to crow and hens to lay eggs." The feminists are in dead earnest. We must take the movement seriously.

The rule holds: Resist the beginnings! The CRC decision of 1990 began with the decision of 1957 to permit women to participate in congregational meetings and continued with the decision of 1984 to open the office of deacon to women. Both of these were decisions that allowed women to rule in the church. Both of these decisions are referred to in the grounds for the decision of 1990.

In the gracious providence of God, the PRC are in a strong position to withstand the gale-force wind of feminism. For almost seventy years now we have learned to think and to walk antithetically. We are unimpressed with the world's wisdom. We are suspicious of the world's proposals. We are prepared to be a scorned minority, saying "no" when all the world is saying "yes." For we know the world. The world crucified the Lord of glory and was judged by His cross. The world is made up of natural men and women who cannot know the things of the Spirit of God about male and female, about marriage and family, about office and government in the church of Christ.

Such knowledge requires grace.

And the world is without God and without grace. □ — DJE



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## Letters

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### The SB on Tape

I received this very nice letter and thought you might be able to use it or part of it in a future issue under "Letters." We are still looking for additional subscribers who have reading problems, and even those who do not find the time to sit down and read each issue and would prefer to use their personal cassette player at home or in their car.

Thanks again for your support.  
Ken Rietema  
Grand Rapids, MI

Dear Mr. Rietema,

Thank you for sending me each month the cassette copy of *The Standard Bearer*. Each copy has something which I especially enjoy and find enriching to my thoughts. There is plenty of material available for a person who cannot see, but so much of it is undesirable from some point of view.

When I get *The Standard Bearer* I know it is going to be theologically accurate and clear and decent to read. I pick it up with a sense of relief.

I have no ability left to read, so depend on what I can remember or absorb from hearing.

Sincerely yours,  
Edwin P. Elliott, Sr.  
Manassas, VA

### Response

We remind our readers that every issue of *The Standard Bearer* is available on cassette tape, especially for those who are blind. To obtain this service regularly, write Mr. Ken Rietema, c/o Southeast Protestant Reformed Church, 1535 Cambridge Ave. S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506. The July 20, 1990 issue of *Christian Observer* featured Mr. Rietema, his daughter-in-

law, Cathy, and their "Standard Bearer Tape Ministry." The cover of this issue of the magazine has a picture of Southeast's church building. Anyone desiring to get this particular issue, or to become a regular subscriber, should write *Christian Observer*, 9400 Fairview Ave., Manassas, VA 22110. — Ed.

### SB Reprint in New Zealand

This is to inform you that I have reprinted an article from *The Standard Bearer* (Vol. 66, # 16, "The Gospel of Christ," by Rev. James Slopsema). It will be used as a "flier" and will have various contact names and addresses of our PRC members, according to the area in which it is distributed.

The only alterations I've made are to some spellings which I've brought into line with NZ conventions.

Thank you for an unfailingly excellent magazine.

R.J. Kane  
Wellington, New Zealand

### Response

Such use of articles published in *The SB* is permitted, indeed encouraged. We ask that the reprint make proper acknowledgment and that a copy of the reprint be sent to the editorial office of *The SB*. — Ed.

### Synodical Decision on Crosses

In the May 1, 1990 issue of *The Standard Bearer*, the practice of the "Moonshine Ministry Center" of publicly displaying a cross with a man upon it (wonder why it wasn't a woman) was condemned as blasphemous. Although this was *not* a

religious worship service, I agree with *The SB's* assessment.

Consistency is a jewel. In the August 1, 1990 issue of *The SB*, the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches defends the use of a cross in the worship services. With this I disagree. Is it any less blasphemous?

The use of the cross in Reformed churches has led to all kinds of aberrations. I know of one church that displays a cross with a wreath of thorns on the upright, and a red cloth draped across the arms. Another displays a cross on the floor with a red cloth draped from the top of the pulpit down to the arms of the cross. The cross also had a wreath of thorns on the upright. Another church has three crosses behind the pulpit and a red banner draped from above the pulpit to the ceiling of the sanctuary. Two churches I know of have crosses and banners displayed around the perimeter of the sanctuary. Enough of this, but can the Synod of the PRC guarantee that this will not happen in their churches?

An empty cross probably means very little unless one places a figure on it. Can the PR Synod guarantee that not one of the members of the PRC does not in his or her imagination place a figure upon it? It matters little whether this is done in actuality or that it is done in imagination. In either case it becomes a crucifix. And can the PR Synod guarantee that no one will in his mind genuflect before that cross? Again, it matters little whether this is done in actuality or in the mind.

The Synod makes much of the fact that displaying a cross is only symbolic and not imagery. But is there that much difference between a symbol, a sign, or an image? Although there are distinctions, there is also a relationship between these words. And I would ask the



Synod, what is the purpose of displaying a cross in the worship service? The Lord has left us with only three symbols, signs, or images. These are the water in baptism and the bread and wine in Communion. This is enough, as He has left no instructions as to displaying crosses in the worship services. The Lord will not have His people taught by "dumb images" and, I may add, "dumb symbols," but by the pure preaching of His word. Can the PR Synod guarantee that not one child, young person, or adult will have his attention drawn to the cross displayed and neglect hearing the preaching of the Word?

The PR Synod states that "this is not out of step with Reformed tradition and the writings of the Reformed fathers." They have not mentioned names but I give you John Calvin, *Institutes* 1.11. 7, who condemns the use of crosses in the worship service.

I gather that most of the day was spent on the cross-appeal. I was not there, but could it be that a spirit of unanimity was not existent in this matter and that it is far from settled?

Howard E. VanManen  
Grand Rapids, MI

## Response

The decision of the Protestant Reformed Synod 1990 concerned the lawfulness of a plain cross, not of a crucifix or of the dramatic reenactment of the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. The issue before the synod was whether a symbol of a cross in or on a church building in itself constitutes violation of the Second Commandment, not whether such a symbol can possibly be abused. Synod did not approve "use of a cross in the worship services." There is no use of crosses in the worship of Protestant Reformed churches. Crosses merely appear on or in some church buildings. If Mr. VanManen will read the complete decision in the "Acts of Synod 1990," other questions he raises about the issue will be answered, particularly the question of the distinction between

an image and a symbol. He and other interested persons who are not members of the PRC can obtain a copy of the "Acts" from the synodical stated clerk, Rev. M. Joostens, 2016 Tekonsha Rd. S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506 for \$5.

As to the danger of abuse, the PRC will ward it off, with the host of other threats to pure worship, only as the Holy Spirit preserves in their midst the worship of God "in spirit and in truth." Symbols of crosses have appeared in PR church buildings for many years (on baptismal fonts; Lord's Supper tables; communion sets; etc.) without resulting in any of the oddities mentioned by Mr. VanManen. If he will visit any PR church service at any time anywhere, he will find only the simply, sober, spiritual service that has always characterized Reformed worship and that is demanded by the Heidelberg Catechism in Questions 96 and 103.

I do not believe that "the use of the cross in Reformed churches has led to all kinds of aberrations." Rather, aberrations in Reformed churches have led to all kinds of superstitious uses of the cross.

The passage in Calvin, the strongest passage in the *Institutes*

on crosses, does not condemn the symbol of a cross in or on a church building as transgression of the Second Commandment. Calvin condemns the use of crosses by the Roman Catholic Church to do that which can only be done by the preaching of the Word, namely, teaching the people the gospel of Christ's atoning death. "What purpose did it serve for so many crosses...to be erected here and there in churches, if this fact had been duly and faithfully taught: that Christ died on the cross to bear our curse.... From this one fact they could have learned more than from a thousand crosses...."

The decision of synod was unanimous. This unanimous decision followed careful study of the issues raised in the appeals and free, thorough debate. Whether there is unanimity in the denomination on the matter is of no consequence as regards its being settled. According to Article 31 of our Church Order, the venerable Church Order of Dordt, having been agreed upon by majority vote, the decision of synod is settled and binding in the PRC, unless it be proved to synod that the decision conflicts with Scripture or the church order. □ —Ed.

## Comforted of God

When filled with sorrow and despair,  
O'er trials more than I can bear;  
These precious words dispel each  
fear:

"Comforted of God!"

When lonely and forsaken, too,  
By those I thought were friends, and  
true,  
How precious are these words,  
though few,

"Comforted of God!"

When weak the body, racked with  
pain,  
And, suffering, seek for rest in vain;  
There comes the soothing, sweet  
refrain,

"Comforted of God!"

In moments dark, and sorely pressed  
With cares, from which there seems  
no rest,  
I go to Him, and on His breast,  
Am "Comforted of God."

When from loved ones I'm called to  
part,  
And naught can soothe the aching  
heart;  
He bids my sighs and tears depart.  
I'm "Comforted of God."

I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou dost  
hear  
When sorrow's weeping brings Thee  
near:  
And giveth to the heart this cheer,  
"Comforted of God!"

Believe His Word, O suffering one,  
When thou art burdened and un-  
done.  
Rejoice in Him, that blessed One:  
Be "Comforted of God."

—SB, January 15, 1931



## The Day of Shadows

Rev. John Heys

# That Wonderful Covenant (1)

Are you aware of the fact that the two main sections of our Bible, which are called the Old Testament and the New Testament, can also be called the Old Covenant and the New Covenant? Did you ever notice that even though we call the first 39 books in our Bible the Old Testament, we cannot in the King James Version of our Bibles find the word testament even once?

Given the privilege recently of speaking on the subject "Preaching From the Old Testament," at a conference in our South Holland, Illinois church, I addressed the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament, and also that which these testaments have in common. Because there is spiritual edification, benefit, and encouragement in the fact that these two testaments bring us one glorious truth about God's covenant with His elect children, I plan to present some of that speech in a few installments in this rubric. We certainly will be dealing with the day of shadows in these articles.

Let it first of all be established that a testament is a covenant, and that our covenant God presents that covenant to us in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. You may turn to Webster's dictionary and find that he calls a testa-

ment "a covenant, an agreement between persons or parties." He says that to make a testament means "to make one's will." Theologically, he says, a testament is "the promise of God revealed in the Scriptures."

We likewise speak of a man's last will and testament. What we mean is that a man wills to have his earthly possessions given to certain persons or institutions when he has passed away by death and can no longer use these possessions. The point is that we must keep in mind that God's covenant is His will to bestow heavenly blessedness upon us through the death into which He entered. Yes, Christ Jesus our Savior is the second Person of the Holy Trinity, Who came into our flesh in His sovereign grace. And His covenant is the will and testament that decrees everlasting blessedness for us through that death. Because of His death we may enter into His house of many mansions and have an intimate covenant fellowship there with Him.

It is interesting to note — as already suggested — that although the Hebrew word *berith*, which means covenant, appears 250 times in the Old Testament, it is always translated as covenant, not testament. We, as the Old Testament clearly and powerfully teaches us, have a covenant God. We have a God Who establishes a relationship of friendship and fellowship with us through the death of His Son. Then, too, the New Testament word in its Greek form, namely, *diatheke*, is translated 20 times as covenant, but also 13 times as testament. When we find that word in Hebrews 8:5, where we read of

Christ as "the mediator of a better covenant," we also find in some Bibles the marginal note that we can here read of a better "testament." The word used in the Greek Bible, that is, in the original language, may be translated either as covenant or as testament.

Now the truth upon which we must insist is that although we may speak of an Old Testament or Old Covenant, and of a New Testament or New Covenant, there is only one covenant that God established with man, not two of them. What we have are two different forms of presentation of that one covenant. What we have are different presentations of the same promises of that covenant. But there is only one covenant that God established.

Do we not in Malachi 3:6 read, "For I am the Lord, I change not"? As the sovereign, almighty God He cannot be changed by our works or by our lack of interest in His covenant. What He eternally decreed stands exactly as it was divinely determined. No creature can by his mind, will, or acts cause God to change His mind and will. As Jehovah, the I AM, He never on His own part ever changes His mind or will.

That we in Hebrews 8:6 are informed by our covenant God that Christ is the mediator of "a better covenant which is established upon better promises" does not mean therefore that He is the mediator of a covenant that is basically different and that rules out what had been promised in the old or first covenant. It does not mean that this better covenant presents gifts that are of a different nature than those enjoyed and promised by the old or

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first covenant. That which is better is always basically the same as the former thing with which it is compared. A better house is just as surely a house as the object with which it is compared. The word better stands between good and best, not between bad and worst. It speaks of that which is compared with something that is good. God's covenant, presented to us in the Old Testament, presented to the saints of that day something very good. Did not the psalmist say in Psalm 34:8, "O taste and see that God is good"? He promises some very, very good things in that Old Testament. However, what He presents in Christ in the New Testament is a richer measure of goodness, a richer measure of the same goodness.

In fact, we may go a step further. As already stated, the word better stands between good and best. Therefore we may be assured by the New Testament that we are going to enjoy a higher blessedness than we can enjoy in this life. We do and can enjoy now, more fully than the Old Testament saints could, the blessings of God's covenant. For we see Christ and His cross, while they saw the human high priests and the sacrifices of lambs. We see Christ in His resurrection, ascension up into heaven, and being seated at God's right hand. That is shown to us in this better covenant or testament. What is more, the best is yet to come! We will soon see Christ personally and will live with Him in the new Jerusalem. Then we will have the best knowledge and enjoyment of God's covenant.

All this, however, does not mean that the Old Testament saints did not enjoy the same covenant blessings, the same good that we now know better and enjoy more richly. Christ having come reveals Himself far more richly to us. We see a far more wonderful and powerful high priest. And we see more fully how our covenant God realizes His covenant promises, but also why we can be so sure of that covenant. Turn to Psalm 25:14, which we find in the Old Testament or Old Covenant. There we see how richly

the saints in that period of time, which we call the Old Testament dispensation, knew God's promises to us. There David wrote, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant."

Now, that covenant which God will show us, and did show to the Old Testament saints, and is mentioned there in Psalm 25:14, presents God's will and testament to bless us through the death of Christ, so that we may enjoy His secret. And that secret very plainly David enjoyed. We today will enjoy that secret more fully when we look at the meaning of that Hebrew word which is translated as secret. The Old Testament saints who spoke the Hebrew language knew the richness of what David wrote. They saw this as a very wonderful promise of God, a very rich blessing which His covenant assures us will be ours in His grace.

Indeed, a secret is a wonderful thing. God's secret is that which the unbelievers cannot and will not enjoy. They laugh at us, and laughed in the Old Testament dispensation at the people of God who confessed that they were Jehovah's covenant children. They today consider us to be fools, a very silly people. However, look up that word "secret" in a Hebrew dictionary and you will see how tremendously rich the truth is here that God's secret will be with us. Gesenius, in his Hebrew dictionary, tells us that the root meaning of this word is "divan" or "couch." He also tells us that the word secret means "a circle of people sitting together." We may, therefore, explain that word "divan" or "couch" as a "love seat" upon which God sits with us in a most intimate fellowship of friendship. That is what God's covenant is, namely, a relationship of friendship and fellowship between God and those whom He chose in His Son, and gave the right for them to have this by His Son's death. Does this not reveal how rich the Old Testament is in presenting God's covenant with His elect children?

Adam and Eve enjoyed covenant fellowship with God in the garden

of Eden. They came to the tree of life by going around the tree of knowledge of good and evil, leaving it alone, refusing to sin against God by eating its forbidden fruit. Eating of that fruit — as they did — revealed a lack of desire for fellowship with God. They revealed that Satan was their friend with whom they desired to sit down for fellowship. They threw away God's covenant fellowship and chose the curse which is in Satan's covenant.

But God in His sovereign grace came and, in their hearing, told Satan that He would establish a new covenant with part of the human race. Satan and his spiritual seed will be hated and punished. They will have their heads broken and thus suffer a fatal blow. The Hebrew word which Moses used, as led by God, is better translated as "break," not merely "bruise." It is used that way in Job 9:17 where we read, "For He breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth without cause." And do we not also in Romans 6:17 read that the wages of sin is death? To break one's head is to kill him!

Now, since the love of God assures us that He has prepared a love seat for us and has caused David to reveal that to us, we certainly have the truth established that, in the Old Testament, God's covenant with His people is presented very richly, even before the giving of the better covenant, after Christ was born and earned salvation for us by His cross. The Old Testament types and shadows did richly present to the church God's wonderful covenant; and the saints, as is plain from Hebrews 11 in the New Testament, enjoyed a very good presentation of that covenant. The shed blood and clothes of skin not only gave Adam and Eve the promise of Christ's coming but also the beginning of the enjoyment of that secret of the Lord, His fellowship because of His love and concern for His elect. He came to a spiritually dead man and brought him spiritual life. And we, in the New Testament dispensation, have that Old Testament promise to encourage and comfort us. Let us appreciate how rich the Old Testa-



ment presents to us God's covenant. Doing so will help us to enjoy the richer, better promises of the New Testament. Without that Old Testament we cannot under-

stand and enjoy the New Testament promises.

We will, the Lord willing, continue this truth next time and point out the richness of the Old

Testament for our comfort and spiritual joy. Without that very good, that very rich Old Testament, we cannot even see the better promises of the New Testament. □

## Search The Scriptures

Rev. Gise VanBaren

# The Amazing Example of Christ

Read and study Philippians 2:1-11.

The church at Philippi was surely one of the favorites of the apostle Paul. He had labored there under great duress. He had been imprisoned in the city for healing of the demon-possessed fortune-telling slave girl. But here also he had the joy of observing the first converts: Lydia the seller of purple, and the jailor.

In the first chapter, and again in the fourth, Paul has fine words in commending the church. In chapter 1:3, he expresses thanks to God for "every remembrance" of them. In chapter 4 Paul calls them "my joy and crown." Again, he extols their kindness shown to Paul himself (vs. 10, "your care of me hath flourished again..."). One might begin to think that this church was some kind of an ideal one. With such great words of commendation, who would not want to be part of such a church?

But all was not perfect at Philippi. There was a tendency toward, if not open expression of, dissatisfaction of members of the church to each other. It appeared that there was elevation of some above fellow members. There was

not all peace and unity in the church at Philippi.

Perhaps this sounds bizarre to our ears. Why should there be disunity in this newly established church? Its members must have spoken often of the fact that they had been saved from the evils of heathendom and from idol worship. They must have rejoiced in the deliverance through the cross of Jesus Christ. So should not they live in close unity and Christian love? One would surely think so.

Yet notice what Paul writes to this church — and to every church. In verse 1 he speaks of the "consolation in Christ." The word "consolation" could also be translated "comfort." There is a close correlation between this word and that name given the Spirit: the Comforter. In John 14:26, Christ calls the Spirit Whom He will send, the Comforter. So here, there is "comfort in Christ," that is, the Comforter has worked within their hearts according to Christ's promise. That Comforter has regenerated and converted His people at Philippi. He has applied Christ's Word to their hearts. They have confessed together that wonderful "consolation." Paul speaks of this in a conditional form: if this be present in them. He does not doubt or question its presence. He only affirms in the strongest possible way that since (if) it is present, then the conclusions of verses 2 through 4 must surely follow.

If the church enjoyed the "comfort of love," the same humility should follow. God so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son. His Son loved us even unto death. That love shows itself also within the church: there is the love of brother for brother. Those who reveled in this glorious love of God and confessed that this love was shed abroad in their hearts should also display that love properly in their relationships within the church.

These too claimed the fruits of "bowels and mercies," or otherwise translated, "tender mercy and compassion." The members of the church had experienced these mercies of God Who saved them. They insisted that the fruit of mercy and compassion was present in their own lives. And if that were true (Paul will not deny or question it), then this also must be seen in the humility within their lives.

When these three fruits of salvation are present, then Paul can rightly expect that they will "fulfill his joy." The beginning of joy for Paul was their conversion and early zealotness within the church. The joy of Paul is "fulfilled" or "filled up" when he sees appropriate and continuing fruit in their lives. He looks for that as well as prays for it.

Paul's joy is fulfilled when three things become seen within the church at Philippi. He expects first a proper oneness (vs. 2: "like-

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mindful"); secondly, "lowliness of mind" (vs. 3); thirdly, that they assist one another (vs. 4).

There must be in the church a proper unity — not a unity which is based on indifference to doctrine, but unity of faith and confession. This is of vital importance within the church.

But that unity can exist only where there is proper "lowliness of mind." Where there is constant fighting (strife) about non-essentials, or where members seek a "vain glory" (an honor which is essentially empty or selfish), there will be no unity either. Each must consider the other better than himself. With Paul, each confesses, "I am the chief of sinners." There is no room for boastfulness or pride.

And in the church there is the willingness to assist one another. Each ought not look on "his own things," that is, be so concerned with his own affairs that he has no time for other members of the church. Rather, each is interested in assisting the various members of the body.

In verse 5, Paul points to that great example, Jesus Christ. The "mind of Christ" must be seen in His people. The mind of Christ is to save His people from their sins in the way of His great humiliation unto death and hell itself.

The Son of God is in the "form" of God. This "form" is not simply a resemblance to God, but the very likeness or Being of God (cf. Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15, 17). He is God Himself. Infinite are His perfections: eternal wisdom, almightiness, infinite love. Christ did not consider it robbery to be equal with God — for He was God. If any would exalt himself, Christ could. If any would seek his own things, Christ could. But He Who justly could maintain that He is Lord over all, Creator of all things, was ready to humble himself even to death in our flesh.

That Christ "emptied Himself" is a thought which has often been debated. How can God "empty" Himself? Does this mean that Christ gave up His Divinity? But that can never be. He must be very God when He bears God's wrath on the cross. This is the great won-

der-work of our God. Christ was ready to conceal His infinite power and glory so that He could come into our flesh in the form of the servant. He made Himself of no reputation. He is born of a virgin, in a manger. He had no place where to lay His head. He came to serve, giving His life for His people.

The death He must face is that of the cross. It is the accursed death (Deut. 21:23). The crucified One is suspended between heaven and earth. He is rejected both by God and man. We can never begin to fathom the wonder of this great work of our God. Still, it is the only possible way of delivering from sin and death.

God exalted this same Christ over all things. Every moral, rational being must also be subject to Him. He is given a "name above every name." His "name" is the revelation of His perfections. Our names merely distinguish us from one another. God's names and Christ's names are revelations. The "name" is the way in which we can know God and Christ.

Even wicked men and the devil with his hosts must finally bow before Him. These confess too His divinity and glory. They are constrained to do this in the day of judgment. Though now they would deny His existence and power, the time comes when they are forced to say what now they deny. They shall then see and grant that He is truly Jesus Christ the Lord. In this way God Himself receives all the glory.

When we see this great wonder of grace, that Christ humbled Himself to death for us, ought not that same mind be in us? He washed His disciples' feet. Ought we not willingly serve in order that brethren may be properly assisted? When we exactly understand all that Christ has done for His people, can there still be division and trouble in the church because of our own sinful natures when Christ purchased that church with His own blood?

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Paul shows his great interest in the church at Philippi. Why was he so attached to this church?

2. Can you explain how it is possible that one could be on very friendly terms with Christians in distant places — but not show that same consideration for those within the same church?

3. What are some of the things which give rise to divisions and disagreements within the church?

4. Do you see in yourself anything which corresponds with what Paul writes of in verses 2-4?

5. Does not the unity which Paul sets forth require also that we be one with Lutheran, Roman Catholics, and others?

6. In what ways are we to be "like-minded"? Can all be identical to others?

7. In what ways can something be done "in strife and vainglory"?

8. How can one esteem a lazy, indifferent Christian "better than himself"?

9. Discuss examples of "looking every man on the things of others."

10. How was Christ "made in the likeness of man"? How "like" was He?

11. Why was it necessary that our Savior be in the likeness of man?

12. Mention several reasons why the cross was the way Christ MUST die.

13. If Christ is God, in what sense is He highly exalted? Is not God eternally exalted?

14. What is the significance of a "name above every name"?

15. Do the wicked in hell confess Christ's name?

16. What is the meaning of the names: Jesus, Christ, and Lord? □

## Not All the Words

Not all the words of all mankind,

However great and wise,

Can lift a sinner from the dust

And place him in the skies.

Then let Thy Word, O Son of God,

Suffice this heart of mine;

And let me count no word as true

If it conflicts with Thine!

— SB, August 1, 1931



## When Thou Sittest In Thine House

Mrs. Mary Beth Lubbers

# The Reformed Wife: Mother (2)

*"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee..." (II Tim. 1:5).*

How easy it is, when writing about women as mothers, so to glamorize their role that the mother-reader would wonder how she ever entertained any doubts as to her calling. One can easily call to mind a Hannah, a Eunice and Lois, a Monica, and all the other famous mothers throughout the history of the church who are instantly remembered for their equally well-known children. One could even include the many famous throughout history who gave credit for their accomplishments to their mothers.

Augustine, the sainted Bishop of Hippo, is one of these children. He wrote in his *Confessions*, "In my mother's breast Thou hadst already begun Thy temple.... She betook herself again to intercede to Thee for me...."

Abraham Lincoln said, "All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my mother."

Of Susanna Wesley, mother of 19 children including the brothers John and Charles, her son Charles wrote, "It is owing, in a great measure, to somebody's prayers — my mother's most likely — that I come to think as I do...." This accolade

for his mother...even though his father was the eminent preacher, Samuel Wesley. The spiritual principles which this woman taught each of her children is said to have shaken 18th century England out of its spiritual lethargy; the methods and disciplined regimen which she exercised in her home gave, through her son John, the Methodists their name. (For an inspiring book for all women, especially ministers' wives, read *Susanna, Mother of the Wesleys*, by Rebecca Lamar Harmon.)

The apostle Paul said to his protege, Timothy: "I thank God...when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (II Tim. 1:3, 5).

A matriarchal society is to be frowned upon; but a society without strong mothers is a society destined for destruction.

It would be a mistake to romanticize the word "mother" as one of the jaded old singers does in his unctuous croon:

"M is for the million things she did for me,

O means only that she's growing old,

T is for the tears she shed to save me..."

and so on to make the word MOTHER. It would be just as offensive, however, to make it mundane as football "heroes" so often do mouthing, "HI, MOM."

The pendulum called mother has not always swung evenly throughout history. There were times when it swung too far to the left, then a

little too far to the right. Now mothers must "tend to their knitting"; now mothers must expand their careers; now mothers must make time for themselves; now mothers must successfully juggle homemaking and career interests; now mothers must give more time to community service. Differing demands for mothers remind one of Aesop's fable of "The Man, His Son, and the Donkey." And if we women are not careful, we will soon be carrying the donkey! No, we mothers of the church cannot keep swinging first this way, then that way, trying to accommodate every new survey or social whim. We will not become better mothers in this way, only dizzy ones. How thankful we can be that the swing of our pendulum has been suspended in God's unchangeable Word and has been regulated by the traditions of our godly mothers and grandmothers.

And yet, there are many questions with which we mothers conscientiously struggle.

Motherhood, in America at least, has been minimized remarkably in the last decade and counted as one of the less-than-desirable occupations. So that a mother, when filling out governmental or school forms, is reluctant to write "housewife" or "mother" on the line which requests occupation, and to her own embarrassment finds herself writing, "housewife — part-time bookkeeper for husband" (even though the line is too short to hold such a lengthy appellation).

We need to be reminded that the nursery is the child's first and most important school, and that the task

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of a Christian mother — a task of such scope that it will affect all of society — is most effective here. The mental, emotional, and spiritual nourishment, so crucial for the years to come, is embedded during these formative years. We know this first and primarily from Scripture itself, but it is of some comfort to know that nearly every pastor, physician, psychiatrist, and philosopher from Paul to Piaget substantiates this truth. As Joan Beck writes in the *Chicago Tribune*: "A young child's brain grows most rapidly during the first years of life.... Much of this growth is genetically programmed, of course. But much of it also depends on the amount and appropriateness of the sensory stimuli fed into the brain during these irreplaceable early years.... A year of missed learning opportunities at age 2 or 3 can't be made up at age 8 or 11 or 17." Or as Jean Paul Sartre succinctly observes: "Childhood decides." Add the spiritual dimension to Beck's academic concerns, and we mothers begin to see the magnitude of mothering. It is true, as my own mother was fond of saying, "A mother needs the wisdom of Solomon along with the patience of Job."

It is a mother's responsibility to develop not only the "unfeigned (genuine) faith" which is to be found in her children, but also their grammar and graces, manners and morals, values and virtues, perspective and poise, gentleness and gallantry, charm and culture. They also change the diapers, bandage the knees, kiss away the tears, supervise the homework, teach the catechism, make the unscheduled trip to the emergency center, and administer the spanking stick. Only a mother can provide the security a child needs and guide his socialization. She gives him his roots and wings. Mothers understand all too well the Gaelic proverb: It is not easy to straighten in the oak the crook that grew in the sapling. And so, we do not just happen to be mothers; we must prove that we are.

The responsibility of mothering, in addition to all of mothers' home-

making chores and wifely concerns, would strike fear in the boldest of warriors. But it is important to keep matters in perspective, too. The years of child rearing and training do not last forever. America's candid first lady, Barbara Bush, says this most nostalgically, "This [is] a period...of long days and short years..." (*Simply Barbara Bush*).

There may be mothers out there who are quietly content in their roles as mothers, who set their jaws with flintiness for each repeated task, and even enjoy each moment of their day. Wonderful! But for us other mortals, I am going to suggest three main reasons for job dissatisfaction.

1. Usually, the rewards and satisfaction of being a mother are not immediate; frequently, the rewards are greatly delayed until even 20 or 30 years later, as was the case with St. Augustine. The "paycheck" does not arrive on the 15th and 30th of the month. Raising children bears little resemblance to raising corn. The "peaceable fruit" (Heb. 12:11; also the title of a book on child rearing by Gertrude Hoeksema) comes many painful years after the planting; no farmer must wait this long for his golden sheaves.

2. The feeling of noncreativity which often accompanies homemaking and motherhood, especially today. In her little volume, *Are Women Human?* (you might also enjoy this book, a penetrating, witty essay of only 47 pages), Dorothy L. Sayers (scholar, theologian, lecturer, essayist, author of detective stories) addresses the problem that many of the profitable, pleasant, and intelligent (the controlling and directing of processes) occupations of women have been steadily removed from the home to the factory. Sayers takes us to the Middle Ages to show us the creative activities which we have been forced to abandon:

*It is a formidable list of jobs: the whole of the spinning industry, the whole of the dyeing industry, the whole of the weaving industry. The whole catering industry...the whole of the nation's brewing and distilling. All the preserving, pickling, and bottling industry, all the bacon-curing.*

*And (since in those days a man was often absent from home for months together on war or business) a very large share in the management of landed estates.... It is all very well to say that woman's place is the home — but modern civilisation has taken all these pleasant and profitable activities out of the home, where the women looked after them, and handed them over to big industry, to be directed and organised by men at the head of large factories. Even the dairymaid in her simple bonnet has gone, to be replaced by a male mechanic in charge of a mechanical milking plant.... Now, it is very likely that men in big industries do these jobs better than the women did them at home. The fact remains that the home contains much less of interesting activity than it used to contain.*

Although Sayers uses this argument to explain why women seek occupation outside the home, and cheerfully concedes that most of us women would not wish these days back, nevertheless, it is true that we women are often left with such mindless and unfulfilling tasks as polishing appliances, taxiing children, running errands, and picking up McDonald's. And although women today still sew, bake, and can, these tasks lack the necessity for subsistence which they once commanded.

3. The third reason for a sense of unhappiness in our work is the sacrificial nature of the mother's work. Much of a mother's work is energy-sapping and self-denying. It is a role of selflessness. It is footwashing; and footwashing today has the same appeal that it did for Jesus' disciples. A mother's work is often servitude. Was not this Jesus' work too? Are we not His disciples? "A disciple is not above his master..." (Matt. 10:24). The mother gives of her time, her energy, her looks, her very life for the sake of the family. The Lord Jesus Himself, the One and Only True Sacrifice, became wearied in His ministry of servant. Often, He sought time apart for prayer and spiritual refreshment. And so, too, we mothers must make time for prayer and refocus our eyes on the heavenly rewards, renewing our determination and devotion as wives and mothers.

I remember a minister once saying that he had never yet talked to a man on his deathbed who said, "I



wish that I had spent more time building up my business." But he had heard the choked confession of many a man who said, "I regret that I did not spend more time with my family."

This applies well to us as mothers. The years spent training, disciplining, caring for children are

years colored with rainbow hues. It is the promise of the covenant: children immaculately groomed for good Christian citizenship in this world and in the world to come.

Let men, then, preside over their businesses and head up their empires — and they must do this, too, for this is their calling from God —

but, mothers, let us never forget our own adage:

"The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."

And the next time that you must identify your occupation, write simply, "Mother"...and be sure to give it a most elegant flourish. □

## Special Article

Rev. Philip Rawson

# The Work of the Measbro Dyke Congregation

### INTRODUCTION

The church of Jesus Christ is the elect of God out of all nations called and gathered by Christ through the preaching of the gospel and by the power of His Holy Spirit. In Barnsley, South Yorkshire, England, Christ's church is to be found in the Measbro Dyke congregation.

Historically our roots as a local church go back to 1875. For the greater part of our history we were a congregation within the Methodist tradition. We were until 1975 affiliated with the Wesleyan Reform Union of Churches.

In 1972 I was called as the first pastor of the Measbro Dyke church and in 1975 the church was reconstituted as an Independent Evangelical Church. The decision to secede from the Wesleyan Reform Union was on the grounds of increasing apostasy and ecumenical

activity on the part of that union of churches.

From 1975 onwards the church has sought to grow and develop as a Reformed church. Over the more recent years we have had many struggles as we have sought to maintain a distinctive testimony, not walking in the popular moderate Calvinism of our times which embraces the errors of "Common Grace" and the "Free Offer of the Gospel."

After a period of struggle and unrest the Lord in sovereign mercy and goodness has been pleased to grant us peace, and once again there are signs of growth in our midst.

Spiritually speaking Barnsley is a barren area. We have all the problems of large towns and cities, particularly on our large council housing estates. Vandalism and violent crime continue to increase. We have one of the lowest crime detection rates in the country, especially in our town center. Much of this crime is drug and alcohol related. Sadly there is very little true gospel preaching in our town. The predominant religious influences are Roman Catholicism and Anglo

Catholicism, and we have several large Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. The older non-conformist chapels are liberal and ecumenical.

It is against such a background that the Measbro Dyke church worships the true and living God, seeking to maintain a testimony to the Reformed faith, which is biblical Christianity.

### MEASBRO DYKE CONGREGATION: LOCAL CHURCH LIFE

The congregation at Measbro Dyke is made up of nine families and thirteen individuals. We are some forty-three souls in all. The communicant membership of the church stands at twenty-three. The total congregation is made up of thirty adults and thirteen children.

We believe that Christ is the head of the church, and that Christ has placed the oversight of the congregation in the hands of elders and deacons. At Measbro Dyke, for the present, that means the pastor and Board of Deacons.

We believe that men only are called of Christ and appointed by the congregation to the oversight.

As you can readily see, we are only a small congregation. That

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has certain advantages, but it also presents us with some difficulties. We seek by God's enabling to maintain a full local church life.

As you would expect, the Lord's Day is the principal day of the week—the day of rest and gladness. We have two worship services on the Lord's Day. These worship services are marked by simplicity and, we trust, solemnity. The principal parts of worship we conceive to be Praise, Prayer, and Preaching. Our praise consists of the singing of Hymns and Psalms with musical accompaniment. Prayers are extempore and preaching is the exposition of a shorter or longer portion of the Scriptures. We seek to have preaching which is Scriptural throughout, maintaining a balance of doctrinal, devotional, experimental, and practical preaching. Much emphasis is laid upon fundamental truths, the distinctives of the Reformed faith.

The afternoon of the Lord's Day is devoted to Sunday School and Bible Class. The Sunday School caters not only for the young people of the congregation under 16 years of age, but also for several children from the neighborhood. Although the numbers attending are not great, Sunday School does give us contact with several people in the area of the church. One member of our church today was first contacted through her son attending Sunday School. She was brought to conversion and is now an active member of our congregation.

Our midweek activities consist of Bible Study on a Thursday evening. We have around twenty members of this meeting. The format used is the lecture method. We work our way through some particular book of the Bible, or deal in more depth with some aspect of doctrine. The prayers at this meeting are led by two or three male members of the congregation.

Also, we have a mid-week coffee morning. This is designed to enable us to make contact with local people, especially the elderly who call at the Post Office adjacent to the church to collect their pension.

## MEASBRO DYKE CONGREGATION AND EVANGELISM

As a church we take seriously the work of Evangelism. Of the church of Christ at Thessalonica Paul wrote "From you sounded out the Word of the Lord." This is what we seek to do in the locality of our church and in our town.

Our church building is situated very well on a busy main road out of town. At the front of our church we have not only a board upon which are displayed the times of our worship services, but we have also the facilities to display Scripture texts (wayside pulpits we call them). Many passing the church have their attention drawn to these Scripture posters which are changed every month.

Within the more immediate neighborhood of the church we distribute the Scripture leaflets and booklets published by the Trinitarian Bible Society. On other occasions we print a brief tract ourselves upon which we place the times of our services. We have also engaged in door-to-door visitation and open air preaching in our town shopping area.

We use the local press also to advertise our services and have had the opportunity on several occasions to write a short article on some specific doctrine which has appeared in the "Barnsley Chronicle."

Over the years we have found Easter and Christmas to be special occasions for gathering the unchurched into our services. At these seasons of the year, which are also public holidays, we make a point of distributing some suitable Scripture leaflet and an invitation to our services. We know that in the world and in the false church there is much superstition and foolishness at these seasons. However, without engaging in such foolishness, we have sought to use such seasons in a positive way. We have been encouraged at the numbers of outsiders who at these seasons will come along to a church service. We seek to preach on these occasions those vital fundamental truths of Virgin Birth-Incarnation, and of the atoning death and bodily resurrec-



Pastor Philip Rawson

tion of Jesus Christ—truths which are blatantly denied by the Bishops and so-called Christian leaders of our churches in England.

All these means of bringing God's Word, the Gospel of Christ, to men and women are dependent upon the power and blessing of the Holy Spirit. We preach and distribute the Word; God alone can give increase. In our own experience we have found that in getting people along to services to listen to preaching, there is no substitute for the personal friendliness and personal invitation extended by every member to others.

## MEASBRO DYKE CONGREGATION AND MISSIONS

We believe that the great commission is still binding upon the church, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." Love to Christ demands obedience; the purpose of God to gather and save His elect requires it.

As a small church we have many limitations placed upon us, yet we do have access to God in prayer and God does give us open doors of opportunity.

As a church we give some assistance to a small group of believers who have no pastoral oversight. With the support of the Board of Deacons the Pastor conducts a mid-week Bible study for this group in the town of Rotherham some fourteen miles from Barnsley.

One of our members travels fifty miles from the town of Scunthorpe



in Humberside. Our services are all taped and this member distributes them to contacts she is able to make in her work as a consultant anaesthetist in a busy general hospital.

We also have access on a regular basis to an aged persons nursing home, where we conduct services.

As a church we give prayerful and practical support to the European Missionary Fellowship. This is a protestant mission which seeks to support and give assistance to pastors and churches of Reformed position throughout Europe. Many of the lands, as you well know, were strongholds of the Reformed faith. Now Romanism and rationalism are rampant. Over the years we have received visits and heard reports of the situation in these lands — Spanish, Portuguese, Swiss, French, and Polish pastors have spoken at our mid-week meetings.

We give support to a family, from a nearby Evangelical church, who are busy in Bible translation work amongst the "Timbe" speaking people in Papua New Guinea.

We support the work of the Trinitarian Bible Society and The Scottish Reformation Society, for these societies are founded upon clear Protestant and Reformed principles.

In these ways we seek to remind ourselves that the church of Jesus Christ is universal, and that within that one church of Christ we have a calling, if not to go in our persons, then by our prayers and giving to the ends of the earth with the Gospel.

#### **MEASBRO DYKE CONGREGATION: OUR DISTINCTIVE WITNESS**

We are not Arminian; our distinctive witness is to the Reformed faith: the doctrine of grace, historic Calvinism.

I would impress upon you again that we do not work amongst men and women whose background and tradition is Reformed. It is doubtful whether there has ever been a witness to the Reformed faith in our town. Those who attend our worship services from other church backgrounds are go-

ing to come either from a ritualist, liberal, or Evangelical Arminian tradition.

We have within our church a free literature table upon which are to be found a good number of booklets explaining the distinctive doctrines of the Reformed faith.

Many of these booklets are supplied from sources within the Protestant Reformed Churches.

The making of this literature available to our own people in Barnsley and for visitors to our church has led to a more widespread distribution than we could ever have imagined.

Visitors to our church began to ask for supplies of these pamphlets for use in their own churches. Then from different parts of the United Kingdom, as word was spread, requests came for further copies. Over the past four years, several thousands of these booklets have been distributed through the post. I also act as an Agent for the RFP, and, from the selling of a few books in 1986, we are now selling, mainly through the post, in excess of 1200 books each year.

We also operate a Protestant Reformed Tape Library.

All this activity has brought us, in recent years, into contact with those who, often in isolated situations, love and seek to maintain the Reformed faith. We have been pleased to welcome into our church and homes many people from the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. Visits, on several occa-

sions, from ministers of the Protestant Reformed Churches have given us opportunities to hold Reformed conferences to which some of those in England who love Reformed truth have been gathered for instruction and encouragement.

In the eyes of much of the church world, this may seem to be of little significance or importance. We do rejoice however in this work the Lord gives us to do in these last days of apostasy and unbelief.

#### **MEASBRO DYKE CONGREGATION AND THE FUTURE**

We stand amazed at what God has done so far in our midst. To us the future is uncertain — will God maintain the cause of truth in our midst? Will our congregation go the way of many others — the way of compromise and then denial?

We cannot remain standing still — we know that a Reformed church must always be reforming. There is need for growth and development in the truth both in our individual lives and in our congregational life.

Our calling is clear —

To stand firm in the truth.

To preach the truth.

To contend for the truth.

May the God of all grace be pleased to keep us faithful to our calling. We lift up our heads, looking for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in glory, longing for that day when all the ransomed church of God shall be saved to sin no more. □

Behold, the potter molds the clay  
His vessels forms himself to please  
Such is our God and such are we  
The subjects of His just Decree  
Does not the workman's pow'r extend  
o'er all the mass which part to  
choose  
And mold it for a nobler end  
And which to leave for iller use?  
May not the Sovereign Lord on high  
Display His favors as He wills  
Choose some to life while others  
die  
And yet be just and glorious still?  
What if He means to show His  
grace

And His electing love employ  
To mark out some of mortal race  
And form them fit for heavenly  
joy?  
Shall man reply against the Lord  
And call his Maker's ways unjust  
The thunder of whose dreadful  
word  
Can crush a thousand worlds to dust?  
But oh my soul, if truth so bright  
Should dazzle and confound thy  
sight  
Yet still His written will obey  
And wait His great decisive day!  
— old Presbyterian Psalter



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*Church  
and State*  
Mr. James Lanting

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# Federal Equal Pay and Minimum Wage Laws Applied to Christian Schools

## FLSA and Christian Schools

Are private and parochial Christian schools subject to federal employment laws such as the Fair Labor Standards Acts (FLSA)? Yes, declared a federal appellate court this spring, and held that the Roanoke Valley Christian Schools in Virginia violated the FLSA by paying their head-of-household male teachers a salary supplement. In addition to condemning this alleged sexual discrimination, the court also found that the schools paid some support personnel less than the minimum wage. Accordingly, the court ordered the schools to pay to the U.S. government \$177,680 in back pay for female teachers and \$16,800 for minimum wage violations.

The U.S. Department of Labor brought suit against the Roanoke Valley Christian Schools owned and operated by Shenandoah Baptist Church in Roanoke, Virginia. The independent Baptist Church, asserting the "absolute authority of the Bible," viewed Christian educa-

tion as a vital part of its mission. The schools employed about 30 teachers in Kindergarten through high school and offered a traditional curriculum into which biblical material was integrated.

Because their low salary levels made it difficult to attract teachers, the Roanoke Valley Christian Schools had adopted a head-of-household salary supplement. All married male teachers received a salary supplement (\$1,200 per year); married women were not eligible. At trial, Pastor Robert Alderman explained the biblical rationale for the supplement:

*When we turn to the Scriptures to determine head of household, we found that the Bible clearly teaches that the husband is the head of the house, head of the wife, head of the family.... We moved in that direction, thinking that our opportunity and responsibility of basing our practice on clear biblical teaching would not be a matter of question.*

In addition, the government also challenged the schools' history of paying some of the schools' support personnel (bus drivers, custodians, kitchen workers, etc.) less than hourly minimum wage.

The Roanoke Valley Christian Schools argued that the strictures of the FLSA did not apply to its church-operated school. The federal court disagreed. Pointing to an obscure amendment to the FLSA passed by Congress in 1966 and prior legislative history, the court held that private and parochial

schools are an "enterprise" within the purview of the Act.

Furthermore, the court rejected the church's argument that since the school was operated by the Shenandoah Baptist Church and shared a common physical plant and payroll, the teachers were actually employees of the church entitled to the "ministerial exemption" under the Act. The court was not persuaded that the teachers considered teaching their "personal ministry" and thus distinguished them from nuns and monks, who apparently are exempt from the FLSA.

## Free Exercise of Religion

The Shenandoah church and its schools also argued unsuccessfully that application of the FLSA impermissibly burdened their first amendment right to the free exercise of religion. The church, schools, and teachers insisted that their head-of-household pay practice was based on a sincerely-held biblical belief. Allowing their wages to be set by the federal government, they argued, rather than by church government acting under divine guidance, deprived them of the blessings they would otherwise receive by allowing the Lord to supply their needs.

Weighing the alleged burden placed on their religious beliefs against the government's compelling interest in eradicating sex discrimination in employment, the

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court held that the "balance tips toward the application of the FLSA to Roanoke Valley Christian Schools." The pay requirements at issue, said the court, "do not cut to the heart of Shenandoah's beliefs," since the Bible does not mandate a pay differential based on sex. The court also pointed out that no Baptist doctrine prevents Roanoke Valley from paying women as much as men or from paying the minimum wage.

#### Excessive Entanglement

The Shenandoah Baptist Church also contended that applying federal labor standards to Christian schools would spawn impermissible government entanglement with religion, in contravention of the establishment clause of the first amendment. The church complained that the necessary government inspection, monitoring, and review required to implement the FLSA would intrude into church affairs. Not so, insisted the court. Although the record-keeping requirements of the FLSA may be "burdensome in terms of paperwork," it held that such review would not be "significantly more intrusive" than fire inspection and building and zoning regulations. **Governmental Regulation of Christian Schools**

This case, *Dole v. Shenandoah Baptist Church* (4th Cir. 1990), fol-

lows an earlier decision in California where a federal court similarly condemned another Christian school's policy of affording health insurance benefits exclusively to male head-of-household teachers (*E.E.O.C. v. Fremont Christian School*, 9th Cir. 1986). The *Shenandoah* and *Fremont* cases clearly establish the trend that the federal Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (E.E.O.C.) intend to impose federal employment regulations aggressively upon Christian schools.

This trend is onerous and alarming for a number of reasons. First, the *Shenandoah* case illustrates how intrusive the government is becoming in that salary benefits and pay differentials in private and parochial Christian schools are now subject to government scrutiny. This is a classic example of invidious overreaching so characteristic of the federal government in recent decades. Certification of teachers, curriculum requirements, and state inspections are apparently not enough; now the government must also interfere in voluntary contractual arrangements for compensation between school boards and school employees.

Secondly, far more than "fair wage" laws are at stake. The *Shenandoah* court boldly asserted that the Department of Labor has a

philosophical and sociological agenda here:

*...to remedy a serious and endemic problem of employment discrimination in private industry — they feel that the wage structure of many segments of American industry has been based on an outmoded belief that man, because of his role in society, should be paid more than a woman even though his duties are the same.*

But it is the government's limited biblical duty to preserve peace and order in society by punishing the criminal and protecting the well-doer (Rom. 13; I Pet. 3). Surely the government has absolutely no prerogative or jurisdiction to interfere with private wage contracts in Christian schools because such contracts are, in the government's view, based on "outmoded" beliefs such as the headship principle or upon family needs. Clearly, schools should have the freedom to pay their male head-of-household teachers a \$1,200 annual supplement based on need, especially when both the male and female teachers consent to such an arrangement. This recent government policy is part and parcel of the feminist agenda which sadly enough is generally harmful to the family, both in our Christian schools and in secular society. □

## Taking Heed to Doctrine

Rev. Bernard Woudenberg

# Eternal Adoption

*Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.*  
Ephesians 1:5

Many years ago, in 1597, a fascinating debate took place between

James Arminius, the father of Arminianism, and Franciscus Junius, hero of the Dutch revolution and professor of theology at the University of Leiden.

It began amidst the festivities of a wedding celebration. Arminius' aunt had married Johannes Cuchlinus, regent of the states college at

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Leiden; and, following the custom of the day, Arminius visited the newly married couple in their home. There he met Francis Junius, the now elderly and highly respected professor of theology at the University of Leiden. Eagerly Arminius engaged him in conversation concerning a small book Junius had recently published entitled *The First Sin of Adam*, a book dealing with the problems which arise in relating the sovereignty of God to the origin of sin. This was a subject with which Arminius had become increasingly involved during his early years in the ministry. While preaching through his first series of sermons, on the book of Romans, he had touched on this issue and raised questions among many concerning his doctrinal soundness. And then, on top of that, he had been assigned the task of answering two pamphlets relating to this matter, possibly with the intent of testing his orthodoxy. One was a pamphlet by Dirk Volkertszoon Coornhert, also a hero of the revolution but a committed Humanist and a bitter enemy of Calvinism, in which he accused Calvin and Beza of making God the author of sin. The other was by two ministers from Delft, Arent Corneliszoon and Reynier Donteklok, suggesting that the problem could be resolved if predestination were looked at as taking place after the fall (now called Infralapsarianism) rather than before the fall as Calvin and Beza did (Supralapsarianism). In studying the matter Arminius became increasingly unhappy with the Calvin/Beza approach, first inclining to that of the Delft ministers, and then, concluding that they had not really resolved the problem, toward that of Coornhert. And so, sensing that Junius too might have criticisms of Calvin and Beza, Arminius eagerly invited him to a friendly correspondence on this matter.

Soon this was begun, but only to make it immediately apparent that Junius' differences with Arminius were far greater than any he had with Calvin and Beza. In fact, essentially he agreed with them, with reservations only on their presenta-

tion and emphasis, while his disagreement with Arminius was serious and basic.

The problem was that through the years predestination had become a subject of popular debate; and Calvin and Beza, committed defenders of the faith that they were, felt committed to answer every attack, many of which centered in Romans 9, and especially verses 21-23, leaving the impression that this was their central and main concern, as though they thought God's ultimate purpose was to exhibit His greatness by creating some people for no other reason than to show Himself merciful, and others to show Himself just. And, if that was so, Arminius maintained, God must be considered the author of sin.

In response Junius made two observations; and we do well to note them.

Predestination, he pointed out, is not the first and primary decree of God; and the theology of Calvin and Beza taken as a whole, as that of all true predestinarian theologians, brings this out. The primary purpose of God is not that of Romans 9, but that of Ephesians 1:5: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." God's first purpose is to have a people who may be His children through Jesus Christ; and other decrees, including those to show mercy and justice, are secondary means to bring this about.

This leads to a second principle, the need to distinguish between things which are corollaries of this primary purpose of God and those which are means to attaining it. That is to say, there are some things which are in themselves part of God's desired end, affording pleasure to God in themselves; and there are the other things which are in themselves abhorrent to Him but which He wills in order to serve a higher purpose nonetheless.

It is to this latter category that the existence of sin and of the reprobate belong. The Bible emphasizes this in a number of different ways, as in Romans 9:22, 23:

"What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." Here the "vessels of wrath" are clearly not something which God desires for themselves, but rather because they serve as means to be used in the making known His glory to the "vessels of mercy." It is similar to that which we read in I Corinthians 3:21: "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Or so beautifully in II Corinthians 4:15: "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God." The purpose of God in all things, including the existence of the reprobate and sin, is but a means to that great and final purpose of bringing those He has appointed unto adoption into union with him in eternal life.

It is something that we must bear in mind for the understanding of life, and of the working of the Gospel.

In this world there is no essential difference between those who have been ordained unto life and those who have not, except this one, namely, God's adopting grace. All are equally sinful, and all have equally sacrificed their right to life, as Romans 3:10-23 brings out: "There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." All of history verifies this; the accomplishments of man only ever lead to further sin.

And then into this sinful world comes God's Word with astounding effect; it divides between the twain.



To the natural man the Word of God is an utter offense, no matter how it comes; and it comes in many different ways, in creation, in law, in judgment, and in the Gospel as well. The reactions may be diverse. Some respond with anger, some with indifference, and some with hypocrisy; but in every instance it is man's way of saying he can be as great as God, as Peter says of Christ and His word, in I Peter 2:8: "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, [even to them] which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."

And yet, in the end, for those who are chosen it is different. Their first reaction, like that of anyone else, will often be also rejection. In fact, for them the reaction may well be more violent and vicious than that of anyone else, as with young Saul of Tarsus. When he stood by the execution of Stephen and heard him say, Acts 7:56, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," it infuriated him, and set in his mind a determination to prove it wasn't so. And he did so with a viciousness unsurpassed, until one day Christ stopped him short. Saul met Him one day in a vision altogether reminiscent of that which Stephen saw, Acts 9:3: "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Within the heart of Saul, even while he was raging, the Spirit of God had been working, pricking at his conscience, and in the end it was not to be denied. It was as Jesus had said long before, John 6:37: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Saul's life was changed; grace had done its work.

So it is always; and in the awareness of this are we to work in the

Gospel. It's God's doing, not ours. He has privileged us with his Word, each in our domain, some in caring for our children, some in witnessing to friends and neighbors, some as ministers of the Gospel, and some who as missionaries bring the Word into distant lands. Wherever we work, however, resistance will be met, and sometimes with great violence. We may well wish to draw back, wondering whether we have done it wrong, or whether he to whom we speak is hopelessly bad. But then it's time to remember, all is in God's hand. Sometimes indeed

those who appear the most receptive will only fall away in the end [remember the stony ground, Matthew 13:20, 21]. And sometimes those who appear to be the worst of all sinners prove to be chosen children of God [I Timothy 1:15]. It is as Paul said, II Corinthians 2:15, "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one [we are] the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" □

## Book Reviews

**DOCTRINAL INTEGRITY**, by Samuel Miller. Presbyterian Heritage Publications, P.O. Box 180922, Dallas, Texas 75218. 1989. 137pp. Hardcover. \$15.95. (Reviewed by the Editor)

This is the kind of book that a reviewer is strongly tempted to review by quoting it in its entirety. It is that good. The subject is that important. Although written originally in the middle 1800s, it is that timely. The author's insight into what is necessary for the very life of a Presbyterian, or Reformed, church (and what assures her death) is that sound.

The creeds are necessary for a Presbyterian, or Reformed, church. Her officebearers must subscribe the creeds in all truthfulness, and without any deceit. The church herself must guard with all vigilance against "allowing men to subscribe to a confession which they obviously do not believe" (p. 88). Objections to creeds are carefully answered. The extent of creeds should not be restricted to a few fundamental articles, but rightly embraces the full range of Reformed truth. Subscribing the creeds, for a preacher in particular,

is a solemn matter. To sign the "formula of subscription" insincerely is nothing less than the modern form of "lying to the Holy Ghost" (p. 60).

It comes out that when Miller wrote the two works that make up this volume, *The Utility and Importance of Creeds and Confessions* and *Letters to Presbyterians on the Present Crisis in the Presbyterian Church in the United States*, his own church—the Presbyterian Church in the United States, harbored officebearers who opposed the creeds and signed them falsely. The reason was their opposition to the Calvinistic doctrines that the creeds taught (cf. pp. 94ff.).

Blame is charged to the "good men" in the church, those who today would be called the "conservatives." They permitted such lying subscription. Miller pleads with them:

*...will you suffer men of coarse and ductile (flexible—DJE) consciences, with the philosophy and the language of Pelagianism on their lips, to be guilty of the solemn, dishonest mockery of subscribing your Calvinistic Creed, and entering your judicatories? If this be admitted, you will soon fill our beloved church (with anguish of spirit I write it) not merely with the ele-*



ments of fearful repulsion and explosion; but, what is unspeakably more to be dreaded, with the sees of spiritual desolation and death, with which the ears of every Christian who hears, shall tingle! (p. 130)

These men were guilty also of approving, if not advocating, as the solution to the doctrinal division in the denomination what was then known as "elective affinity," and today is called "modalities" in the church. Each party creates its own formation or organization and tries to live its own church-life within the denomination. Miller points out that this resolution of the problem is sin against the unity of the church; likely the cause of "painful and fatal division" of the church; and, eventually, the occasion of the spiritual death of the entire body.

Miller was prophetic. Writing in 1833, he warned the Presbyterian Church of her certain death, if she persisted in her course of relaxing creedal subscription and tolerating the anti-Calvinistic doctrines:

*...whenever our ecclesiastical judicatories begin deliberately to admit of subscription to our public standards on any such principles, they are paving the way for troubles and dangers of the most ruinous kind. They will soon discover, either that they have introduced an enemy into the camp, who will create all the confusion of Babel, and eventually tear them in pieces; or, that indifference to truth, and that moral torpor and death, into which the Protestant Churches of France and Geneva, from this very cause, and in this very way, gradually sunk down, and which was, for many years, the basis of all their tranquility. There is peace among the dead; but it is the peace of darkness, of rottenness and of desolation. (p. 89)*

Like the biblical prophets, Miller warned so sharply because he loved his church so greatly. He loved her as a faithful, confessional Presbyterian church.

Where are the preachers, professors, and elders who love the Reformed, or Presbyterian, church so in our day? □

**CALVINISM, HYPER-CALVINISM & ARMINIANISM**, by Kenneth G. Talbot and W. Gary Crampton. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada: Still Waters Revival Books, 1990. 88 pages. Paper. \$5.95 US/\$6.95 Canadian. (Reviewed by the Editor.)

This is a curious little book. The title is intriguing. The subject fairly demands to be treated in Calvinistic circles. The authors' hearts are plainly in the right place: The book vigorously defends five-point Calvinism and sharply condemns five-point Arminianism. They even dare to mention reprobation as an integral part of Calvinism: "In our study of Calvinism we have seen that God is sovereign over all things in His universe, including the salvation or reprobation of man" (p. 40). The word "reprobation" never passes over the lips or through the pens of most professing Calvinists today.

What is curious is the inclusion of "hyper-Calvinism" in the title. In this regard, the book promises more than it delivers. It does not clearly identify this doctrinal error, pointing out how hyper-Calvinism deviates from Calvinism. It does not substantiate its claim that there is such a threat to genuine Calvinism. Is there a hyper-Calvinistic threat to the Reformed faith today? Where is it? Who teaches it? Or is the reference to hyper-Calvinism by those professing Calvinism a mere bogey?

John Gill, whom many regard as a full-fledged hyper-Calvinist, Talbot and Crampton class with the "staunch Calvinists" (p. 80).

The fullest and most pointed description of hyper-Calvinism accuses it of eliminating the need to evangelize and of holding a "truncated view of the free offer" (pp. 76ff.). But the authors themselves defend a sharp distinction between the external and internal calls of the gospel (pp. 42ff.). Only the internal call is saving in nature. And this call is directed to the elect alone. How is this to be harmonized with the conception of the "free offer" now rampant in Calvinistic circles, namely, the notion that God calls all alike in grace, with a sincere will for the salvation of every person who hears the gospel? At this crucial point, the book is silent.

The well-intentioned defense of a sound Calvinism is weakened by the assertion that "all men benefit from the atonement; they are the recipients of what has been called

'common grace'....The full sufficiency of the atonement is the basis for the universal offer of the gospel" (p. 30).

Does "common grace" indeed flow from the cross by which the Son of God redeemed the elect church from sin and death and by which He judged the ungodly world?

Is the mere sufficiency of the atonement indeed the basis of the call of the gospel? Or does God call men to come to Christ on the basis of the actual redemption accomplished in the cross? "Tell them which are called, Behold, I have prepared My dinner...all things are ready..." (Matt. 22:4).

Before Reformed theologians can grapple with the error of hyper-Calvinism, they must be straight as regards sound, consistent Calvinism. □

**SAFE IN THE WORLD: THE ASSURANCE OF OUR SALVATION**, by Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988, 1-157pp., \$10.95, (cloth). (Reviewed by R.D. Decker.)

This book contains a collection of twelve sermons on John 17:6-19.

These sermons were part of a series of sermons Lloyd-Jones preached in Westminster Chapel on the High Priestly prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17. The first part of the series was published in 1988 by Crossway under the title *Saved in Eternity*. These sermons were preached in 1952-1953 on Sunday mornings.

The sermons in this volume deal with two questions: 1) Why did Jesus offer this prayer? 2) For what did our Lord pray? The sermons are clear, based on good exposition of the text, and full of good instruction, comfort, and assurance. They are as applicable today as they were when they were first preached nearly forty years ago. Any Christian looking for good devotional reading or looking for biblical instruction on the subject of prayer would do well to purchase the book.

The preacher looking for a good exegetical commentary on this section of John 17 will find it in this book. □



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# News From Our Churches

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Mr. Benjamin Wigger

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## MINISTERIAL CALLS

Rev. C. Haak, pastor of the Lynden PRC in Lynden, WA declined the call he was considering from the congregation of the Randolph PRC in Randolph, WI. Following Rev. Haak's decline, Randolph's consistory formed another trio, consisting of the Revs. R. Cammenga, T. Miersma, and R. Moore.

And from a trio of pastors that was included here last month, the congregation in our Hope PRC in Isabel, SD has extended a call to Pastor T. Miersma, who serves as undershepherd of the First PRC in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

## MISSION ACTIVITIES

The Council of the Hudsonville PRC in Hudsonville, MI presented the following trio of ministers to their congregation, from which one would be called as missionary to serve in Larne, Northern Ireland: Revs. M. Kamps, J. Kortering, and

T. Miersma. A congregational meeting was scheduled for August 27.

Rev. W. Bekkering, pastor of the Pella, PRC in Pella, IA spent two weeks of his vacation preaching for the group in Venice, FL.

## CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The congregation of the Doon PRC in Doon, IA invited the congregations of Hull, IA and Edgerton, MN to join them in an opportunity to learn more about our sister churches, and to witness part of the fulfillment of Christ's promise to gather His church out of all the earth. These three congregations met on July 19 to hear Rev. R. Miersma give a speech on the work of his congregation, the PRC of New Zealand. Also shown was a slide and tape program given to our churches at the International Reformed Conference by the Evangelical Reformed Churches of Singapore, on their history and work.

A special congregational meeting was held in late June at the Hope PRC in Walker, MI. The congregation was asked to consider a proposal from their Council for an addition/renovation of their church. This proposal failed to pass by the two-thirds majority required by Hope's Council. But evidently Hope's Council gave permission to its Building Committee to continue their investigation of the church building project with a view to another presentation to the congregation later this year.

The Council of the Randolph PRC in Randolph, WI has decided to have the elders greet the congregation after the morning service along with the pastor.

The Consistory of the Covenant PRC in Wyckoff, NJ recently approved a request from its Evangelism Committee to have their pastor revise the historical section of the pamphlet, "Is the Christian Faith Easy?" to correspond with their history as a congregation.

The Evangelism Society of the Byron Center PRC in Byron Center, MI reported to their congregation that the response to the special worship service and the offer for the tape of the sermon has been strong (see last month's news). One man wrote, "After listening to your tape, 'Remember the Lord's Day,' given by Rev. Gritters, I would like another tape so I can send it to a friend of mine...." Several requested additional copies for their children or grandchildren.

Kyle Flikkema, son of Rev. and Mrs. R. Flikkema of our Covenant PRC in Wyckoff, was re-admitted to Columbia Presbyterian Babies Hospital in early July because fluid had been accumulating around his heart. It was hoped that medication would help eliminate this problem but further tests indicated that the fluid was not responding to the medication as well as was hoped. This meant that Kyle had to return to the hospital as much as twice a week to have this fluid drained. At the time of this writing Kyle and his family are on vacation, so Kyle continues to make progress. Let us remember the Flikkemas, as well as all God's afflicted, in our prayers. □

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*Mr. Wigger is a member of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.*



## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 1, 1990 MR. and MRS. EDWIN GRITTERS celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary. We, their children and grandchildren, rejoice with them and gratefully acknowledge the work of the Lord through them in our lives. We pray that our heavenly Father will continue to strengthen them in their way and give them joy in Him.

"Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel" (Ps 128:6).

Jerry and Shirley VanderKolk

Brian, Brent, and Joel

Ed and Jeanne Karsemeyer

Shaun, Renae, Todd, and Ryan

Barry and Lori Gritters

Curt, Kevin, Eric, Dan, and Brad

Mike and Brenda Gritters

Darin, Candace, Julianne, and

Amber

Roger and Hilda Gritters

Sharon, Gerrit, Kaylynn, and Jordan

Rick Gritters

Redlands, California

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 5, 1990, our parents, MR. and MRS. PETER LUBBERS will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with a family dinner.

We are thankful to our heavenly Father for the many happy years He has given them to each other and to us, their children and grandchildren. It is our prayer that God will continue to bless them with good health and all spiritual blessings.

Jase and Carolyn Redder

Rich and Gloria Smith

Larry and Sandy Lubbers

Clare and Pat Berens

Rog and Kathy Berens

11 grandchildren Hudsonville, Michigan

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of Faith Protestant Reformed Church wishes to extend its heartfelt Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hanco in the death of their daughter, MRS. ELLEN DICK.

May they be comforted by the words of the Lord in John 11:25, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Rev. Kenneth Koole, President  
Sandy Tinklenberg, Secretary

## RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Doon PR Church would like to express their Christian sympathy to their fellow member Joawn VanOort and family in the loss of his mother, MRS. HENRY VAN OORT.

May our heavenly Father comfort the bereaved with the assurance that He doeth all things well.

Rev. R. Dykstra, President  
Ed VanGinkel, Clerk

## NOTICE!!!

### Bible Study at Dordt College

A group of students dedicated to the historic Reformed faith meets together Monday evenings at 7:00 in the Dordt College library for a Bible study. The meetings are sponsored by the Protestant Reformed Churches in the area. This year we plan to study the Gospel according to Mark. Any student at Dordt is welcome to attend. If you have any questions, please call Rev. Russ Dykstra (712) 726-3382.

## NOTICE!!!

Reminder: Thursday, September 20, the R.F.P.A. (SB) will hold its annual meeting in Southwest Church at 8 PM. Prof. Herman Hanco will deliver the address based on Psalm 60:4. Also on the

agenda are a brief program, refreshments, and election of three new members to the Board from a nomination consisting of Cal Kalsbeek, John Kalsbeek, Jr., Harry Langerak, Phil Lotterman, Gary Nienhuis, and Bill Oomkes.

For 66 years men have been willing to write for and direct the affairs of *The Standard Bearer*. May our good attendance at this meeting, involving just a couple of hours of our time, demonstrate our interest in the SB and our concern for its welfare. And if any of you men are not members of the Association, you are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to join our ranks.

The RFPA Board  
Peter Koole, Secretary

## LYNDEN P.R. CHURCH

The Lynden Protestant Reformed Church of Lynden, Washington is offering up to \$330,000 in notes to finance the construction of our sanctuary. (5-years: 8%; 10-years: 8.5%)

These notes will be issued in multiples of \$1,000, payable on demand with interest paid semi-annually.

For further information, please call or write:

Albert deBoer  
1633 Matz Road  
Ferndale, WA 98248  
(206) 384-4148.

We ask that you give this your prayerful consideration.