

THE **STANDARD BEARER**

**A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine**



Farel urging Calvin to remain in Geneva

See "William Farel: Fiery Evangelist..." — page 319

Vol. 69, No. 14
April 15, 1993

CONTENTS:

April 15, 1993

Meditation — <i>Rev. Cornelius Hanko</i>	
Christ's Ascension	315
Editorial — <i>Prof. David J. Engelsma</i>	
The Saving Death of Jesus Christ	317
The Reader Asks	319
A Cloud of Witnesses — <i>Prof. Herman C. Hanko</i>	
William Farel: Fiery Evangelist of the Reformation (2)	319
Search the Scriptures — <i>Rev. George C. Lubbers</i>	
The Proper Spiritual Conduct of Christian Women (1)	322
Decency and Order — <i>Rev. Ronald L. Cammenga</i>	
Organizing New Congregations	324
Taking Heed to the Doctrine — <i>Rev. Bernard Woudenberg</i>	
The Declaration's Final Adoption	326
Church and State — <i>Mr. James Lanting</i>	
Recent Developments in Church-State Law	328
Guest Article — <i>Rev. Jason L. Kortering</i>	
Classis Meeting of the ERCS	329
The Day of Shadows — <i>Rev. John Heys</i>	
That Blessed Comforting Shadow	332
Letter from R.F.P.A.	334
News From Our Churches — <i>Mr. Benjamin Wigger</i>	335

In This Issue...

"May God curse your rest, and curse your studies, if for their sake you flee from the work He would have you to do!"

Looking at the picture on the cover can you almost hear the Fiery Evangelist uttering those words? It's just an artist's conception ... but an excellent character study. On the left — a young man, pale, thin, grave, shy, and not in very good health. (It's worthy of note, however, that, though not more than 27 years old at the time of this unexpected encounter with Farel in Geneva, he had already seen his *Christian Institutes* published in French.) On the right, Farel — leaning intently forward, eyes of fire and voice of thunder. Calvin later owned that it appeared to him "that the hand of God was stretched down from heaven, that it lay hold of him and fixed him, whether he would or no, to the place he was so impatient to leave."

Farel died of old age. Many contemporaries of his in the ministry did not. They were burned at the stake, with slow fire ... or worse. One young acquaintance of William Farel, led to the stake in Paris, is said to have spoken with such great power in his last few moments, that one of the priests lamented, "I would rather the Church (i.e., Roman Catholic) had paid a million gold pieces, than that Pavanne should have spoken as he did."

Such is the stuff of church history. Not dry data, in tomes gathering dust on the shelves of seminary libraries, but living, vital, inspiring, instructive, interesting. Snapshots of that history we find in Prof. Hanko's articles in "A Cloud of Witnesses." Helpful they are, in their own right ... but they serve best as 'appetizers.' We, upon whom the end of the ages has come, ignore the church's history at our own peril.

Read, in this issue, "William Farel: Fiery Evangelist of the Reformation (2)."

D.D.

THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August.
Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.,
4949 Ivanrest Ave., Grandville, MI 49418. Second Class
Postage Paid at Grandville, Michigan.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Standard Bearer,
P.O. Box 603, Grandville, MI 49418-0603.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Editor: Prof. David J. Engelsma
Secretary: Prof. Robert D. Decker
Managing Editor: Mr. Don Doezema

DEPARTMENT EDITORS

Rev. Ronald Cammenga, Prof. Robert Decker, Rev. Arie
den Hartog, Rev. Barry Gritters, Mr. Fred Hanko, Prof. Herman
Hanko, Rev. John Heys, Rev. Steven Key, Rev. Kenneth
Kooie, Rev. Jason Kortering, Rev. Dale Kuiper, Mr. James
Lanting, Rev. George Lubbers, Mrs. MaryBeth Lubbers, Rev.
James Slopeema, Rev. Charles Terpstra, Rev. Gise VanBaren,
Rev. Ronald VanOverloop, Mr. Benjamin Wigger, Rev. Bernard
Woudenberg.

EDITORIAL OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
4949 Ivanrest
Grandville, MI 49418
BUSINESS OFFICE
The Standard Bearer
Don Doezema
P.O. Box 603
Grandville, MI
49418-0603

PH: (616) 538-1778
(616) 531-1490

FAX: (616) 531-3033

CHURCH NEWS EDITOR

Mr. Ben Wigger
6597 40th Ave.
Hudsonville, MI 49426
NEW ZEALAND OFFICE
The Standard Bearer
c/o Protestant Reformed
Church
B. VanHerk
66 Fraser St.
Wainuiomata, New Zealand

EDITORIAL POLICY

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

REPRINT POLICY

Permission is hereby granted for the reprinting of articles in our
magazine by other publications, provided: a) that such reprinted
articles are reproduced in full; b) that proper acknowledgment
is made; c) that a copy of the periodical in which such reprint
appears is sent to our editorial office.

SUBSCRIPTION POLICY

Subscription price: \$12.00 per year in the U.S., \$15.00
elsewhere. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is
received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the
subscription to continue, and he will be billed for renewal. If you
have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as
early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of
interrupted delivery. Include your Zip or Postal Code.

ADVERTISING POLICY

The Standard Bearer does not accept commercial advertising
of any kind. Announcements of church and school events,
anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be
placed for a \$3.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business
Office and should be accompanied by the \$3.00 fee. Deadline
for announcements is at least one month prior to publication
date.

BOUND VOLUMES

The Business Office will accept standing orders for bound
copies of the current volume. Such orders are filled as soon as
possible after completion of a volume year.

16mm microfilm, 35mm microfilm and 105mm microfiche, and
article copies are available through University Microfilms
International.

Christ's Ascension

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.

Psalm 110:3a

As children we sang loudly and exuberantly:

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before.

As we grew a bit older we sang with equal fervor:

The fight is on, O be not weary,
Be strong, and in His might hold fast.
With banners gleaming, with colors streaming,
We'll sing the victor's song at last.

Much of that enthusiasm has faded away now that we have actually been in combat and tasted of the smoke and fury of battle. Our zeal is replaced by a more sober outlook, a serious determination to heed the call to battle and to fight the good fight of faith, with the prayer on our lips: "By thy grace we will."

That is the main thought of this infallible Word of God: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

* * * * *

Psalm 110 speaks in prophecy of Christ's ascension to the right hand of the Father. It refers to the climax of

Jesus' earthly ministry, after He had triumphantly marched through hell by way of the cross, had conquered over Satan, sin, death, and the grave, and proceeded as Victor to His heavenly throne and glory.

Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives, bidding His disciples farewell. "While they beheld he was taken up." An invisible Hand reached down to receive our Lord, and a cloud of glory appeared, which enveloped Him, as He faded from sight and entered into heaven.

This was our Lord's Coronation Day.

"Jehovah said unto my *Adonai*, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool. Jehovah shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies" (Ps. 110:1, 2).

Amazing prophecy. When Christ ascends to heaven all power is entrusted to Him in heaven and on earth. The emphasis is on His royal office. He is Lord over all, called to carry out the counsel of God unto the time of His return.

Here this power to rule is limited specifically to His military power as Conqueror over God's enemies, which are also His and our enemies.

Moreover, He reigns out of Zion, out of the Temple, the House of God, that is, out of and for the sake of His people. He is King, but He is also Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (v. 4). He rules over His people with a scepter of love and grace. His victory over all His enemies is also our victory in the "day of his (military) power."

The text, therefore, speaks of Pentecost with all its blessings for Christ's

church. It is a call to arms, an incentive to fight the good fight, taking unto ourselves the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:10-17).

* * * * *

We are the army of the living God in the battlefield of this world.

*Every individual believer
is a soldier,
wearing the uniform
of Jesus Christ....*

We must not fail to realize that God's church is a militant church, surrounded by the powers of darkness that seek to destroy her. Christ is her Captain, who has called her out of darkness into His marvelous light as a separate people, a holy people, devoted to God and antithetically opposed to all the works of darkness.

Every individual believer is a soldier, wearing the uniform of Jesus Christ, called to fight the battle of faith against the foe round about. That enemy is the devil, who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. He even comes as an angel of light with cunning deception to lure us into his grasp. Moreover, that enemy is the wicked world with her treasures and pleasures, her allurements and threats. And finally, the worst enemy of all is our own corrupt, lustful flesh that wars against us.

We are, thanks be to God, a *willing* army.

Upon Christ's ascension to heaven God promises Him a willing people, willing recruits.

Not as if we become "volunteers

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

for Jesus." The opposite is true. We belonged to the camp of the enemy, and were filled with all the hostility of Satan against God and His Anointed. We were "drafted" by the irresistible power of the Spirit, who made us new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is the work of God's grace that supplies us with the uniform of Jesus Christ, and equips us with the armor of faith wrought through the gospel.

In this respect the church of the new dispensation is far richer than the church of the shadows.

Israel in the old dispensation was under the tutelage of the law. Like a child who must be taught by pictures, Israel was taught by the stern demands of the law, that touched every phase of their lives with a strict, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not." Since they could never fulfill these stern demands, the law drove true Israel into the arms of Christ, to seek all their salvation in Him.

With the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost the church has been freed from the bondage of the law. Christ has fulfilled that law for us. We are now like adults, mature sons and daughters in the family of God. We have in our hearts the Spirit of adoption that gives us all the privileges and freedom of an adult.

We can serve God, we may serve Him, we will to serve Him; and from that follows the inner must of true obedience. We are no longer bound by all sorts of laws and precepts. Even the "Thou shalt" and the "Thou shalt not" of the ten commandments have become a guide for us in our walk of thankfulness.

That in no way means that we are perfect, free from sin. The power of sin still wars in our members, so that our flesh would rather compromise with the enemy than fight. Our sinful nature cringes at the sneers and opposition of the world. Often we falter in battle. Often our flesh asks whether all this bitter struggle is really worth while. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

By the grace of God this willing people, at the same time, makes up a

powerful army that follows its Captain on to victory.

As exalted Lord in heaven, Christ exercises the rod of His power "out of Zion."

In the old dispensation the church sang in hope: "Christ shall have dominion over land and sea. Earth's remotest regions shall His empire be." That is now fulfilled. Christ gathers His church from the ends of the earth and from the islands of the sea.

But, more than that, Christ also holds His scepter over all the wicked, so that, not only are all their efforts to destroy God's church frustrated, but in spite of themselves the wicked must serve, by their wicked rebellion against God and His Anointed, for the gathering of the church and the coming of His kingdom.

"O why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" God has set His "King upon the holy hill of Zion."

*We are duty-bound
to live exemplary lives
in our homes, in the church,
and in the midst of the world.*

But also God's people form a powerful army, because God carries out His work of grace in and through them by the Spirit of Christ. They are strong in the power of His might (Eph. 6:10). The church is entrusted with the keys of the kingdom: the preaching of the Word and the exercise of Christian discipline. They are instrumental in the ingathering of the elect from all the nations of the world, for instructing the seed of the covenant, and for keeping the church pure in doctrine and walk of life.

Also as individual believers we have our own unique calling to fight the battle of faith for the cause of Jesus Christ. It is our calling to maintain and defend the truth of the Scriptures over against all heresy. We are duty-bound to live exemplary lives in our homes, in the church, and in the midst of the world. "Ye are My witnesses," saith the Lord, for the gathering of the

saints and the coming of God's kingdom.

* * * * *

The victory is certain.

In fact, Christ has already attained the victory for Himself and for His church by His atoning suffering on the cross and His resurrection from the dead.

Paul makes the remarkable confession: "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). Often this hardly seems true. We blush with shame when we think of the numerous times we lend an ear to the lures of Satan. Considering our sins and imperfections, we grieve with longing for perfection. In the midst of the trials and afflictions of this present time we weep.

No wonder that Scripture pictures the departing saints as entering heaven with tear-stained eyes.

Yet, even though when the battle is ended we stand with dented helmet, with worn-out shoes, with battered shield and chipped sword, yet we still are more than conquerors. Actually, God's people do not gain the victory in spite of heavy losses on the battlefield. We are not like the victorious nations which pay the heavy cost of winning with numerous casualties, a tremendous war debt, ruined fields and cities, wounded veterans, and other heavy losses. The battle scars in our warfare are all on the side of the enemy.

We are more than conquerors as we reach out for the crown. For our light affliction, which lasts but for a moment, works an eternal weight of glory!

We exchange our dented helmet for a crown of glory, our shabby garb for raiments of righteousness washed in the blood of the Lamb, and our sword for palm branches of victory. In final perfection we live to the praise of the glory of our God into endless eternity for so great a salvation.

Ours is the victory in our Lord Jesus Christ! □

The Saving Death of Jesus Christ

In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the church remembers the death of Jesus Christ. Remembering, she celebrates.

Every preacher of the gospel has determined to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Each believer glories in the cross, and in nothing else.

What was that death that it should be remembered, preached, and gloried in?

As a historical fact, it was the execution of Jesus of Nazareth by crucifixion. This took place just outside Jerusalem about A.D. 30. The Crucified died under sentence of condemnation by both the Jewish Sanhedrin and the Roman state. The manner of dying was shameful and painful.

Apart from this historical event, the death of Jesus Christ means nothing. This is, I know, an absurd statement. It is as absurd as to say that apart from the historical reality of Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox, the surrender of the Confederacy to the Union is meaningless. How *could* something that never happened mean anything?

But exactly this absurdity flourishes in theology and church today, passing for profound wisdom. That which never happened is yet historical and of the greatest importance to Christians. Such is the event of creation described in Genesis 1 and 2. Such also is the event of the fall recorded in Genesis 3. The same can and will and must be said about the death of Jesus: Although it never actually took place, it is still "histori-

cal" and of significance for mankind.

It must absurdly be asserted in our absurd age that the death of Christ was a historical event. It must absurdly be added that this means that the death of Christ really happened. It happened in earthly space and time just as did the surrender of Lee to Grant. The Bible says so. Jesus' death took place exactly as described by the four gospel narratives.

This historical event had a definite, unique meaning. The Triune God determined this meaning by His purpose with Christ's death and by His work in this death.

The meaning of the cross is saving. Christ's death was a saving death. It was not saving for everybody. On the contrary, it was judgment unto condemnation for some people. But God's main purpose with the cross of Christ was salvation. The death of Jesus Christ was the deliverance of guilty sinners from eternal damnation by Christ's suffering their punishment in their stead. It was redemption of others by payment of the ransom. Christ paid the ransom to God. This was Christ's own explanation of His death: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

The death of Christ was satisfaction of divine justice. Satisfaction was the essence of the cross. Christ died under condemnation of the heavenly tribunal. Hanging on the tree, He was cursed of God.

Satisfaction was possible for Jesus of Nazareth because He was (and is) not only a real, sinless man but also

the eternal Son of God. Manhood was required to suffer punishment deserved by men. Godhead enabled Him to bear infinite wrath. Godhead gave His suffering infinite worth and value. This costly sacrifice was the price of ransom.

Because the death of Christ was satisfaction, the church remembers it, the ministers of the gospel proclaim it, and believers glory in it.

Other explanations are given. One is that the death of Christ exercises a moral influence upon sinners. It is an example that attracts them to Jesus, changes their attitude toward God from terror to trust, and turns them from self-love to love of the neighbor.

The cross melts men's hearts by its display of love. Or it brings them to repentance by demonstrating the punishment that all deserve. Or, as the supreme instance of sacrificial concern for one's fellow man, it moves men to live for others.

Another popular explanation is that Christ's death conquered the evil powers that trouble human life. By His death, Jesus is victor over Satan and death.

But these theories reject satisfaction. Therefore, they deny the cross. Those who teach these theories are enemies of the cross of Christ. There is nothing in these theories that makes the death of Christ memorable, nothing that is worth preaching, nothing that warrants a sinner's putting his trust in the cross or glorying in it.

No mere influence can change the depraved sinner since he is deservedly depraved—totally depraved—by the just judgment of God.

No victory over the dark powers is conceivable apart from satisfaction since the malignant rule of the forces of evil is founded on the claims of the broken law.

At the center of God's world and history is righteousness. This is not a righteousness without love, to be sure, but it is a righteousness that will not be ignored, or even slighted, by love.

The explanation of the historical death of Jesus Christ is satisfaction.

Only this doctrine of the cross does justice to the biblical truths about the cross picked up by the theories of moral influence and of victory over the evil powers.

*Apart from satisfaction,
the cross was a futile, foolhardy,
fruitless engagement
with the enemies.*

The believer is moved and motivated by the love of God revealed in the death of Christ, *when that death is known as God's own suffering of His wrath in the incarnate Son*. Forgiven by the cross, the believing sinner is melted by the love of God for him in the cross, moved to love this God, and motivated to love his neighbor as himself. Apart from satisfaction, the cross only moves thinking men and women to marvel at an act of consummate foolishness. Why the bother of incarnation and hellish suffering merely to set an example?

Satan, sin, the wicked world, and death were indeed spoiled by the death of Christ, as the apostle writes in Colossians 2:14,15, *exactly because that death was the stripping from them of their right according to the law of God to dominate God's creation and (new) human race*. The triumph of the cross over the principalities and powers was its "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us" (Col. 2:14,15). Apart from satisfaction, the cross was a futile, foolhardy, fruitless engagement with the enemies.

Satisfaction is the confessionally Reformed doctrine of the death of

Christ. In answer to the question, "Why was it necessary for Christ to humble himself even unto death?" the Heidelberg Catechism replies:

Because with respect to the justice and truth of God, satisfaction for our sins could be made no otherwise, than by the death of the Son of God (Q. 40).

In further explanation and defense of this Reformed belief concerning the death of Christ, the Canons of Dordt develop the truth of Christ's death as satisfaction in the second head of doctrine. The approach to Christ's death is that of the requirement of divine justice that satisfaction be made for our sins, which are committed against "His infinite majesty" (Art. 1). The explanation of Christ's death as to its fundamental meaning is that

(the) only begotten Son, for our surety, who was made sin, and became a curse for us and in our stead, (made) satisfaction to divine justice on our behalf. The death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sin (Articles 2, 3).

Basic to the death of Christ as satisfaction is that it was for a limited number of particular persons. By decree of God, Jesus Christ died as the substitute for some, and for some only. Those for whom He died are those, and those only, whom the Triune God elected in eternity, those who are actually saved by that death.

If the possibility of Jesus' bearing the wrath of God for others is His humanity and Deity, the legitimacy of His representing others is His appointment in eternity as covenant Head of the elect church. Christ died as Head and Mediator of the new covenant (cf. Canons, II/8,9; II, Rejection of Errors/ II).

Christ did not die for all humans without exception. He did not die for all in the sphere of the covenant without exception.

To teach that Christ died for every human, or for every baptized child

of believing parents, is contrary to Christ's own Word in Scripture: "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15). It contradicts the Reformed confession:

It was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to Him by the Father ... (Canons, II/8).

Besides, the teaching of a death of Christ for all denies that death as satisfaction. For now there is a death of Christ that fails to save some for whom He died. The cross was not satisfaction for those who yet perish. Implied is that it was not satisfaction for any.

Why remember a death that leaves sins unpaid, sinners unredeemed, and divine justice unsatisfied? Preaching such a death is an exercise in futility, for, regardless of the effect of the preaching, satisfaction for sin has never been made. Rather than glory in such a cross, miserable sinners should lament it as the failure of the finest attempt of God at salvation.

The death of Christ of universal atonement, like that of moral influence and victory over the dark powers, is not saving. It does not effectually save. If it does not effectually save, neither does it make salvation possible.

God's resurrection of the crucified Jesus Christ, however, declared Christ's death to be saving. The church remembers a death that satisfied. The preacher proclaims a death that believers trust in for deliverance from the condemnation of God and, therefore, deliverance from the tyranny of Satan and the slavery of sin.

In the cross the sin-stricken, penitent sinner glories. In the cross as satisfaction, he glories.

Only in the cross.

Only in the cross as satisfaction. □

— DJE

■ Preaching the Catechism

My question pertains to the proper or best method of preaching on the Lord's Days of the Heidelberg Catechism.

The question is, Is the selecting of a text or passage of Scripture as the basis for the sermon a proper or better method than basing the sermon on the Lord's Day itself?

Garrett Flikkema
Lansing, IL

Response:

Ministers in the Protestant Reformed Churches have no choice in this matter. Article 68 of *The Church Order* states, "The ministers shall on Sunday explain briefly the sum of Christian doctrine comprehended in the Heidelberg Catechism so that as

much as possible the explanation shall be annually completed, according to the division of the Catechism itself, for that purpose." This certainly means that the ministers must explain the Lord's Day, i.e., they must preach on the Lord's Day itself.

The Heidelberg Catechism, one of the Three Forms of Unity, accurately sums and sets forth the truth of Holy Scripture. Each Lord's Day presents an aspect or aspects of that truth of Holy Scripture. The ministers must explain that "sum of Christian doctrine" comprehended in that particular Lord's Day.

It is customary in the Protestant Reformed Churches for the minister to introduce the sermon by quoting one or a few texts/passages of Scripture and saying: "On the basis of this

(or these) and many other passages of Scripture is based the instruction of Lord's Day I." He then proceeds, or ought to proceed, to preach a sermon based on that particular Lord's Day, demonstrating how that Lord's Day reflects the truth of Scripture.

This method has been taught in our seminary from its earliest days. It is still being taught to our ministerial students today.

The fine, long-standing tradition of Catechism preaching ought to be faithfully maintained in our churches. It ensures the fact that the whole counsel of God will be preached. It also ensures the fact that our members will be systematically instructed in the "sum of Christian doctrine."

— Editorial Committee

William Farel: Fiery Evangelist of the Reformation (2)

Introduction

William Farel, first generation Reformer, is remembered especially for his work with John Calvin, the great Reformer of Geneva.

Into this darkness Farel burst, roaring like a bull, flinging about without regard for personal safety the

great truths of Scripture which he had learned to love. He appeared on the scene as a meteor, smashing by his oratory and preaching of the gospel all the carefully fashioned practices of the false church from which he had broken.

These labors led him to Geneva.

Contact With The Waldensians

Before we begin to describe his work in what was to become the center of Calvinism, it is not inappropriate to mention that Farel, more than

any other Reformer, was instrumental in leading many of the Waldensians, those God-fearing and horribly persecuted pre-Reformers, into the fold of Calvinism.

In our last article we noted that Farel was born in a region which had once been the stronghold of Waldensian thought. His contact with the Waldensians must have left its mark on him, for he maintained contact with and influence upon them throughout his ministry.

In fact, in 1531 Farel was sent with

Prof. Hanko is professor of Church History and New Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

A. Saunier to the Waldensian Synod which was being held in Chanforans. There he told these people of the Reformation truths, and there he persuaded many of the great work of God which was being done on behalf of the pure gospel. This influence with the Waldensians he was never to lose. And, if Farel is remembered for nothing more than for his work among these people, it would be enough to engrave forever his name in the memories of all those who love the Reformation.

Work With Calvin

But we must turn to Geneva.

Geneva, at this time, was under the rule of Berne, a neighboring canton in Switzerland. It remained, however, a thoroughly Roman Catholic city where every vice was openly practiced and where the foul rituals of Rome were a staple in the spiritual diet of the citizens.

His first stay in Geneva was not a long one. He came in 1532, when about 43 years old. The city was full of religious strife, and near chaos reigned. Within that city, however, were a few who had been touched by the truths of the Reformation, and Farel limited his preaching to private worship in the homes of these few faithful. But his preaching was too successful to be kept secret, and soon he was forced by circumstances to begin public proclamation of the gospel.

This practice could not last long in this citadel of Romish thought. He was soon summoned before a furious episcopal council which saw his preaching as a threat to their own authority. Farel produced his credentials from Berne; and, although they made some impression, he was treated with insolence. One of the clerics present shouted to him: "Come thou, filthy devil. Art thou baptized? Who invited you hither? Who gave you authority to preach?"

Farel's response was: "I have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and am not a devil. I go about preaching Christ, who died for our sins and rose

for our justification. Whoever believes in him will be saved; unbelievers will be lost. I am sent by God as a messenger of Christ, and am bound to preach him to all who will hear me. I am ready to dispute with you, and to give an account of my faith and ministry. Elijah said to King Ahab, 'It is thou, and not I, who disturbest Israel.' So I say, it is you and yours, who trouble the world by your traditions, your human inventions, and your dissolute lives."

When another shouted, "He has blasphemed; we need no further evidence; he deserves to die," Farel responded, "Speak the words of God, and not of Caiaphas."

In response to this, the council could no longer contain its rage. It taunted him, spit on him, chased him with clubs; and, as he was leaving, one shot at him. Even that could not frighten the dauntless Reformer. He turned to the one who attempted his murder with the words: "Your shots do not frighten me." But it was only with difficulty that he escaped, and his first labors in Geneva came to an end.

He sent Froment and Olivetan, two fellow Reformers, to continue the work which he had begun; and he himself returned in 1533. Still under the protection of Berne, he labored with courage and zeal in times of great peril and danger.

Gradually the city was turned from its superstitions and many were brought by God to the faith. Gradually the Roman Catholics began to leave, and on August 27, 1535, the Great Council of Two Hundred in Geneva passed a formal decision that Geneva was to become protestant.

The mass was abolished and forbidden. The people took the images and relics from the churches. The citizens pledged to live according to the gospel and established a school which became the forerunner of Calvin's famous academy. A hospital was built, financed by the revenues from older hospitals. The palace of the bishop, with fine irony, became a prison. Ministers, elders, and deacons were appointed. Daily

sermons were preached. The sacraments were administered according to the Scriptures. All shops were closed on the Lord's Day.

Nevertheless, the city was far from a Reformed city. Troubles continued, and the work of reformation was far from over.

It was into this situation that Calvin came on an evening. He had no intention of staying in the city, but sought a night's lodging in his travels. When Farel heard that Calvin was in the city, he immediately sought out this man whom he had never met, to implore him to stay in Geneva and help with the work. But Calvin was of no mind to do this. Calvin, as he tells us himself, was shy and retiring and yearned for a life of quiet and peaceful study in some sanctuary far from the rumble of the storms created by the Reformation. He steadfastly and strenuously resisted every overture of Farel until, in exasperation, Farel bellowed: "I declare, in the name of God, that if you do not assist us in this work of the Lord, the Lord will punish you for following your own interest rather than this call."

Calvin was overwhelmed by this threat of God's judgment and, in resignation to God's will, agreed to work with Farel in the difficult task of the Reformation in Geneva.

Thrown into the hurly-burly of the life of the city, Farel and Calvin worked day and night to bring about a thorough reformation, until the city, weary of the stringent discipline imposed on them, rose against them and expelled them. Calvin retired to Strassburg, where he spent some of the happiest moments of his life, only to return a few years later when he was summoned by a Council alarmed at the chaotic conditions in the city. Farel went on with his work, especially in Neuchâtel, a city where also disorder and confusion reigned.

Farel's association with Calvin was close from the time of their labors in Geneva. In fact, during Calvin's stay in Strassburg, Farel was the one who urged Calvin to marry. In a letter to Farel, sent May 19, 1539, Calvin wrote: "I am none of those insane

lovers who, when once smitten with the fine figure of a woman, embrace also her faults. This only is the beauty that allures me, if she be chaste, obliging, not fastidious, economical, patient, and careful for my health. Therefore, if you think well of it, set out immediately, lest some one else gets the start of you. But if you think otherwise, we will let it pass."

Although Farel did not return to Geneva when Calvin was called back, the two remained close friends, and the correspondence between them continued. Calvin spent the rest of his days in Geneva; Farel continued his evangelistic labors, traveling even in his old age.

When Calvin was near death, Farel, though nearly 75 years old, traveled to see his old friend and co-Reformer for the last time. Calvin, aware of Farel's age and the difficulties of travel, begged Farel not to come. But Farel could not be kept away. Part of the letter reads: "Farewell, my best and truest brother! And since it is God's will that you remain behind me in the world, live mindful of our friendship, which as it was useful to the Church of God, so the fruit of it awaits us in heaven. Pray do not fatigue yourself on my account. It is with difficulty that I draw my breath, and I expect that every moment will be the last. It is enough that I live and die for Christ, who is the reward of his followers both in life and in death. Again, farewell with the brethren."

Ten days after Calvin died, Farel

wrote to a friend: "Oh, why was not I taken away in his place, while he might have been spared for many years of health to the service of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ! Thanks be to Him who gave me the exceeding grace to meet this man and to hold him against his will in Geneva, where he has labored and accomplished more than tongue can tell. In the name of God, I then pressed him and pressed him again to take upon himself a burden which appeared to him harder than death, so that he at times asked me for God's sake to have pity on him and to allow him to serve God in a manner which suited his nature. But when he recognized the will of God, he sacrificed his own will and accomplished more than was expected from him, and surpassed not only others, but even himself. Oh, what a glorious course has he happily finished!"

Farel did marry, but at the age of 69, much to Calvin's disgust. But Calvin had the grace to write the preachers of the city in which Farel was working to "bear with patience the folly of the old bachelor."

Still traveling and preaching very shortly before his death, he returned to Neuchâtel to die. There, worn with his many labors, weary with the sufferings which came with the reproach of Christ, he died quietly in his sleep on September 13, 1565.

Wild and fiery as he was, he served an important place in God's work of bringing reformation to the

church. Though his methods could surely be scrutinized and criticized, no one ever questioned his integrity, his courage, and his faithfulness to his God. His was the work of the plowman who was called to hack down the trees, clear away the underbrush, and do the hard work of plowing; others would come, more gentle than he, and sow the seed.

When God led His people from Egypt to Canaan, Moses, that mighty man of God, could not do all the work. He died before Israel inherited the promised land. After him, God raised up Joshua to finish the work. David could not build the temple, for his calling was to fight the wars of the Lord. Another, Solomon, was called to build the temple. Neither Calvin nor Farel could do that which had to be done for reformation to come; God used both—first Farel to break down; then Calvin to build up. So it always is in the church of Christ: each member has his place and calling; and all together are called to labor in the cause of Christ.

Especially in his association with Calvin, a deeper and profoundly spiritual aspect of his character came to the fore. With a sincere humility he was content to stand in the shadow of Calvin, to retire to the background when events required it, and to decrease in order that Calvin might increase. This was his most endearing quality, and it is a virtue registered in the books of heaven. □

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.

Romans 12:11

Mine be the reverent, listening love
That waits all day on Thee,
With the service of a watchful heart
Which no one else can see.

Nothing is small or great in God's sight; whatever He wills becomes great to us, however seemingly trifling, and if once the voice of conscience tells us that He requires anything of us, we have no right to measure its importance. On the other hand, whatever He would not have us do, however important we may think it, is as nought to us. How do you know what you may lose by neglecting this duty, which you think so trifling, or the blessing which its faithful performance may bring? Be sure that if you do your very best in that which is laid upon you daily, you will not be left without sufficient help when some weightier occasion arises. Give yourself to Him, trust Him, fix your eye upon Him, listen to His voice, and then go on bravely and cheerfully.

The Standard Bearer
June 15, 1933

The Proper Spiritual Conduct of Christian Women (1)

Lesson 5

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

I Timothy 2:9, 10

Some general observations on the text and context:

1. We ought to keep in mind that Paul is writing in the remainder of Chapter 1 (vv. 9-15) concerning the proper, God-ordained role of both men and women in the "house of God." This house by its distinctive character is nothing less than the "church (*ekklesia*) of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:19-22; Heb. 3:1-6).
2. This holy church is gathered by the Son of God out of every tongue, tribe, people, and nation (I Pet. 2:10; Rom. 9:25, 26; Hosea 2:23). The church at Ephesus is the people who are erstwhile "Gentiles."
3. In our Scripture lesson Paul is building as a Mastercraftsman upon the only foundation, Jesus Christ. And as thus built, the church is the ground and pillar of the truth of the

Gospel. In this church both men and women are living members of the Body of Christ. However, each has his own role. The twofold "roles" are very distinctive in character. Their role is wholly in keeping with their respective created character. "Male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:26, 27).

4. I do believe that we should remember that the exhortation in the verses 8-15 consists of words which heretofore had not been written by any of the apostles. When Paul writes the words here, he writes as one of the holy men of God. He is writing according to the grace which was given him. He was writing, as II Peter 1:21 enlightens us, concerning the grand fact that "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Did not Peter, as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, designate the beloved brother Paul as being on a par even with Moses of old? Was this not the time when men in the New Testament church spoke with tongues (I Cor. 12:10, 28-31)?
5. When the New Testament Scriptures had been written, *then* "tongues ceased" (I Cor. 13:8).

* * * * *

Let us now direct our attention to the Holy Spirit's admonition to the beloved sisters in the Lord Jesus. These words are not such as were

uttered by men who had the special gift of tongues. They are foundational words; they are words from Christ to women who "profess godliness." They are words speaking of the spiritual adornment of women, women who (I Pet. 3:5) adorned themselves with "good works," being in subjection to their own husbands, even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, "calling him lord." In the Hebrew text in Genesis 18:12 we read: "Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord (*Adonai*) being old also?"

Sarah truly was a godly woman. She showed in her entire life that she shared the faith of Abraham, her "lord." Thus she manifested herself before the very faces of Jehovah God and the two angels with Him. She did not speak disrespectfully of her husband. She knew that the matter of her bearing Abraham's son of the promise, heir of the promise, was a matter of struggling on bended knee. It was while Abraham was growing impotent and she was ceasing to be able to live after the manner of women, that Abraham and Sarah believed in hope against hope; they believed that they would be the father and mother of many nations (see Gen. 12:3 and 17:15). Had not God directed that, as Sarah's lord, Abraham should have the living hope that she would be not merely a mother in Israel, but "a

mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her" (Gen. 17:15, 16)?

But to return to our text. Paul is speaking here to a class of reborn, erstwhile Gentile women, who once worshiped outside of the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants and promises. But now they profess before all the world not merely that they are *dwelling* in God's temple, but that the living God has gathered them to *be* the very house of God itself. Small wonder that the Holy Spirit uses the very beautiful Greek term *Theosebeian* instead of the usual Greek term *Eusebeian*. Paul employs that latter term in I Timothy some nine times. However, in our text, the term *Theosebeian* means not merely godlikeness, but real godliness, having potency (II Tim. 3:5). It means that these holy women have come to know God as the God of their salvation!

However, there was a fly in the ointment. It was this: they were really very inconsistent; they clung to an outward display of perishable and corruptible beauty. Would not these shapely, youthful bodies perish? Being corruptible, would they not fade away? Really, their "profession" is on higher ground. Do they not have a hope laid away for them in heaven? Should they not be wearing the garments of good works? These women (their husbands too) must listen to the great vision shown to John on Patmos. We read of this vision in Revelation 21:2: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*"

Did not Sarah dwell with Abraham in tents? And did they not in hope against hope see that new Jerusalem from afar? Was such seeing of the beautiful city foursquare not the staying power which enabled Sarah both to refuse to return to Ur of the Chaldees, and to refuse to live another life-style of the people of the land (Heb. 11:16; John 8:56)?

* * * * *

But there was another evil under the sun which was pervading the life

of the church. It is an evil which is very closely associated with the lack of spiritual sensitiveness concerning the truth that this pure and undefiled adornment is "the end of the commandment," which is love "out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (I Tim. 1:5). One sanctified conscience is more powerful than a thousand witnesses. To this we will return.

The text inserts in parentheses, "which becometh women professing God-likeness." The term "professing" refers to the promised *godly* service. It is their solemn "Amen" to the will of God that they walk the straight and narrow way which leads to life. The term in the original Greek occurs only once in the Bible. Paul also uses another word which means God-pleasing walk. It could very properly be translated "piety," or "reverence" (see I Tim. 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:5, 6, 11). Such women, professing that they truly fear and obey the one only true God in Jesus Christ, are women who publish the fact that they are Christians, i.e., prophets, priests, and kings of God. (See Heidelberg Catechism, Questions 86-91.) Does a glamorous dress and outlandish hairdo really "adorn" a Christian as she is portrayed by the Holy Spirit in I Peter 3:1-6?

It is well known that the life of the children of God is a letter (II Cor. 3:1, 2). See also what Paul writes in I Corinthians 7:16, 17. Is this in a broad sense not implied in the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:13-16? Is this not also the implication of Matthew 5:43-48? Let us search the Scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (II Tim. 3:15-17).

(We will continue the exposition of verses 11-15 in Lesson 6, D.V.)

* * * * *

Some questions for more in-depth discussion:

1. Is it not a remarkable fact that Paul refers to two women from the Old Testament Scriptures: Sarah and Eve? The latter was *not* born from a woman, but was one whom

God brought forth from a rib of Adam as the finishing creative act on the sixth day. Was she not surnamed Eve (*Hewa*) by Adam after the Fall of the first man (*Adam*), and also after God revealed His grace and mercy in Paradise? In Genesis 3:20 we read, "And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the *mother* of all living." In all the holy Scriptures the name Eve is mentioned but four times — twice in each testament (Gen. 3:20; 4:1; II Cor. 11:3; I Tim. 2:13-15).

2. Sarah called Abraham her *Adonai*. We read this of her in I Peter 3:6: "Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord (*Adonai*)." She called him this in the very presence of *Jehovah*, who appeared unto her and Abraham accompanied by two angels. We should notice that *Jehovah*, the covenant God, and the two angels are designated as "three men" who stood by him (Gen. 18:1-5). Sarah's calling Abraham *Adonai* was the deep and constant attitude of "revering her husband," expressed spontaneously before God and His angels, uttered with sanctified lips! (See Ephesians 5:32, 33.)

All the obedience of Sarah, mother of Isaac and his Seed, is uttered. Only holy women are permitted by God to walk the long road of patience. See the long road of patience, even from Ur of the Chaldees, until God took Sarah home to the better country, the heavenly (Gen. 23:1, 2; Heb. 11:11-13; 6:9-11).

3. Should it be difficult to understand that Sarah is mentioned in the Bible more often than Eve? If not, why not?

4. What is the greatness of both Eve and Sarah in their "motherhood" in the church? Who seem not to be able to fathom the greatness of the mother in the church who rocks the cradle?

5. What were the "good works" which adorned Eve? Sarah? Does the definition of what really constitutes good works apply also to Eve and to Sarah? □

Organizing New Congregations

In places where the consistory is to be constituted for the first time or anew, this shall not take place except with the advice of the classis.

Church Order, Article 38

Introduction

This article concerns the re-organizing of congregations and the organization of new congregations. Originally the article referred only to the re-constituting of congregations. This was necessary in the early history of the Reformed churches because of persecution. Often congregations were scattered, sometimes even forced to flee to foreign lands. When conditions improved, many of these believers would return to their homeland and native cities. Thus, there would arise the need to re-organize these groups of believers into congregations.

In the revision of the *Church Order* in 1914 by the Christian Reformed Church, the matter of the organization of new congregations was added to the article.

Various situations are covered by Article 38:

1) The organizing of congregations which are the fruit of local church extension work or denominational mission work.

2) The organizing of congregations born of a larger, mother church.

3) Existing congregations and consistories seeking admittance into the denomination.

4) Two smaller neighboring congregations joining together because they find it impossible to exist alone.

5) Re-organizing a congregation left without a consistory, as was the case in the history of the Protestant Reformed Churches in 1953 when, in some cases, most or all consistory members departed the denomination.

Strictly speaking, this article does not speak of organizing new congregations, but of organizing consistories: "In places where the *consistory* is to be constituted for the first time or anew...." The reason for this is that the constituting of a consistory is essential for the organizing of a congregation. Without competent officebearer material, no group may be organized as a congregation. Without the offices there can be no congregation.

Organizing with Classical Approval

No congregation may be organized without the advice of the classis, the article states.

The function of the classis is not that it organizes new churches *per se*. It is incorrect to say that a church cannot be organized without a major assembly's approval and help. To take this position is essentially hierarchy. A congregation organizes itself. This is both the activity and the calling of the believers themselves.

Nevertheless, the church federation, through the classis, has the right and power to decide whether a certain congregation shall be organized as a part of the communion of churches. This decision is not simply left to the discretion of the group being organized. Nor can another local consistory decide this alone. This is the

prerogative of the churches in common. Hence the need for approval of the classis, along with the concurring advice of the delegates *ad examina* from the other classes.

When the classis decided on granting a request for organization of a new congregation, certain criteria ought to be met. Is the group large enough to function as a viable congregation? Is there sufficient officebearer material in the group? Will the group be able to support itself financially now or in the foreseeable future? What are the prospects for growth, both internally and from the community?

There is a danger that congregations are organized too hastily. It may be that groups too small to function as viable congregations are organized. It may be that groups that are not entirely one with us are granted admittance into the denomination. These dangers must be avoided, both for the good of the group involved and for the good of the federation.

Procedure for Organization

The procedure for organizing new congregations is spelled out in the "Decisions Pertaining To This Article." That procedure is as follows:

1. A letter of request is directed to the classis, expressing the desire to organize a congregation in a certain locality. In the case of a group formed by the mission work of the churches in common, this request shall come to classis by way of a favorable decision of the local calling church with the advice of the Mission Committee.
2. The classis shall thereupon deliberate whether such organization is possible or desirable, observing whether there be among the

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

signators, persons suitable for consistory members, at the same time taking into account the neighboring churches. In case classis with the concurrence of the delegates *ad examina* decides to grant the request it appoints a committee to carry out the organization.

3. In order to organize the congregation the committee of the local church meets with the persons concerned, who have meanwhile requested their certificates of membership, or if it be impossible to have their certificates transferred, those present shall give testimony one of another that they were members in full communion and of good report in the congregation from which they were separating. After a service of worship shall have been conducted under the guidance of the committee, the latter shall request those present to tender their certificates, in as far as possible. The committee having found the certificates in good order and having accepted them, they shall proceed to election of officebearers, who shall immediately upon their election be installed in their respective offices.

4. In such situations as this the election cannot be performed otherwise than by free election by the vote of the male membership whose testimonials were found in order and accepted. Following the rule for free election it is required, in order to be chosen by the first ballot, to receive a two-thirds majority. In case of a reballoting an unqualified majority shall be decisive.

5. It is recommended that at this meeting, in the presence of a notary public, the documents pertaining to the incorporation of the new congregation be brought in order.

Definite improvements could be made in our present procedure for organizing new congregations. For one thing, altogether too much is left to the night of organization: a public worship service, organization itself, election of officebearers, installation of officebearers, and filling out papers for incorporation.

Change should also be made in the free election of a newly organized congregation's first officebearers. The idea of a free election runs contrary to sound Reformed church polity. Bet-

ter that the organizing consistory meet ahead of time with the heads of families of the group to be organized in order to discuss nominations for officebearers. The organizing consistory could then formulate the first slate of nominees. Certainly, if the organizing consistory is convinced that there is sufficient officebearer material in the group, it should be in a position to compose a slate of nominations.

The procedure for organizing new congregations followed by the Christian Reformed Church has more to commend itself than our own.

1. Classis shall mandate a neighboring consistory to effect the organization of a new congregation.

2. This consistory which is so mandated shall meet with the petition-signers to arrange for the organizational meeting and the nomination of at least twice the number of officebearers to be elected, or less than twice the number to be elected, giving reasons for this departure from the rule. Prior to making these nominations, the effecting consistory shall give the petition-signers an opportunity to direct attention to suitable persons. Nominations are to be announced two successive Sundays before the organizational meeting. Any objections to the nominations are to be heard by the consistory or representatives of the effecting consistory.

3. The consistory mandated to effect the organization shall accept and hold memberships of the petition-signers and present them at the organizational meeting.

4. At the organizational meeting, the officebearers shall be elected by balloting of all confessing members whose letters of transfer or dismissal have been accepted by the effecting consistory, and a majority is sufficient to elect. These officebearers shall be ordained and shall sign the Formula of Subscription at the organizational meeting.

5. No professions of faith shall be heard at the organizational meeting.

6. The papers of incorporation shall be prepared with legal counsel at a meeting of the newly organized consistory and presented for approval as early as possible after their organization.

Disbanding of Congregations

If a church cannot be organized as a member of the denomination without the advice of classis, it follows that no church can be disbanded without the advice of classis.

At times disbanding proves necessary. In case a church dwindles in size until only a few members remain, so that it cannot very well continue to exist, it may seek to be associated with a neighboring congregation and even be placed under the care of a neighboring consistory. But this can be at best only a temporary arrangement. Eventually such a dwindling congregation is forced to disband. In this case it informs classis of its decision with appropriate grounds, and seeks classis' advice. If classis advises to proceed with disbandment, the classis may appoint a committee to aid in the process. Often property will need to be disposed of. Monies received from the sale of the property should ordinarily be turned over to the classis. Minute books and archives should also become the possession of the classis.

Although ordinarily a congregation itself ought to take the initiative for disbandment, facing the reality that it is not feasible for them to continue as a viable congregation, there may be times when a congregation, or what is left of a congregation, is not willing to face this reality. In this case it may be necessary for the classis to step in and take the initiative. A classis certainly has the right to do this. Of course, this must be done in the right way, allowing time to convince those who are left that they ought, for their own good and the good of their children, to disband and move to other existing congregations. But it may come to this, that a classis simply has to take action and advise a congregation that they ought to disband. Like all classical advice, this advice too "has teeth." A classis cannot, of course, force a congregation to disband, or themselves effect disbandment. But a classis, if it comes to that, can initiate actions to sever from the denomination a congregation that ought to disband. □

The Declaration's Final Adoption

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand.

1 Corinthians 15:1

The Declaration of Principles was up for final adoption at the synod of 1951; and as the time for this session approached, the tensions began to build.

* * * * *

It was not as though the Declaration itself caused the breakdown in relations between us and the Liberated churches. For all practical purposes, that was accomplished before the Declaration ever appeared.

If there was any one thing that precipitated the beginning of this breakdown, it was no doubt the letter of Prof. Holwerda advising the Canadian immigrants not to accept Rev. Hoeksema's theological views. Rev. Ophoff received much of the blame for making the letter known; but the problem was with the letter itself, and it would have caused the breakdown whether published or not. For, by making it evident, as this letter did, that among the major figures in the Netherlands there were at least some who had no real interest in the principles upon which our churches were based, the letter was not something that could be overlooked. The Liberated were interested in our churches only to infiltrate them with their views, and thus, in effect, to make us over in their image. The free and open ex-

change of views, which we had hoped for and anticipated, was not in the offing for them. There had been indications of this all along, as in the failure of their committee for correspondence to contact our churches as their synod had told them to; but in this letter their intentions were too blatantly put to be ignored. The letter poisoned the relationship, possibly beyond repair.

And the letter was not alone. Almost immediately thereupon another blow fell, and that from a source least expected, from one whom we had counted among our closest friends. It came in the form of a small pamphlet written by Prof. Veenhof, the man who had been Rev. Hoeksema's point of contact with Dr. Schilder and the Netherlands all through the war. They had corresponded regularly together, he calling Rev. Hoeksema "uncle" and Hoeksema calling him "nephew," as through carefully coded messages he kept us informed of all that was taking place. It was he, if any, that we would have expected to understand and respect the principles upon which we stood.

His pamphlet, under the title *Appeal*, was addressed to the Synodical churches which had thrown Dr. Schilder and his followers out; but it was so full of common grace that it came as a shock to us all. Dr. Schilder had always been careful, and avoided direct conflict between their views and ours; but this pamphlet laid it right out:

Above all we must know and maintain this; through faith we must also see that: God, our God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, bap-

tizes the little children of the church!... When a child is baptized the LORD himself comes to that child, He himself sprinkles the water on its head and says very really and personally: *John, Mary, Ann, I, the LORD Himself, baptize you in My Holy Name. You are now of me!...* That is, He says to all those children, head for head, day in and day out, meaningfully and sincerely: *I am the LORD your God. I establish my covenant with you. I wash you from all your sin in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; my Holy Spirit lives in you. In short, I declare to you the complete forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation.*

There was no avoiding it. The claim was clear. Within the sphere of the covenant, in the Liberated view, gracious promises are given to every child head for head, elect and reprobate the same. Even the fondest defenders of the Liberated among us were embarrassed and forced to take exception. As reluctant as many were to admit it, their views and ours stood in contradiction.

And then Prof. Holwerda entered the scene again. This time it was with a speech he made and had printed. He was the one who had expressed such abhorrence at the suggestion that our views of the covenant should in any sense be binding. But in his speech, as Rev. Ophoff was quick to point out, their views were presented as though equal to Scripture itself, and thus binding on everyone. In spite of all their claims, there was no intent of equality between them and us.

And then came the final blow. In the early summer of 1950, before the Declaration was ever published, there appeared among the members of our

Rev. Woudenberg is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

churches in Canada a Liberated minister, a certain Rev. Hettinga, who proceeded to draw those members out and to organize them into an independent Liberated church, without warning or explanation to anyone. Before the year was out, our congregation had disappeared; and there was no indication that anyone in the Netherlands as much as cared. This was not the result of the Declaration, but only served to demonstrate how necessary the Declaration was, except that it came too late to have any practical effect.

That is not to say, however, that the Declaration was ignored. Once published, the Liberated pounced upon it as though it were the sole cause of everything wrong, even though the breakdown was all but completed before it appeared.

* * * * *

Nevertheless the document did have its effect. While the Declaration had little to do with our break with the Liberated, it certainly succeeded in bringing out the division in our own midst.

During the year following the Synod of 1950, a flurry of writing took place, especially out of our churches in the West. In the Eastern churches most joined together in a united classical expression of support for the Declaration, with relatively few opposing it. But in the West just about every consistory composed an overture in opposition, along with a good number of individuals. The division ran deep; and it built up to a climax at that synod of '51 where the final adoption of the Declaration was to take place.

At that synod the treatment was careful and deliberate, covering two lengthy sessions, one in June and the other in late September. The June session succeeded in treating only the legality issue, along with its regular synodical concerns, so that it was not until September that the content itself was addressed. Throughout, however, the division which had begun within our churches was clearly to be seen. In fact, already the advisory committee was split, with two mem-

bers from the East advising "yes" to adoption, and the two from the West "no." The lines were being drawn.

In the June session, where the matter of legality was considered, the treatment was rather spasmodic, because there was other regular business that had to be treated, and because one of the Western delegates fell sick. But in the end the effort to declare the Declaration out of order failed — but by only one vote. And then the synod adjourned to meet again in a special session in the fall.

This was, of course, the crucial session; for in it the substance of the Declaration was to be considered, and the real confrontation take place.

In actuality the objections were not many. The protests themselves had brought this out. No one, minister or layman, was ready to repudiate the contents of the Declaration as such; for, after all, these were the principles upon which our churches had been built, and which they had always maintained. Our ministers had all been trained in them; and it was the preaching of them which had made our churches what they were. Thus the Liberated view of the covenant, with its teaching that every child in the church is a recipient of a covenant grace, head for head, elect and reprobate alike (as the Declaration brought out) was hardly something that any could think to defend. But still the division was there. There were those who held a driving conviction that these differences could be overlooked, and that there were elements of Liberated theology which could be harmoniously integrated into our own — particularly the element of conditionality.

As we noted at the beginning of our series, the problem with which Dr. Schilder and his colleagues had been confronted already before the war, was a kind of dead orthodoxy which had spread through the Dutch churches, a defense of abstract theology while the responsibilities of Christian life were ignored. This could be corrected, they believed, only by injecting a conditional element into the preaching. All in the church are to be

told, on the one hand, that the promises of the covenant are theirs, head for head, through baptism; but that those promises are, on the other hand, dependent upon their meeting the conditions which the covenant laid down. If they do not meet the conditions, they fall under a covenant curse.

This was something that Rev. Hoeksema had never believed. It wasn't that he was indifferent to worldly living; he had always been as insistent upon sound discipline as any in the church. It was just that he didn't believe that laying down conditions, as some kind of a law, was the way in which true sanctification is brought about. Rather, and quite the opposite, he avoided in his preaching the kind of practical sermons which told people what to do and what not. That such did not and could not work had been brought out in the Scriptures by the failure of the law to bring about salvation or sanctification. All that such legal demands and threats can do is to demonstrate the reality of sin. Free grace alone can save or sanctify, and this is what the covenant is all about. Only as God opens the heart to the wonder of sound and full doctrinal preaching is the soul moved to gratitude, and only then will sanctification follow, just as the Heidelberg Catechism so carefully brings out.

As it was, however, there were those among us who had wearied of this and wanted something new. Thus they became quickly enamored of this Liberated view. Moreover, they were convinced that they could not only demonstrate this to be perfectly Scriptural, but also integrate it into our own views; and this they had set out to do. Long articles were written in an effort to bring this about, until the time came when Rev. Ophoff, and at last Rev. Hoeksema too, felt compelled to show that this simply could not be done. But by that time their opponents were committed to their position. They therefore not only had no ears for correction, or openness to real discussion, but they were determined that this was something worthy of fighting for to the end.

And so it was, at this final session of the synod of '51, that they made their move. An amendment was made to allow a place for conditions in the Declaration. It read like this:

There are conditions in God's Word, the confrontation of God's demand which God annexes to the promise in order to bring out clearly His unconditional grace and mercy as well as His just wrath and man's inability to fulfill them.

The formulation was careful, as mild as they could make it read; but the idea was clear. They wanted a place

for a conditional element in the theology of our churches. But in the end their effort failed. The amendment did not pass — by reason of a tie vote. Clearly the churches were split.

For the time being, however, the synodical battle was over. The consideration of the Declaration moved on quickly with only three dissenting votes recorded at the last. The Declaration of Principles was officially adopted; but only after attaching this preamble:

Declaration of principles, to be

used only by the Mission Committee and the Missionaries for the organization of prospective churches on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions as these have always been maintained in the Protestant Reformed Churches and as these are now further explained in regard to certain principles.

The covenant position which one could expect to be preached in the Protestant Reformed churches was now established; but the battle was still to go on. □

Church and State

Mr. James Lanting

Recent Developments in Church-State Law

■ Equal Pay Act Applies to Church-Operated School

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) brought a federal suit against the First Baptist Church in northern Indiana for alleged violation of the federal Equal Pay Act. The Act prohibits discrimination "between employees on the basis of sex by paying wages to employees ... at a rate less wages paid to employees of the opposite sex ... for equal work...." The EEOC claimed that the Baptist school, which serves pre-schoolers through eighth graders, paid male teachers higher wages than female teachers.

The church argued that this pay differential was due to a gender neutral "head of household" allowance, although admittedly there were no female teachers presently eligible for it. After the EEOC commenced the

suit, the church abandoned the "head of household" allowance and reduced the salaries of all male teachers to that of the female teachers.

The federal court held that the EEOC need not show a discriminatory motive for creating the pay differential — only that a pay differential exists between members of the opposite sex. The court also held that the church's belated elimination of the "head of household allowance" did not cure that violation, because the Act expressly prohibits compliance by means of reducing wages. The purpose of the Act, asserted the court, is to insure that violations are remedied by an increase of the lower rate to the level of the higher.

The church also argued that an application of the Equal Pay Act to church-operated schools violates the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment. The court disagreed, noting that although the Act does have minimal impact on the free exercise of religious belief, such impact is outweighed by a compelling state interest, and the Act is the "least restrictive means" to that end. The court

also held that the Act has a secular purpose, neither advances nor inhibits its religion, and does not foster excessive entanglement between government and religion.

Accordingly, the court held that the church-operated school violated the Equal Pay Act by paying some male teachers a "head of household" allowance, even though (single parent) female teachers were eligible for the same allowance. Moreover, the subsequent elimination of the "head of household" allowance also violated the Act, since the Act instead required that all salaries of female teachers be increased to the level of all male teachers.

This case and others clearly demonstrate that all private and parochial schools are now subject to all provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, including standards regarding minimum wages, overtime laws, and equal pay laws. (*EEOC v. First Baptist Church*, N.D. Ind. 1992).

■ Texas Court Jettisons Sodomy Law

A group of homosexual rights

Mr. Lanting, a member of South Holland Protestant Reformed Church, is a practicing attorney.

activists recently challenged a portion of the Texas Criminal Code which criminalized private sexual relations between consenting adults of the same sex. A trial court ruled the sodomy law unconstitutional, and the state of Texas appealed.

The appellate court agreed, striking down the Texas sodomy law as unconstitutional. The activists argued that the sodomy law violated their personal rights; condoned hate crimes against lesbians and homosexuals; encouraged discrimination in employment, family issues, and housing; and raised the potential threat of arrest and fines.

The state argued the law was constitutional because of the state's overriding interest in protecting public morality. The court disagreed, holding that implementing public morality was not a compelling state interest. Moreover, the court held that individual right to privacy concerns would invariably be violated by the sodomy law. "The right to privacy," declared the court, "should yield only when government can demonstrate that an intrusion is reasonably warranted for the achievement of a compelling governmental objective...." It is not constitutional, ruled the court, to prohibit gays and lesbians from engaging in the same activities that are legal for heterosexuals.

But what about AIDS and other public health concerns? The court

stated that there was no evidence in the record that the statute protected the public's health or that the Texas legislature intended the statute as a disease prevention measure. Thus, sadly enough, Texas now joins the majority of states that have either struck down or repealed sodomy laws. But in light of current statistics that over 90 percent of AIDS victims are homosexuals, the Texas court is seemingly oblivious to the threat of AIDS, which is largely caused by homosexual behavior, and to the general erosion of public morality in this country. (*State v. Morales*, Tex. Ct. App. 1992).

■ Religious Organizations may Discriminate on the Basis of Religion

Recent cases and new legislation have indicated that although religious organizations are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, sex, or national origin, such organizations may discriminate on the basis of religion. In a federal case in Illinois, a woman employee of a Jewish church brought a complaint against her employer alleging discrimination. The court held that although federal laws prohibited the church from discriminating on the basis of sex or race, the church would be exempt from religious discrimination charges "with

respect to the employment of individuals of a particular religion to perform work connected with the [purpose] of the corporation."

Similarly, the state legislature of Florida recently passed the Florida Civil Rights Act which prohibits employers from discriminating on the basis of "race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, or marital status." However, the new laws contained an important exemption which provides as follows: "This [law] shall not apply to any religious corporation, association, educational institution, or society which conditions opportunities in the area of employment or public accommodation to members of that religious ... society or to persons who subscribe to its tenets or beliefs."

Accordingly, although there now exist a bewildering array of federal and state anti-discrimination laws, it is reassuring to note that churches and Christian schools still have the right to refuse employment or admission to those who do not subscribe to the religious tenets and beliefs of the religious organization. This right is obviously fundamental to the continued existence of our parental Christian day schools, both with respect to employment of teachers and admission of students. (*Elbaz v. Congregation Beth Judea, Inc.*, N.D. Ill. 1992; Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992). □

Guest Article

Rev. Jason Kortering

Classis Meeting of the ERCS

It was my privilege to be present at the annual meeting of the Classis of the Evangelical Reformed Churches of Singapore which met at Covenant Church on Saturday, February 27. It was with great joy that we could observe as well as participate in the discussions which led to the deci-

sions which had to be made. Besides the delegates, Pastor Mahtani was also present to participate. The Lord has greatly blessed these churches, and there is abundant evidence of their increasing ability to handle ecclesiastical matters.

Though the denomination con-

Rev. Kortering is a Protestant Reformed minister-on-loan to Singapore.

sists of two churches, Covenant and First, they have in place the necessary checks and balances which distinguish a Reformed-Presbyterian system of church government from an Independent system. The Committees and Sessions prepare their material for the agenda and forward it to the Stated Clerk, who publishes the agenda at least one month prior to the meeting of Classis. Both Sessions meet ahead of time and go over the agenda and decide what points they desire to raise at the meeting of Classis. This is quite important; for the six men delegated to Classis (three from each church) carry quite a bit of weight, and they want to be sure that they understand the mind of the Sessions. In some instances the members of a Session might want to suggest a certain course of action with respect to an item on the agenda for Classis. Such a recommendation is not binding upon the delegates, but is taken as information to be considered in the process of making a decision that is according to the Word of God and our Reformed Confessions. In this way, reports of committees and requests for action which are not contested by either Session are treated with dispatch. The Classis focuses attention on matters which have to be worked out in greater detail, matters on which the Sessions may have expressed different viewpoints. This works very well, since the Classis meets only once a year, on Saturday afternoon, and the delegates do not have the luxury of extra time.

Under the capable leadership of Pastor Lau, the meeting moved right along, and enough time was given for discussion and careful consideration. The meeting lasted from 2 P.M. until 8:30 P.M. The decisions that were taken will be prepared by the Stated Clerk and made available to the membership of both churches.

Since the work of the churches is a spiritual work, time is taken at the beginning of the meeting for a devotional. Pastor Lau gave an exhortation on the prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17. He gave a refreshing overview of this prayer and reminded his

listeners that Jesus prayed that the Father might "sanctify them through thy truth, (for) thy word is truth." The true unity of the church is their oneness with the Father. It is this which motivates the church to work hard for the great gathering of the entire church of our Lord. This message set a good tone for the work which followed.

The reports which came to Classis were the following: General Reports from Covenant and First; and reports from the Denominational Study Committee, Contact Committee, Joint Mission Committee, Theological Training Committee, and the Denominational Finance Committee.

By way of explanation, the General Reports from each Session include a rather detailed description of the present state of the congregation and what activities are going on in the furtherance of the gospel. This includes the preaching ministry, the teaching ministry, pastoral visitation, discipline, evangelism, diaconate work, and statistics of the membership. In this way there is a certain accountability, much like the work of church visitation by the Classes in the PRC.

Among the statistics given, we take note that FERC has 73 brothers (50 married, 23 single) and 83 sisters (46 married and 37 single); 49 families, 67 children (31 males, 36 females); 4 adult baptisms were held last year, 2 confessions of faith, 8 infant baptisms, 1 transfer in, 4 transfers out, 3 resignations. CERC has 18 brothers (12 married, 1 divorced, 5 single) and 22 sisters (13 married, 9 single); 12 families, 24 children (15 males, 9 females); 5 infant baptisms, 1 transfer out, 2 resignations.

The reports indicate too that much work is being done to build up the church spiritually.

The Denominational Study Committee has just completed its work, and the Classis has set up a more permanent Denominational Development Committee. The former committee was entrusted with a number of important projects. The most time-consuming was to formulate the Con-

stitution of the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore. This is a legal document which is now being filed with the Registry of Societies, a necessary move in order that they can function officially as a Classis and hold property and bank accounts. The committee was also instructed to prepare documents on "Overture," "Protest," "Appeal," "Classical Censure," and "Procedures Dealing with Doctrinal Controversies." All of these were submitted to Classis and approved. These now constitute the groundwork for orderly dealing with issues within the churches. The supervision of the registry with the government will be made by the new DDC. The new committee is also instructed to study and recommend the adoption of a Church Order. A constitution for this committee was also adopted.

The Contact Committee reported on the letter which they sent to the PRC regarding consideration of Pastor Mahtani for a call. They also informed Classis that they had written both Sessions requesting that they deal with the issue of the covenant, in view of the letter received from the Synod of the PRC. One Session responded, the other did not. Classis instructed the Session to reply to the Contact Committee in order that they may then compose a reply. The Committee also informed Classis they had received a letter of apology from the Free Reformed Church of Australia regarding insensitive comments in their Synod Report of 1990 and that the CC had accepted this apology. The Contact Committee also received oral information of a possible visit of a pastor from the FRCA to Singapore in March. This will afford opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings and to discuss possible dealings with each other. (A previous Classis decided not to work toward Sister-church Relationship.)

The Joint Mission Committee Report included the information that the work in Penang, Malaysia was terminated, since the group there decided to request a Reformed Baptist pastor to work with them. The rec-

ommendation to continue to develop the Indian field by way of correspondence and printed material, including courses, tracts, books, Bibles, and audio and visual material, was approved. If this should prove effective, the funds were approved for a future visit for the purpose of intensive instruction in India for a brief period. Effort will also be put forth to develop evangelism work here in Singapore itself. The committee was instructed to continue to explore different possibilities in which the churches can cooperate in this work.

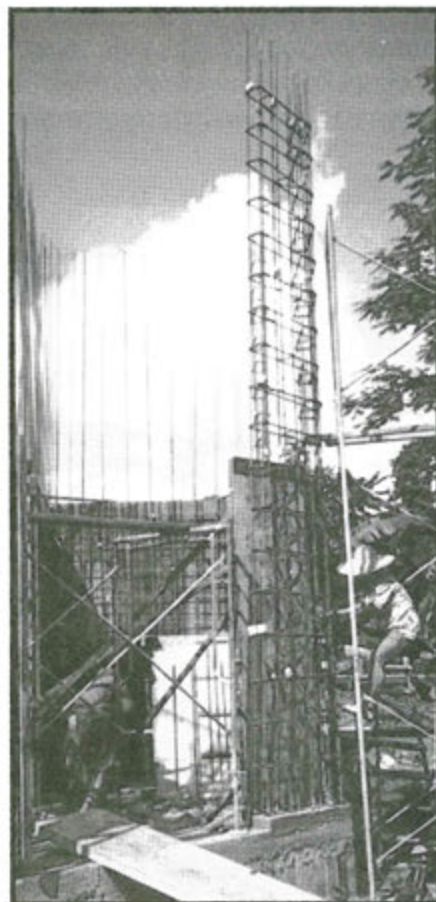
The Theological Training Committee reported with thankfulness to God that student Cheah Fook Meng is ready for his studies in the USA. He is finishing his work at Far Eastern Bible College and a course on the Belgic Confession with Pastor Kortering. FERC has agreed to administer the Student Aid Fund to raise one-half of his support while in the States. Classis also approved the request from FERC that CERC raise seventy percent of this amount, and FERC take thirty percent, since First Church has their building program and Covenant has no financial responsibility for a pastor. The TTC will also supervise the progress of the student's work in the Theological School of the PRC while in the States. The program of lectures by Pastor Kortering was approved. These include lecture series on the church order, missions, and eschatology.

The Denominational Finance Committee presented a financial state-

ment of the work of Classis. They also proposed approval of the requests of each of the committees. Since the financial aid for the student will be administered outside the expenses of classis, the amount approved by Classis was US\$6,000.00. Classis also approved a constitution for this committee.

After these decisions were made, Classis discussed the role of Pastor Kortering in the churches' activities. Since he is loaned by the PRC to assist them, the churches together faced this question. Covenant requested Classis to approve his continuing as pastor in that church for one more year. The reason given was that the congregation was settling down after going through the difficulties, and that it would be helpful for the building up of the congregation if this could continue without interruption. Classis approved this request. They also decided that the oversight of Rev. Kortering's work in the denomination be administered by Covenant in consultation with First Church.

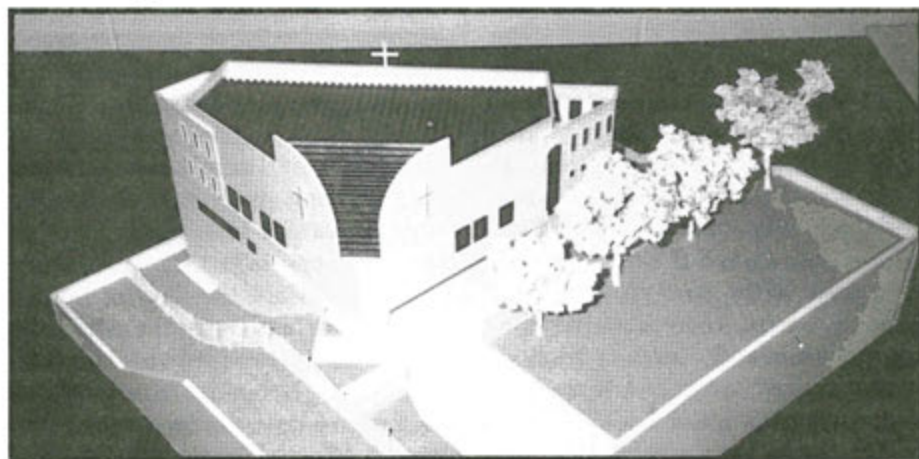
The next meeting of Classis was set for February 26, 1994 at First Church. It was with particular gratitude to God that this motion could be passed, for, the Lord willing, their new church building will be ready for use by that time. We include a few pictures of the "model" and the construction site. This is quite an unusual structure, designed to take advantage of limited ground level space, and to expand as it goes up the hill. As a result it has five levels, the lowest



FERC Construction Site

being much like a "void deck," open and usable for more informal meetings; the next level for offices and Sunday School classrooms; the third level for car parking and pastor's study; the fourth level for auditorium; and fifth level like a mezzanine or balcony. I do not have available the square footage. The land cost about US\$565,000.00 and the building will cost about US\$750,000.00. The members have been very generous to underwrite the cost, so that only a rather small amount has to be borrowed from the bank. For those in the PRC who know what it is like to meet in public auditoriums, it will be easy to appreciate the anticipation of FERC and the entire denomination to see this building completed and put to use.

We trust this report will update the readers of the *Standard Bearer* concerning the work of the ERCS. Continue to pray for us that, though small in number, we may be a powerful influence for the good of the gos-



Model of new church building of First ERC of Singapore

That Blessed Comforting Shadow

A shadow always gives evidence of the existence of an object on which the light is falling. That object is between the light and the shadow. An illustration of that we find in II Kings 20:9-11, where we read of a shadow cast by a piece of wood or metal on a sundial. Further, in Colossians 2:16, 17 we read that the Sabbath days are "a shadow of things to come." And in the old dispensation we find shadows of things that are coming, that are presented to us in the New Testament.

Likewise, when we in this department called the Day of Shadows consider more details in the life of Jacob, we see revealed to us shadows of what our almighty and gracious God does for His people. It is comforting to take note of the fact that we are in these articles dealing with a child of God whose name was Jacob, which means Supplanter, a word which means "one who follows another." Jacob received that name because of the way in which God caused him to come out of his mother Rebekah, with his hand holding on to Esau's heel. These twin sons differed, not only in their coming forth from their mother, but also in their lives from a spiritual point of view.

Jacob — as we considered in a previous article — had to flee to his uncle Laban in Haran, to be protected from his brother who intended to kill

him. There in Mesopotamia Jacob begat eleven sons, and determined finally to return to Canaan. On his way our God told him that his name must be changed to Israel. That name means Prince of God (Gen. 32:28).

Jacob's return to the promised land, and his being given a new and glorious name, are shadows of our soon coming into the new Jerusalem as Princes of God. We too enjoy a shadow of God's grace in His Son, which shadow we will presently enjoy, not as a shadow, but as a gracious blessing when Christ returns with the fullness of salvation for us.

What did take place, and what is very important for us to consider, is that Jacob, without informing his uncle Laban, left him in order to return to his father in the land of Canaan. This he did because he knew God's promises. Further, his return to Canaan was a fruit of God's grace. He went back to the land which God had promised him through his father.

Jacob was moved to do this after God in His providence caused some of Laban's cattle to have white spots speckling them, and causing some of his sheep to become brown. When Laban, as Jacob had suggested, let him have those relatively few cattle and sheep with white spots and brown color, Jacob agreed to stay and work for Laban. In the good providence of God, however, there occurred between Jacob and Laban a friction, which moved Jacob at last to steal away from his uncle Laban and to return to the land where his father still dwelt. Thus the Lord Himself

fulfilled His promise to Abraham, by bringing Jacob back to the promised land.

What we should note here, for it applies also to us, is the fact that what we read in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day XLIV, is so true. Counting the hours and minutes of our lives, and the sins which we have committed, it is so evident that we have "only a small beginning of this obedience." Correctly Paul, who wrote those thirteen beautiful and instructive epistles from Romans through Philemon, wrote in Romans 7:24 that awesome truth, namely, "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And in verses 20 and 21, "Sin dwelleth in me" and evil is present.

There were in Jacob's life shadows of what our merciful God does in His grace and of what He enables us to do. There are many sins of reborn children of God presented to us in Scripture. And every child of God is described as having only a small beginning of obedience. Surely in Jacob's life there is revealed to us how merciful and gracious our God is.

Jacob, having two wives, and using two of their handmaidens, brought forth eleven sons. Strikingly, we read of our Holy God saying to Jacob in Genesis 31:13, after his sin of adultery, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." What a clear evidence of the forgiveness of Jacob's sins!

Take note also of Jacob's sinful acts, that he took "rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut trees, and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods" (Gen. 30:37). Jacob laid them before Laban's cattle and sheep in an attempt to get more speckled cattle and brown sheep. How true then is the word of God in Romans 5:20, that, "Where sin aboundeth, grace did much more abound." Yes, how wonderful and true is what Paul also wrote in Ephesians 2:8, namely, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." That gift of grace is so plainly and richly revealed to us in the life of Jacob.

Yes, Jacob had to flee from Canaan, the promised land, because of his sin of lying to his father, and of making his father believe that he was Esau, and in that way seeking carnal things in a carnal way. Yet our gracious God, because of what His Son did for us, calls Jacob to go back to Canaan, and thus back to His gracious promises given to Abraham in Genesis 12:2, namely, "And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." Jacob had turned his back upon God; but our God turned Jacob back and promised him not only the land of Canaan, but that which it pictured, namely, the new Jerusalem, when His Son returns after His cross and resurrection and comes in due time with everlasting blessedness.

What a blessed shadow of what lies ahead for us! What a manifestation of God's grace! How true it is that we are saved by grace, and not by our works. What a comforting shadow fell here on God's church. Let us never overlook the fact that even our desire for such a salvation is God's gift to us. We are not saved because we believe. We believe because we are saved by God from unbelief. What a tragedy it is that in many churches today salvation is presented merely as deliverance from the punishment which we deserve. How prevalent also is the untruth that we must give

God something before He will give us salvation. God's call to us is not presented as a command but as an offer; and He waits to see what we will do before He causes us to be born again with a new spiritual life that will bring us to heavenly blessedness. And men teach that heavenly blessedness merely is a freedom from pain and suffering.

But let us take hold of what our God Himself said the day that man fell into sin. In what is called the Mother Promise (Gen. 3:15) our God gives us that awesome and basic truth of our salvation. Salvation is that work of God's grace whereby He delivers us from sin, not merely from its punishment. God said to Satan, in the day Satan tempted man to sin, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Let us note in the first place that there is here, in this first promise of God's grace, no mention of saving man from punishment. Such salvation is however implied and clearly taught throughout Scripture. Thus in Romans 6:23 we do read, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." And in II Corinthians 4:17 Paul also wrote that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And in Revelation 21 and 22 we have so much comfort presented to us while we are yet in awful aches and pains, sickness and death. In heaven there will be neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain (Rev. 21:4). All tears will God wipe from our eyes. And Revelation 22 presents the comforting truths that there will be leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations; no night there in the new Jerusalem; no curse; and one endless life of covenant fellowship with God.

But do not overlook the fact that all this blessedness of our bodies is so that we may constantly serve God more fully than Adam could the day he was created. Adam was created in the image of God and fell into Satan's

image. But through Christ we are saved in order to be more in God's image than Adam was the day he was created. Salvation brings us into being members of Christ's body, the church. And our new man in Christ always says, "Get thee behind me Satan" (Luke 4:8). We will not only be brought where Satan cannot tempt us — for he will be cast into hell with its everlasting punishment — but we will be created in Christ, everlastingly unable to sin.

All this explains how Jacob could and did return to the promised land, and how he could be listed with the giants of faith in Hebrews 11, particularly in verse 21. By faith, when he was dying, he blessed the sons of Joseph and worshiped God, leaning upon his staff. Read then also the blessed truth in Mark 12:26, where Jesus said: "Have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" Clearly Jacob is listed, as in Hebrews 11, as an elect child of God, in whom God had wrought faith, and who was eternally elected to be a member of the body of Christ, His blessed church.

In Jacob's going back to the promised land, and in God's calling him to do so, we have presented to us a blessed shadow of what lies ahead for us. Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden; and they were promised hatred against Satan and sin. We will not return to that garden, but will be elevated to a higher garden, wherein we cannot sin, or even be tempted to do so.

What a blessed shadow we see in Jacob's return, in fact in his *safe* return. So surely shall we leave this life which is nothing but a continual death; and we, who are created in Christ to be in the image of God, will be brought into a more blessed life than that to which the highest of the angels were created. Take into your souls that blessed truth in Hebrews 1:13 and 14. We shall sit at God's right hand, higher than any of the angels ever were. The angels are ministering spirits, who serve us as heirs with Christ. □

R.F.P.A.

Permanent Committee for the Publication of Protestant Reformed Literature

P.O. Box 2006
Grand Rapids, MI 49501

February 26, 1993

Dear Readers,

The R.F.P.A. Permanent Book Committee takes this opportunity to acquaint our readers with the latest work and plans in the publishing of our books. We do so in the hopes and with the prayers that our God will bless these labors as good Reformed literature is distributed in our churches and among those who hold like precious faith with us.

As many of our readers know, two new and important books have recently been offered to the public. One is Mrs. Gertrude Hoeksema's fascinating and exciting book about the history of our Protestant Reformed Churches. It is published under the title, *A Watered Garden*, which title is taken from Isaiah 58:11. This book ought to be in every Protestant Reformed home, and it is a valuable resource for anyone interested in our churches.

The second book is entitled *Far Above Rubies* and is a collection of speeches, articles, and pamphlets which deal with the important question of the biblically defined role of women in the church and covenant of God. It is not a negative book, interested only in condemning modern feministic movements, but it is a positive book, showing biblical teachings of the important place which women have in God's work of the kingdom. The book has already been selling above expectations, and we urge those who have not purchased it to obtain a copy.

It might interest our readers to know that one of our publications, *Whosoever Will*, written by the late Herman Hoeksema, has been translated into Spanish and is being distributed in Spain. If anyone of our readers can make use of this Spanish translation, he can get the address of the publisher in Spain by writing the Seminary.

The R.F.P.A. Permanent Book Committee has plans for a number of new books which should be available within the next year, funds permitting. By next summer Gertrude Hoeksema's last book in the series *Show Me Thy Ways* will be available. The series, *Suffer Little Children*, has been complete for some time. The whole set sells for \$32.95. It is for very young children and contains three books plus two workbooks. *Show Me Thy Ways* is a set of books for Bible study for children in intermediate grades. It consists of three textbooks and three workbooks. The textbooks are \$15.95 apiece and the workbooks are \$4.95. A price for the entire set has not yet been determined.

Several new books will be published within the next year, the Lord willing. Prof. David Engelsma is preparing a revised edition of *Hyper-Calvinism and the Call of the Gospel*. This revised edition will have a Preface by Dr. John Gerstner, which preface is worth the price of the book.

Rev. Gise VanBaren has prepared, in book form, his articles entitled *Good Morning, Alice*, which originally appeared in the *Standard Bearer*. These articles contain brief notes which were sent by an anonymous person in cards over a period of time to Rev. VanBaren's sister as she was dying from Lou Gehrig's disease. They are a source of comfort and encouragement to all who suffer serious disease and face death.

The book on *The Five Points of Calvinism* has long been out of print. It has not been reprinted because a new book, written by Revs. Ronald Cammenga and Ronald Hanks, has been in the process of preparation. It is now nearly finished and will soon go to press. It is a book eminently suited for use in Societies and Bible Study Groups.

Rev. Carl Haak's Study Guide on the book of Philippians has proved to be popular. We are happy to announce, therefore, that we have received manuscripts for two other Study Guides: one on the book of Ruth, another on Malachi. These also should be ready within a year.

So you see, our committee has been busy. We commend our work to the prayers and support of God's people everywhere. Especially we seek your support in the purchase of our books; for the more books we are able to sell, the more we are able to print. God has blessed us richly, and our books have gone out to many parts of the world. Under God's blessing they have been instrumental in bringing many to and confirming many in the Reformed faith.

With Christian greetings,
R.F.P.A. Permanent Book Committee

School Activities

Our Christian schools continue to grow and expand with the growth of our congregations. The evidence of this is seen in recent school developments in three different congregations.

In the first place, the Board of Covenant Christian School in Lynden, WA announced recently that it had approved a constitution for a new high school society. The organization of this society took place back in early February.

In the second place, the Randolph (WI) PR School Society, along with its Board, continues to meet on a regular basis. Although the Board had hoped to be able to come with proposals concerning a starting date and use of classroom space, some complications have come into play concerning the building that the Board is considering. Information concerning financial matters and operational expenses is also being gathered. Given time, these obstacles will, the Lord willing, be overcome.

And in the third place, the Board of the PR Christian school in South Holland, IL informed all their association members of a proposal to add approximately 5,700 square feet to their present building, and to do some remodeling. Plans were approved for four new classrooms; a conference room; additional room for storage; remodeling of office space; and new, energy-efficient windows.

Congregational Activities

Not only are our schools moving ahead with building plans, but our churches are as well. Such is the case with the Peace PRC in Lynwood, IL. At a recent congregational meeting, they approved the final concept plans for stage #1 of their church building. This means that, after an architect has

made blueprints based on the final concept plans, and after financial matters are in place, the congregation can begin the actual construction of their first church home. Plans call for the construction to begin this fall season.

On March 8, the Church Extension Committee of the Lynden, WA PRC sponsored a lecture held in the auditorium of the Lynden Christian Middle School. Rev. R. VanOverloop, pastor of the Bethel PRC in Elk Grove Village, IL, was the featured speaker. He addressed his audience on the subject, *Sex and Dating in the Christian Life*. The Young People's Society of Lynden also provided a special number at that lecture.

As a side note to the above, this lecture resulted in a three-way pulpit exchange. Rev. C. Haak, pastor of Lynden, WA, preached for both the Bethel and South Holland, IL congregations on March 7, while Rev. C. Terpstra, South Holland's pastor, preached once in his own pulpit and once at Bethel, while Rev. R. VanOverloop preached twice in Lynden. These arrangements were made because of the Conference and the meeting of Classis that past week and the lecture the next.

You can feel that spring has finally arrived here in the midwest when you see announcements like the one recently in Pella, IA PRC's bulletin asking for volunteers to help paint the interior of their church.

Denominational Activities

On Saturday, March 20, the spring meeting of the PR Evangelism Planning Committee was held at First PRC in Grand Rapids, MI. All members of Evangelism Committees and other interested persons in the area were invited to attend. These meetings are held on a regular basis and are intended to help coordinate activities between the churches in the West-Michigan area concerning evangelism.

The Seminary of our churches recently invited Dr. W. Robert Godfrey to speak. Dr. Godfrey delivered two academic lectures on the subject, "Predestination as Taught in the Canons of Dordrecht." These lectures were given at 10 A.M. and 2 P.M. at the seminary on March 15. Dr. Godfrey is a conservative, first-rate Church Historian who teaches at Westminster Theological Seminary in Escondido, CA.

Mission Activities

Rev. R. Hanco, newly installed missionary-pastor to the Covenant Reformed Fellowship of Northern Ireland, preached his inaugural sermon on Sunday evening, March 14. He chose as his topic, "Jesus Calls His Sheep By Name," based on John 10:2, 3.

The following Monday, the 15th, the Hanco family was scheduled to leave for Northern Ireland; but these plans were altered by a day, due to the severe late-winter storm of that weekend on the east coast. So on Tuesday the Hankos left Grand Rapids, MI, flew to Chicago, then on to Frankfurt, Germany, then back to London, and finally on to Belfast, Northern Ireland. It sounds like a long, exhausting trip.

The Fellowship planned a welcome "tea" for the Hanco family on Friday evening.

The VanBarens have also finalized their return flight on Wednesday, April 14. Rev. VanBaren expected to preach in Birmingham and London the two Sundays prior to that return.

Ministerial Calls

The Council of the Southwest PRC in Grandville, MI presented a trio to their congregation consisting of the Pastors R. Cammenga, R. Dykstra, and R. VanOverloop; and on March 17 they extended a call to Rev. R. VanOverloop to become their next under-shepherd. □

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

THE STANDARD BEARER

P.O. Box 603
Grandville, MI 49468-0603

SECOND CLASS
Postage Paid at
Grandville, Michigan

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council of Grandville Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincerest sympathy to our fellow officebearer and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. John VanderWoude, in the loss of their son,

MR. JIM VANDER WOUDE.

May our gracious God comfort them by His Word, "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8).

Rev. A. Spriensma, President
Mr. David Harbach, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's and Ladies' Societies of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Redlands express their deepest Christian sympathy to fellow members and their families in the death of their mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother,

MRS. GRETINE VAN UFFELEN.

May they be comforted in the words of our Lord and Savior in I Thessalonians 4:16-18, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ... and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Pastor A. den Hartog, President
Brenda Gritters, Vice-Secretary
Rick Span, Secretary

NOTICE!!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, May 12, 1993 at the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church.

Jon J. Huiskens,
Stated Clerk

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NOTICE!!

Pamphlets reprinted

***The Place of Reprobation in the
Preaching of the Gospel*** (\$1.00)
and

Triple Breach (\$2.00)
by Herman Hoeksema

Available from
Southwest Protestant Reformed
Evangelism Committee
4875 Ivanrest Ave.
Grandville, MI 49418

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

April 16, 1993 marked the 45th wedding anniversary of

BARNEY and THRESSA HAAK.

The children are thankful to our covenant God that He has blessed them with these 45 years of marriage. "He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations" (Psalm 105:8).

- * Richard Haak
- * Ken and Marilyn DeJong
- * Rev. Carl and Mary Haak
13 grandchildren

South Holland, Illinois

TAPES AVAILABLE

Cassette tapes of the public youth lecture on "Sex and Dating: In the Christian Life," by Rev. VanOverloop are available. The cost is \$3.00. Direct correspondence to:

Lynden PRC
Extension Committee
315 North Park St.
Lynden, WA 98264

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The consistory and congregation of the Loveland Protestant Reformed Church express Christian sympathy to the family of Mr. Gustave Huber in the passing of their loved one into glory. Brother Huber was one of the founding fathers of our congregation and served as elder for many years. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13).

Rev. Ron Cammenga, President
Mr. Ron Koole, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church expresses its Christian sympathy to fellow member, Egbert Gritters and family, in the loss of Egbert's mother,

MRS. WILMA GRITTERS.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort" (II Corinthians 1:3).

Rev. Richard Moore, President
Jim Andringa, Secretary

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

We express our Christian Sympathy and love to an elder of our congregation, Egbert Gritters, and to his family at the time of the death of his mother,

WILEMINA GRITTERS,

on March 7, 1993.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55:22).

Council of the Hull PR Church
Rev. R.G. Moore, President
Leon Uittenbogaard, Asst. Clerk