



# *THE* **STANDARD BEARER**

**A Reformed  
Semi-Monthly  
Magazine**

Pastoral work begins  
on the pulpit. All other work  
in the congregation  
is of no avail if the pulpit  
is considered of  
secondary importance.  
All individual pastoral work  
must be built upon,  
and I dare say,  
receive its power from,  
preaching.

See "A Pastor's Heart" — p. 255

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In This Issue . . .

A rubric that is deservedly popular with readers of the *Standard Bearer* is Prof. Hanko's "A Cloud of Witnesses." Drawing on his vast knowledge of the history of the church, Prof. Hanko gives us delightful and informative sketches of the life and labor of many of the leading figures of church history. Adding to the value of the historical and biographical accounts are the observations that our church historian makes on the history that he is presenting. Such an observation occurs in the article in this issue. Having mentioned that a future Reformed minister was greatly helped by the comment of an old priest in the as yet unreformed church, Hanko remarks that "it must have been these lonely and scattered men who enabled the church of Christ to stay alive during those perilous times."

In this issue, Prof. Hanko begins his treatment of Caspar Olevianus, one of the authors of our precious Heidelberg Catechism. (Prince Frederick III and the other author of the Catechism, Zacharius Ursinus, were featured in earlier articles. If you have not yet read the accounts of their involvement in the producing of the Catechism, you really should do so before proceeding with Olevianus.)

All of this is our history, as the church — the Reformed church — in the world.

Caspar Olevianus was one of the men of God by whom God did great, good things for us His church. As was often the case with such men, God framed his life in sometimes extraordinary ways in order to use him for the purposes that God intended. Luther had his thunderstorm. Olevianus had a near-drowning.

Read "Caspar Olevianus: Author of the Heidelberg Catechism."

— DJE



# Our Christian Liberty

*"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

Galatians 1:11, 12

What Paul wrote here, in this first chapter of his epistle to the Galatians, is as serious and necessary for us today as it was in the day when he wrote it. And we ought not only to agree with Paul, in order to agree with God; but we should also realize what an astounding development there is in the different forms of the lie which Satan has brought into the church-world today.

By some in these churches in Galatia Paul was accused of bringing a gospel that did not please them. They considered it to be a false doctrine. Likewise today the false doctrines which Satan has worked into the church-world divide and separate many churches and link them up with the world.

Today many churches maintain that they are free to walk in what they call Christian liberty. Actually they are walking in antichristian devilry. It is amazing to realize what a tremendous number of different kinds of churches there are today. They do not simply have different names; but they have distinctly different kinds of doctrines and walks of life. We do well, therefore, to consider what our God

reveals to us here through the apostle Paul.

What Paul writes about here is our actual, real, and blessed Christian liberty. That liberty is the liberty which Christ Jesus earned for those whom His Father eternally chose in Christ. It is not a liberty that our flesh wants. It is a liberty which Christ earned for us and by God's grace works in us. Since man fell into sin in Paradise, we, the whole human race, come into this world in a liberty which Satan brought upon us, a liberty that every man has by nature, and is revealed in all his walk of life. Through Adam's sin of eating the forbidden fruit we are all set free from that spiritual life wherewith Adam was created. And liberty is freedom. Every liberty is not a Christian liberty, even though by Satan's craftiness in the church-world it is called that. Much of what is called Christian liberty is devilish rebellion against God.

God told Adam that if he would commit the sin of eating of the forbidden fruit, he would die. That meant that all his seed, the whole human race, would come into this world spiritually dead. That death came in the day that Adam did what Satan presented as an advantage for him. And, coming upon Adam, it came upon the whole human race. When a man dies physically he has no power to benefit his children that are left behind him. Although Adam had not yet begotten a son or daughter, he did die spiritually; and in no way could he bring forth children that did not want to go Satan's way. Even though Adam did not die physically for 930 years, he could not, after being born again in God's grace, implant any spiritual life

in any of his children.

In I Peter 4:6 we read that the gospel was preached to them that were spiritually dead, not those physically dead. Likewise Paul in Ephesians 2:1 states that we are "quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sin." And when God told Adam that the day he ate of the forbidden fruit he would die, He did not merely refer to the punishment which he would deserve. Stating, as He did, that he would die the day that he ate the forbidden fruit, God presented the terrifying truth that he would that day die spiritually, and never be able to serve God, or want to serve Him, unless God would cause him to be born again.

Let us bear in mind, and hold on tightly to the fact, that spiritual death means that one cannot do anything pleasing in God's sight. In fact, being spiritually dead means that one does not do anything, and cannot want to do anything, that is pleasing in God's eyes. It means that our flesh enjoys going away from God, as Adam revealed the day that he ate the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:8).

Now spiritual death means incapability of doing anything, or of having any desire to do anything, that is performed in love toward God. Every unbeliever, in all his thoughts, desires, and actions, will be going against God. That he does and that he wants to do. Yes, every sin is an act away from God. It is due to the fact that man's back is turned, as Adam's was, away from God. Adam and Eve tried to hide themselves from God, fearing the punishment which their sin would bring upon them. But what must not be overlooked or denied is

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



that every act of sin — and thus every act of every unbeliever — is against God.

Take note of the fact that Paul begins this epistle to the Galatians by stating that Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). He also states in verse 6, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." Through Paul our God presents all the unbelievers as an evil world. The unbeliever does not simply fail to do what is an act of love toward God; but he does evil, which means that he goes against God in all his thinking, willing, and acting. All that is not for God is against Him. There simply is no spiritual neutrality. In Luke 11:23 we have Jesus' word for that. He states, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."

The awesome truth therefore in the church-world as we find it today is that where a church departs from the truth, it is not only departing from Christ, but is going against Him. That is the awesome and terrible fact which should be borne in mind. One is either for or against Christ, for God or against God.

We do well to bear in mind Paul's word that the gospel which he preached was not his philosophy. He was accused of having brought these Galatians a false doctrine, a message which he had invented, or borrowed, from those who were not faithful apostles of Jesus Christ.

What we stand for as churches is likewise called by some today a false doctrine, namely, that God's grace is only upon His church; and that there is no grace of God that falls upon the rest of the human race. By God's grace, however, we have and still do maintain a particular grace that falls only upon His elect.

Now surely it cannot be denied that God gives to unbelievers many things which their carnal flesh enjoys — even often to a greater extent than He does to His church. According to Revelation 13:15-18 the Antichrist will

come and will not let those who by God's grace remain faithful to God buy or sell, because they refuse to have the mark of the beast in their right hands or in their foreheads. The believers are going to get very poor, and not have what their earthly lives need. That Antichrist and his kingdom will have what they will call wonderful and enjoyable lives. Is that due to God's grace? And do the believers who die in starvation lose God's grace? If giving earthly goods to men is always an act of God's grace, does God's grace not fall also upon those of Satan's kingdom? Surely we should reject fully the teaching that any of God's grace falls on those not chosen in Christ.

The day lies ahead of us, and there is much evidence that that day is approaching, when it will look to our flesh as though God is not gracious to His church, but shows His grace to the wicked world in its coming prosperity; and it will surely look to us as though God is not dealing with us in His grace. However, as Paul wrote in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is everlasting life through Jesus Christ, our Lord." We may not and must not judge God's grace merely by the material things He gives.

What Paul writes here to the Galatians is so very true. The gospel which he preached was not devised by man, but given him by God. The gospel which he preached to the Galatians was the truth which he received "by the revelation of Jesus Christ," not by man.

What he taught the Galatians stands in perfect harmony with what God said to Adam, namely, that the day he committed his first sin, he would die spiritually, and be on his way to physical death. We can be sure that upon man — the whole human race that died spiritually in Adam — no grace of God came except upon those chosen in Christ.

Upon those who were in eternity chosen in Christ comes Christian liberty. The truth of the matter cannot rightly be denied, namely, that God's grace which comes through Christ

comes only upon those chosen in Him. Go back to what was quoted a moment ago in Romans 6:23, namely, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is everlasting life through Christ Jesus our Lord." Those who were not chosen in Christ cannot and do not receive anything in God's grace. What Paul wrote to the Romans is like that which he taught the Galatians. What he wrote to them was not "after men," but "by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Our Christian liberty is a liberty which God works only in His elect. And what Paul states to the Galatians is true. Christian liberty is liberty God realized through Christ, and only for those who are Christians. Christians are liberated from their guilt, but also from their love of sin. Christian liberty is realized by Christ; and only those who are the members of His body, by God's eternal decree, have Christian liberty. □

#### REMINDER

In response to our request, in the January 15 issue, for copies of old Acts of Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches we received a couple of much-appreciated donations of books. We do, however, need more. Even the set in the denominational archives is still missing a couple of the older volumes. And we should have backup copies for the set in the library, in the event that some are lost. We are most concerned about the 1940s and 1950s, of course, but several years in the 60s and 70s are also potential problems for supply. So, whatever you're willing to part with, we will be delighted to take. The address of the seminary is:

4949 Ivanrest Ave.  
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# The Headship of the Reformed Husband

The feminist movement and the insubordinate wife are getting all the attention in conservative circles today. They are being blamed for the disturbance of marriage and the family.

This is understandable. The feminist movement is powerful in the world. It makes obvious inroads into the Reformed and evangelical churches. Denying the headship of the man in the church, feminism necessarily rejects also the headship of the husband in the home. Any movement that "liberates" the wife and mother from submission to her husband is indeed an enemy of marriage and the family, as well as a disturber of the peace of the home.

The trouble is that another threat to the home is easily overlooked. This threat is not a whit less destructive of marriage and the family than the independent or rebellious wife. It is every bit as prevalent in conservative churches, including the Protestant Reformed Churches, as is the danger of the unruly wife. This is the wickedness of the abuse of his headship by the husband and father.

Christ the Lord calls the Christian husband and father to headship: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church" (Eph. 5:23; cf. I Cor. 11:3). This headship is authority over the wife and, by implication, the family. This is proved beyond any question by the comparison in Ephesians 5 between the husband's headship over his wife and Christ's headship over

His church. To deny that the headship of the husband over the wife in Ephesians 5:22-33 means authority in the human family is to depose Christ from office in the church. That headship is authority is confirmed by the proper response on the part of the wife: submission (vv. 22, 24) and reverence (v. 33).

Christ authorizes the Reformed husband and father to govern his wife, children, and household. This is his responsibility. He will give account to Christ in the Day of Judgment.

The husband's headship is not absolute authority. It is not the right to treat wife and children as the man pleases. It is rather the right, and duty, to treat wife and children as Christ pleases. Christ is Lord of the wife, children, household, and husband. The will of Christ determines the nature of the husband's headship, the manner in which the headship is carried out, and the end, or goal, of the headship. Every husband knows this will of Christ, for Christ has plainly revealed it in Holy Scripture. He has plainly revealed His will concerning the husband's headship in Ephesians 5:23: "even as Christ is the head of the church."

The headship of the husband is a headship of love. It is a headship of the love with which Christ loves His church. The authority of a husband is strictly qualified, controlled, and directed by love, indeed by *such* love.

The husband has the right to regard his wife as dear and precious to himself. He has the right to give

himself to and for his wife, sacrificing himself. He has the right to live his life, not apart from his wife or at the expense of his wife, but with her and through her. He has the right to treat her by word and deed with tenderness: "nourishing and cherishing (her)" (Eph. 5:29). He has the right to make her welfare the purpose of his married life with her. In and by this relationship of love, he has the right to govern her life.

Although his headship over his children differs in certain respects from the exercise of that headship over his wife, the nature and purpose of the father's authority over his children are the same. It is an authority of love that aims at the children's earthly and spiritual good. Good instruction and discipline will be a special feature of the father's rule. Patience with the children's weaknesses and pity for them in their troubles will characterize a Reformed man's headship over the family. In and by this relationship of love, he has the right to govern their lives.

The wife must be able to see Christ in her husband.

The children must be able to see their heavenly Father in their dad.

This is Reformed headship. The Lord Christ demands it of every man who marries. Every married man has vowed before God that he will be such a husband and father, for this is one of the marriage vows. The ability to carry out this headship is a precious grace of the Holy Spirit for which a young man should earnestly pray



before he marries and for which all husbands and fathers ought to pray as long as they live. The Spirit works this grace in covenant lines, so that good headship is handed down from father to son. The boy grows up seeing his father treating his mother and the children in the right way. Under the blessing of the Spirit of the covenant, the boy learns how to be a Christian husband and father himself.

Headship is abused. Headship is abused in conservative circles. I am not now referring to the shortcomings of all husbands and fathers, even the holiest, which shortcomings are a grief to them. Nor do I refer to sinful deeds against wife and children that all husbands and fathers sometimes commit, which they confess both to God and to their family. But I refer to a wicked way of life that is ongoing in marriage and family, to a pattern of conduct on the part of the "head of the home" that never changes because it is never repented of.

One form of the abuse of headship is the failure of the husband to live with his wife and children. He eats and sleeps in the same building alright, but there is no involvement with the family, no care for their life, no interest in their doings and problems, no daily oversight. Work and recreation are his love. This head must not be surprised that there is a lack of response when he does try to assert his will in the home. A body does not respond to a distant, disinterested head.

A worse form of the abuse of headship is harsh, cruel rule. The husband and father governs by threat and force. He rages. He ridicules and belittles. He is always critical, never praising. His physical discipline of his children consists of battering them in an outburst of anger, rather than spanking them in the love that desires their holiness. He may even dare to hit, or otherwise lay rough hands on, his wife. There is submission in the

family. It is the submission of terror. Wife and children cower in the presence of this hateful, hurtful head.

No man may justify this tyranny by appeal to his headship. Christ gives no one this kind of authority.

This is devilish perversion of headship.

Such a husband is a fool. Mistreating his wife — his own flesh — he is actually hating himself (Eph. 5:28, 29). If he thinks to achieve his wife's willing obedience in this way, he only deceives himself. A wife

cannot be browbeaten into willing obedience. She must be won by love. Christ draws His wife by cords of love.

The cold or cruel father foolishly ruins his own flesh and blood — the children of his own body. It is likely that he sets in motion an abuse of headship down through his generations, as his sons follow his example. There is blessing in the covenant that is healthy for the family from generation to generation. There is also judgment in the covenant as the sins of fathers are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation.

This is not to say that a young husband in the church may excuse his own wretched behavior toward his family on the basis of the bad example of his father. No one may regard himself as a helpless victim. The Word of God instructs him clearly enough how he is to live with his wife, regardless of the example of his father. The Word imperiously calls him to take Christ as his pattern, not his disobedient father. There is a Holy Spirit who empowers every believer to be the loving head that the Word requires. In the Day of Judgment, God will hold every husband fully responsible for failing to be a head of his wife in the love of Christ. The Judge will not accept a plea of "extenuating circumstances."

*The children  
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heavenly Father  
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There is, and must be, help for wives and children in the church who suffer under husbands who abuse their headship. This help is at the same time help for the sinning husbands who, if they continue in their grievous wickedness, will be damned. The help is the church. Specifically the help is the sharp preaching and firm discipline of the church. The preaching gives positive, detailed instruction to husbands as to the proper exercise of headship. It also pointedly warns against the abuse of headship. This preaching works repentance and a change of behavior.

The wife who suffers at the hands of a brutal husband, or who sees the children being injured by a cruel father, must tell the church, that is, the consistory. The elders must not turn the woman away because of the problems that the case promises. They must take hold of the matter. They must work with the sinning husband so that he repents and changes his conduct. They must keep a close watch on the family for some time in order to be sure that the husband does not fall back into his old ways.

Such oversight of family life is the church's business. Christ has called her to guard the husbands and fathers in her fellowship against their spiritual and eternal ruin. Christ has also called her to protect the helpless wife and children against the oppressor.

In these wild, bewildering times at the end of the ages, the Reformed church must be the defender of marriage and the family.

She must oppose feminism, proclaiming the church-like submission of the Christian wife.

With equal determination, she must oppose selfish male dominion, proclaiming the Christ-like headship of the Christian husband.

□  
— DJE

*A wife  
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## ■ RE-Imagining Conference

"This was no Christian meeting," said Faye Short about the RE-Imagining Conference partially sponsored by the United Methodist Church. Short, a representative of the Evangelical Coalition of United Methodist Women (ECUMW), said the November meeting was heretical, neo-pagan, and blasphemous. The meeting, held in Minneapolis and attended by 2,150 women and 60 men, was designed to celebrate the midpoint of World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity With Women.

The speakers, most of them feminist theologians, led participants in "re-imagining" a church where everyone shares common visions of spirituality. Attendees borrowed from Native American and Eastern faiths, in what critics called a syncretic approach to Christianity. ("Syncretism" is a combining of conflicting beliefs. In other words, it's a compromising of the truth of Scripture with unbelief.) A very unorthodox liturgical blessing and communion-like service was held in which milk and honey were used. The ceremony invoked the wisdom spirit of "Sophia, Creator God" in a celebration of women's sensuality and "warm body fluids." Themes of goddess worship and the invalidity of the concept of sin were pervasive, said *Presbyterian Layman* Editor Parker Williamson. Because the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) helped fund the conference, several churches have voted to withhold financial contributions to the denomination's headquarters.

*National & International  
Religion Report*

*Prof. Decker is professor of Practical Theology in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.*

## ■ Dutch Churches Adopt New Church Order

For a number of years we have been reporting on the unification process involving three Dutch denominations. The process, called *samen op weg* (together on the way), involves the Netherlands Reformed Church (State Church), the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (formed out of the secessions from the State Church in 1834 and 1886), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Netherlands.

The union is now about to be realized. In November delegates from the three churches adopted a church order by a vote of 179 to 19. Most of the 19 negative votes came from conservatives within the State Church.

The new church order contains an article on baptism which does not mention infant baptism. An amendment was proposed that specified that children of the congregation should be baptized, and that others should be baptized after making confession of faith. The amendment failed.

The new church order appears to allow children to the Lord's table. Conservatives protested that this was still under discussion in the Netherlands Reformed Churches. In the end the article was adopted with only 20 negative votes.

The new church order has no statement on marriage. This provoked a lengthy discussion in which questions were raised concerning the church's role in "covenant relations," homosexual relationships, and people who lived together without being married. Several proposed amendments were defeated. The synod appointed a study committee to deal with these issues.

We wonder about a number of matters once the union is completed. What will the relationship be between the united church and the Christian Reformed Church in North America?

The CRC has maintained close ties with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands for many years. The two denominations in fact instituted the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (now known as the Reformed Ecumenical Council) in the late 1940s. Will the new church apply for membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Council?

One thing about which no one need wonder is the fact that the union will do nothing to promote or maintain the Reformed faith as that faith is taught in Scripture and set forth in the Three Forms of Unity.

*REC News Exchange*

## ■ North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council

This body met in Grand Rapids, Michigan on November 9 and 10. NAPARC consists of six member denominations: The Christian Reformed Church, The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, The Presbyterian Church in America, The Reformed Presbyterian Church, The Korean American Presbyterian Church, and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. Sixteen other Reformed and Presbyterian Churches, including the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, were invited to send "observer representatives."

Though the interim committee recommended that the Reformed Churches in the United States' application for membership be approved, the plenary session once more decided to postpone action on this application for one year. Concern was expressed by delegates from the larger denominations at last year's meeting and again this year, that admitting the RCUS and other smaller denominations would give these denominations a majority in NAPARC. Other delegates were opposed to admitting the RCUS because of the latter's par-



ticipation in the Alliance of Reformed Churches, which consists largely of independent congregations which have seceded from the CRC in recent years. It will be interesting to see what NAPARC does with the RCUS next year.

The Council also passed a motion proposed by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to send a letter to the CRC expressing concern about its violation of Scriptural principles and its own Belgic Confession in the 1993 decision to allow congregations to ordain women to the offices of minister and elder. Following this another motion was passed "out of deep love for our brothers and sisters in the CRC and with a humble spirit to establish a pastoral committee" to meet

with representatives of the CRC about women officebearers.

*Reformed Herald*

### ■ Alliance of Reformed Churches

This group of churches (59 churches and 130 delegates) consists largely of independent congregations which have seceded from the Christian Reformed Church. The Alliance met in Lynwood, Illinois last November. As was true last year, the Protestant Reformed Churches were invited to send observer delegates. Revs. Charles Terpstra and Ronald Van Overloop represented the PRC.

Recognizing the need to federate, the Alliance appointed a committee to work on a church order. Among

other decisions the Alliance adopted a procedure for the examination of those seeking ordination into the ministry of the Word and Sacraments.

The Alliance also adopted a recommendation to contact specific conservative Reformed bodies with two questions: "Are they interested in working toward federative unity with the independent churches, and if so, what procedure would they suggest?" The churches to be contacted are the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Free Reformed Churches, the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches, the Protestant Reformed Churches, the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches, the Christian Presbyterian Church, and the Reformed Church in the United States. □

*Reformed Believers Press Service*

*A Cloud of Witnesses*

*Prof. Herman Hanko*

# Caspar Olevianus: Author of the Heidelberg Catechism (1)

## Introduction

God used more than one man to write that precious creed of the Reformed churches: The Heidelberg Catechism. Frederick III, elector of the Palatinate, ordered it written and supported the project, even offering suggestions from time to time. Zacharius Ursinus, professor of theology, was one of its authors. We have described the life and work of these two men in earlier articles. We

have one more man to discuss: Caspar Olevianus.

History has not recorded for us what precise part each of the two authors of the Catechism played in its formation; and speculations on the subject by historians have proved fruitless. But it does seem to be a manifestation of God's great wisdom when, in the formulation of this marvelous creed, God used both the theologian Ursinus and the preacher Olevianus. Not only is the Catechism an unsurpassed summary of the Christian faith—the touch of a theologian; but it is a confession eminently suitable to preach—the touch of a man who was himself a gifted and eloquent preacher.

## Early Life and Training

Caspar Olevianus was born on August 10, 1536, two years after the birth of his colleague Ursinus. He was born in one of the most famous cities in Trans-Alpine Europe, the city of Trier, or, as it was sometimes called, Treves. The city was built on the banks of the Moselle River on the border of Germany and Luxembourg. It boasted of the fact that its history went back to the days before the birth of Christ, and it claimed to be one of the oldest, if not the oldest city north of the Alps. The Emperor Caesar Augustus had started the city in 15 B.C. and had made it an important city in an ocean of barbarians.

The city had the distinction of

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being briefly the home of the great church father Athanasius, when, because of his uncompromising defense of the truth of Christ's divinity, he had been banished from his church in Alexandria in Egypt. That was back in the first half of the 4th century.

The prominence of the city in the Middle Ages was due in large measure to the fact that the cathedral in the city claimed to have in its possession the seamless robe of Christ over which the soldiers gambled at the cross. (This robe is still put on public display at 25-year intervals, and hundreds of thousands crowd the city to look at it.) Further, the abbey church in the city claimed to be the burial place of the apostle Matthew, the only apostle, so tradition said, to be buried north of the Alps.

Olevianus was born of Gerhard von der Olewig and Anna Sinzig. The name "Olewig," which means "olive," actually refers to a part of the city, perhaps even a small village annexed to the city, known by that name. "Olevianus" is the Latinized form of that name.

Caspar's father was a merchant, relatively wealthy, and a prominent citizen of this historic place. He was a baker, a president of the Bakers' Guild, a member of the city council, and treasurer of the city. He followed a family tradition of service to the city, for Caspar's grandfather was president of the Butchers' Guild and also a member of the council. These positions in the city were important, for Trier, because of its ancient and illustrious past, was a "free" city in Germany.

Caspar's mother was a pious and godly woman who exerted great influence on her family and son. It is striking, if I may make here a somewhat parenthetical remark, that so many of those men who occupied places of great importance in the cause of God and of His church, had very godly and pious mothers. It is a fact of history that ought to give all covenant mothers pause: they never know what the effect of their piety and humble service of God will be upon their children and how God will use

their godliness for His cause.

Trier was a Roman Catholic city. It remained such even though the Lutheran Reformation spread through much of Germany. It remained immune to Lutheran teachings. Caspar was brought up, therefore, in a Roman Catholic home and taught in a Roman Catholic school in Trier the first 14 years of his life.

Offsetting this Roman Catholic influence was one incident which made a deep impression on Caspar during these years, an incident of which he himself later spoke. While Caspar was at school, an aged but kindly and saintly priest planted a seed in his heart which was eventually to bear fruit. It was nothing more than a remark which the old priest made to him in the corridors of the school. Recognizing the abilities of the young boy, the priest put his arm over Caspar's shoulder and said to him: "Never forget that salvation and comfort are to be found only in Christ's perfect work." Again and again, through those dark and dreary centuries when Roman Catholicism held sway over the minds and consciences of men, we find these isolated individuals who, in spite of Rome's denial of Christ's perfect sacrifice for sin, held to the truth that all our salvation is only in Christ. It must have been these lonely and scattered men who enabled the church of Christ to stay alive during those perilous times.

In 1550, at the age of 14, Caspar completed his studies in Trier. His grandfather stepped in and offered to support Caspar's further education in France provided Caspar would study law. This was somewhat strange, for Trier had its own university; but it becomes a bit understandable when we remember that Trier was solidly Roman Catholic and its schools were steadily losing students, while the universities of other parts of Europe were becoming very popular because of openness to Renaissance and Reformation teachings.

It was in France that Caspar's life took an extraordinary turn.

## Conversion and Early Work

The years Olevianus spent in France were profitable, if for no other reason than that they led to his conversion to the Reformed faith.

Caspar attended the universities of Paris, Orleans, and Bourges, the same universities in which Calvin had received his training. Although he studied law, he came under the influence of leading thinkers in the universities who were more or less committed to Lutheranism; but more importantly, he came under the influence of Huguenot teaching. The Huguenots were French Calvinists who had been delivered from Roman Catholicism, but who were forced to meet secretly because they were severely persecuted by the king and the church. The shadow of the stake, the hangman's noose, and the sword hung constantly over them and their families. Not only did Caspar come in contact with them, but he became persuaded of their position and even attended their secret meetings.

Especially one experience changed his life. While walking with a friend, a prince from Germany, along the river which ran by Bourges, Caspar and this friend were invited to cross the river in a boat in which were other students. Caspar refused because the students in the boat were drunk, but his friend took up the offer. In midstream the students began rocking the boat and it overturned. Caspar dove into the water to save his friend, but was unable to do so because of the swift current. He was himself in danger of drowning. At that crucial point, Caspar promised that if God would spare his life he would preach the gospel in Trier. His friend's valet, thinking Caspar was his master, hauled Caspar from the water, while the friend drowned. Although Caspar continued his studies in law, that promise, made in the cold waters of the river Auron, was not forgotten.

After completing his studies in France, Caspar returned to Trier — not yet to preach (for this he was untrained), but to practice law. His promise, however, sat heavily upon



his soul, and he found no satisfaction in the legal niceties of 16th century law practice. In disgust and restlessness, Caspar traveled to Geneva for the express purpose of talking with Calvin.

The two years he spent in Switzerland were important ones. He not only met with and talked to Calvin, but had opportunity to spend many hours with Theodore Beza, Henry Bullinger, Peter Martyr, William Farel, and Peter Viret, all luminous stars in the Reformation heavens. The years were not spent, though, in idle chatter; he studied in Geneva under Calvin, learned Hebrew, mastered theology, was instructed in the art of preaching, and prepared himself for the ministry.

It must have been good instruction which he received in preaching because, along with the development of his native gifts, this instruction made Caspar one of the outstanding and most eloquent preachers of the

times — and the times were blessed with many gifted preachers!

The year 1559 was an important one in the history of the Reformation. During this year French Protestants held their first Synod in Paris, John Knox returned to Scotland to establish the Presbyterian Church there, William the Silent made his vow to drive "the Spanish vermin" from the Netherlands, Elector Frederick III the Pious began his reign in Heidelberg, and Calvin opened his Academy in Geneva and published the last edition of his *Institutes*.

In June of this important year, at the urging of Farel — that firebrand of a Reformer who had been instrumental in keeping Calvin in Geneva — Olevianus returned to Trier.

Trier was still a Roman Catholic City, and Caspar's presence as a minister of the truth of the Calvin Reformation would not have gone over very well there. But two men, Otto Seele and Peter Sierk, influential in

the city, were known in Geneva to have some Calvinistic leanings. To them Calvin wrote to try to encourage them to work towards reformation in the city, and especially to bring Caspar Olevianus to the city to help.

It seems as if Caspar went without really revealing what his position on reformational matters was. He must have, for the time being, concealed his true purposes, for he had no difficulty, because of the reputation of his parents and grandparents, obtaining an appointment to teach philosophy in the school of a solidly Roman Catholic city. He chose to teach Melancthon's *Dialectics*. The instruction was in Latin, and *Dialectics* was rather boring to any but the most ardent students; so Olevianus could be of little influence. Here we shall leave him for awhile, in his home town, in a sense flying under false colors, eager to keep a vow he had made long before, stuck in a philosophy class in a dying school. □

*Search the Scriptures*

*Rev. George Lubbers*

# A Faithful Saying

## Lesson 13

*... and exercise thyself rather unto godliness ... godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.*

*For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.*

*These things command and teach.*

I Timothy 4:7-10

Our lesson includes the apostolic exhortation to Timothy, who is a Christ-appointed minister of God. He became this through the laying on of hands by the presbytery in the presence of the entire church at Lystra and Iconium. I Timothy 4:14 indicates that Timothy was equipped with wonderful and astounding spiritual gifts, which are referred to by the term "the gift." Paul says to him that he is not to "neglect the gift" which was given thee by prophecy (i.e., through a prophetic message) and with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. As a man of God, Timothy would be able to engage in a good warfare (cf. I Tim.

1:18). For this warfare Timothy would need spiritual weapons. With the sword of the Spirit he could pull down strongholds, cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ — i.e., take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (Cf. II Corinthians 10:4-5.)

[\*It seems correct to assume that no one but Paul knew exactly what the special gift was that Timothy possessed. Paul, knowing this, encourages Timothy not to neglect this gift.]

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In the previous lesson we noticed that Timothy is urged to exercise himself unto godliness. Paul often speaks of godliness. He does so in I and II Timothy and also in Titus. We noticed in former lessons that godliness is really the God-ordained end or purpose (i.e., *telos* — end) of God's work of salvation. Christ came into the world to bring this about and to establish all those ordained unto life unto perpetual godliness. For this purpose Christ arose from the dead, ascended on high, and was received in glory as the head of the church, which is Christ's body. Through Christ and His work the saints have been made new creatures. (Cf. Galatians 6:12-16.) Is it not the sanctification of the saints that is the very end, purpose, or *telos* of our having been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus?

Hence, it is only they who exercise themselves in godliness who enjoy a good conscience. They experience that what the Law could not do, Christ did by fulfilling the Law for them. It is likewise true that it is only when a minister enjoys a good conscience which has been purged from sin that he can be a *good and faithful minister*.

\* \* \* \* \*

So that Timothy may understand the importance of being exercised unto godliness, the Holy Spirit through Paul tells him that this is a "faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance."

Three times in I Timothy Paul says that something is faithful and worthy of acceptance.

The first instance is in I Timothy 1:15. In this passage Paul refers to the great mystery of gracious salvation. He had spoken of this in Romans 5:20 which says, "Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Stated most briefly the mystery is that the "gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is the basic saying which is worthy of all acceptance. It is the truth and the fulfillment of the

great Protevangel spoken by God to Eve and Satan (Gen. 3:15) as well as the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham spoken by God on Mount Moriah. (Compare Genesis 22:15-18 and Hebrews 6:10-20.) This is a clear case-study of the faithfulness of all the covenant sayings of God.

An exhibition of the most profound and significant fulfillment of the truthfulness of the Word of the Lord occurred on the outskirts of the ancient city of Damascus when Saul of Tarsus was saved by sovereign grace. Paul had been counted faithful to serve as a chosen vessel. He was a vessel of Christ called to bear the message of the Cross. He stood before kings and the Gentiles. He was one through whom Christ would show what great things one must suffer for the sake of the gospel of grace.

If ever there was a thankful sinner saved by grace without the works of the law, it was Paul. (Read Philippians 3:1-15.) This saved apostle must often have comforted and instructed poor sinners to take heart. How people must have experienced unspeakable joy as Paul expounded the theme of the gospel — "where sin abounds, grace does much more abound."

The second instance in which Paul speaks of the "faithfulness of the word" is I Timothy 3:1. "This is a true (faithful) saying. If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

The third instance is found in the text of I Timothy 4:9, in which Paul affirms that Timothy and all believers must exercise themselves unto godliness. Timothy and all believers are encouraged to accept the faithfulness of the saying in the confidence that God will surely keep His promise. Paul encourages Timothy to be faithful in his godly exercise as an evangelist. There is a good reason for this command to accept the faithful word. In II Timothy 4:5 Paul commands Timothy to "endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." He must do this so the brethren will come to the unity of

the faith, and to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the truly mature man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Cf. Ephesians 4:10-16.) This is the reason for the command to accept this faithful saying.

Paul himself was a noteworthy and wonderful example of the work of God's grace. He had been converted from the errors of Judaism and work righteousness. Paul had not merely had a confrontation with Christ, but he had learned to say, "... when it pleased God to reveal his Son in me" (Gal. 1:16). This was a wonderful manifestation of all the goodness of God toward him, so that in one moment the emissary of the Jews and the Sanhedrin became the beloved apostle of Christ to the Gentiles.

Wonder of wonders, Paul now has but one desire, and that is that he be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness but the righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ. He now has but one joy and that is to walk in the hope of Israel, the hope of the resurrection from the dead. This was the central theme of his preaching. (Cf. Philippians 3:8-15.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Paul writes in I Timothy 4:9-11 that because of the faithfulness of this saying we "both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. These things command and teach."

It is crucial that we properly understand these words which have often been misinterpreted to mean that Paul is here teaching that God intends to save all human beings. This is not the meaning. This text cannot be used to teach the universalist heresy and Arminian heresy that all men can be saved. This is contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture in John 6:44. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

First, let us notice that the phrase "faithful saying" refers to a word



which God speaks. We can only accept this as the word of God when by faith we believe that this is God's solemn oath which He swore by Himself, and out of His own holiness. He is a God who cannot lie. (Cf. Genesis 22:16; Hebrews 6:13-19.)

Second, it should be noticed that the covenant oath which God swore to Abraham concerning the salvation of all men in His only begotten Son must be commanded and preached in all the world. It is emphatically stated that it must be preached clearly, so that Jesus may be powerfully set forth as the Son of God as this is made manifest through His bodily resurrection from the dead. Paul himself had been convinced most profoundly concerning the importance and significance of the resurrection through the glorious heavenly appearance of the resurrected Christ on the road from Jerusalem to Damascus. (Cf. Acts 9:15, 16; 23:1-11; 26:4-29.) That which he had once denied became his supreme and undying confession. Those whom he had once persecuted now became his friends.

Third, we should notice that Paul speaks to Timothy about his own toil and labor which results in reproach. Paul uses himself as an example to Timothy of one who suffered reproach for the sake of the gospel. (Cf. Acts 9:15, 16; II Corinthians 11:16-33.) Notice also the testimony of Paul in Galatians 6:17b where he says, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

\* \* \* \* \*

The passage under consideration concludes with the command of Paul to Timothy in the brief and meaningful words, "These things command and teach."

Timothy must be concerned not merely about this life but about the life which is to come. This is the resurrection life earned by the work of Christ. This was glad-tidings written not merely for Abraham and the Jews but also for the Greeks and Gentiles. The message of righteousness by faith without the works of the law

was the universal rule for all men (all humans) who believed, whether they are Jews or Gentiles (i.e., all kinds of people). (Cf. Romans 4:24, 25.) This was a message for all men — all kinds of men who had been ordained unto life eternal. These are those concerning whom Christ said, "... those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost..." (John 17:12b).

Two things Timothy must do. He must "command" and "teach" men everywhere to believe the gospel of the Cross. We should notice that in reality these were the very words contained in the Great Commission. (Cf. Matthew 28:19-20.)

Although the words "command" and "teach" belong together, Timothy is told that he must "command men" everywhere. The term "command" in the Greek means "to announce" the Gospel — the Gospel of the death and resurrection of Christ to all men everywhere. To all those who have been ordained to life and are saved in Christ Timothy and all preachers of the Gospel must give the assurance of Jesus Christ — that He has all authority in heaven and earth. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). He who says these words is the Lamb of God who carries away the "sin" of the world — not the sin of all men head for head, but the sin of the cosmos — the world that Jesus Christ was sent to save. (Cf. John 3:16.)

Paul gives this command because there is work for Timothy. He must reject the old wives' fables of all those who leave the faith. He must labor so that the foundation stands. This he must do in the assurance of the Son of God who is at the Father's right hand and who has the authority over all the powers of hell. Christ says to Timothy through Paul, "These things command as my authorized evangelist."

But Timothy must not neglect "to teach." Basic to the work of the key-power of the Word is that of authoritative teaching. It is by sound teaching that we come to health-producing doctrine. The great mystery of godliness is a matter of teaching accurately the basic doctrines, i.e., "... that God is

manifest in the flesh, is justified by the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up in glory" (I Tim. 3:16).

The church gathered by the truth of the gospel is the pillar and ground of the truth. Paul shouts triumphantly in II Timothy 2:19, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

This is true godly exercise which Paul teaches and which the church is called to practice.

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### Some Questions to Consider:

1. Is it possible for any person to teach the Bible and not teach some form of doctrine — either false or true?
2. What does Paul say in Ephesians 4:14 concerning the sleight of men and of those who would shipwreck the children of God so that they will lose faith?
3. What is the strong weapon of the believer according to Ephesians 4:15?
4. Can a godly man deny the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?
5. If one denies the mystery of godliness that is great (cf. I Tim. 3:16) can he or she be one who speaks the truth in love? ☐





## Chapter 2

# The Creative Work in the Beginning (2)

## How Did God Create All Things?

In answering this question, we must remember the strict limitations of the question. Creation is a unique work of God. We cannot even know it, except by revelation. And the mere creature can never comprehend this act of God's omnipotent will. When we ask this question, therefore, in the first place, we must bear in mind that it is not the intention of this question curiously to pry into the nature of God's work or to ask how it is possible that such a thing as creation could take place. In that respect there is but one position to take, and that is: God is the Almighty Sovereign and Lord, and He always acts as the incomparable God, not as the creature. He is the God who calls all things into existence by the act of His almighty will. And in that respect creation is like the miracles. You and I cannot comprehend them. They are altogether beyond the understanding derived from mere human experience. In terms of man's work and man's method of doing things and man's use of means and man's understanding, you cannot explain God's work. God's works are other. They are divine. We are simply confronted by them as the work of God who is really God. And thus it is also with the unique work of creation. We do not and we may not ask: Is it possible? And we do not and we may not ask:

How can it be possible? We may only bow before the Word of the Scriptures. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Heb. 11:3).

In the second place, therefore, when we ask how God created, we ask that question in faith. We ask it in the framework of the Scriptures, in which God Himself has made known to us all that we need to know and all that we can know concerning His own wonderful work of creation.

Concerning this manner of creation Scripture informs us: "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." This immediately reminds us of the truth that creation is the work of God triune, and that there is no separation to be made with respect to the work of God in the Holy Trinity. It is not simply thus, that the Father creates, and the Son redeems, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies — each working in separation from the other Persons of the Trinity. But all the acts of God are the acts of God Triune. Even as within Himself God lives and acts and had fellowship eternally as the Triune God, so all the activity of God out-going, in time, is the reflection of His activity within Himself. God is Triune. He is one in Being, and three in Persons. And all the three Persons operate within the Godhead. The Father generates, and eternally knows and loves the Son in Himself. And so it is also in all the out-going works of God, of which creation is the first in time. God Triune creates. In

that work of creation, therefore, the Father works, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit.

This is confirmed by all Scripture. In the first place, not only does the Bible speak of the Spirit brooding upon the face of the waters here in verse 2; but repeatedly in the narrative of the successive days of creation Genesis speaks of the Word spoken. God spoke through the eternal Word, the Son, or Second Person in the Holy Trinity. This is the meaning when repeatedly we read in Genesis 1, "And God said...."

Moreover, in connection with the creation of man on the sixth day, while there is no specific reference to the *three* Persons of the Holy Trinity, there is nevertheless mention of a *plurality* of Persons in God when we read in Genesis 1:26, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Thus, we read also in the prologue of the Gospel according to John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3). Also in Hebrews 1:1, 2 we are instructed that the Son, by whom God has spoken to us in these last days, and whom He hath appointed heir of all things, is He "by whom also he made the worlds."

This same truth from a slightly different viewpoint is beautifully set forth in Proverbs 8, which also makes it plain that creation in the beginning does not signify or presuppose a

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change in God, because God is not governed by time, but dwells in eternity; and all His works are with Him in His counsel eternally. Proverbs 8 speaks of the eternal Wisdom which was with God before the world was, and which was present in the creation of the world. It tells us, for example: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way." And again: "I was set up from everlasting." And again: "I was daily his delight" (Prov. 8:22-31).

And in that beautiful passage of Scripture which speaks of the First-born of every creature, who is the image of the invisible God Himself, we read: "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him" (Col. 1:15, 16). Moreover, we read in Job 26:13: "By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens." And in Psalm 33:6: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the Spirit of his mouth."

Hence, according to the text in Genesis, the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters. The original term here contains the idea of tremulously fluttering, or of brooding, as a hen upon her eggs. And the conception is that as the material of all things is present in the original waters, in the unformed mass of creation, the Spirit quickens and engenders life and energy in that chaos. In and through the Holy Spirit is the bond of life which unites the whole creation in fellowship with God.

And the Word separates and gives form to that creation. That God spake, and it was done, does not mean that He simply pronounced some kind of magic formula, and that creation is some kind of hocus-pocus. In creation the eternal and infinite Word of God proceeded outside of Himself, in the Spirit. And when through that Word, who is in Himself the eternal and infinite fullness of divine wisdom and thought, God speaks, He gives existence outside of Himself to

all creation, a creation which is the revelation of His eternal thoughts, thoughts which through the Son He conceived in Himself from eternity to eternity. Thus God called the name of every creature — out of Himself, through the Son, and in the Spirit. And by speaking He separated from the chaos the creature which He thus named. The Father called; the Spirit quickened; and the Word gave form and separate existence to every creature, so that it might be the embodiment of God's thoughts. When God made all things by the Word of His mouth, and all the host of heaven by His Spirit, He revealed Himself. He spoke. He spoke concerning Himself. And He spoke to us. The infinite Word of God proceeded out of His mouth in a manifold variety of concrete, created Words. The eternal Word went out into time. Creation as a whole, therefore, is a created Word of God, and all creatures are so many individual thoughts, words; and together they reveal the perfect and infinite Wisdom of the Most High. By creation, therefore, as an act of Self-revelation on the part of God, He makes Himself known as God who is God indeed, the God who is infinite in power and wisdom, and glorious in all His perfections.

#### When Did God Create?

The answer of Genesis 1 is that creation commenced "in the beginning."

Let us be reminded once more, in the first place, that by this declaration of Holy Writ we are confronted by an amazing mystery, which can be known only by revelation. No historian can possibly take his starting-point in this beginning. He may go back to ancient times, and he may carry his historical research into the remote past; but never will he be able to approach this beginning, the beginning in the absolute sense of the word. He cannot because he is a child of

time, limited by time in all his conceptions. And one who should imagine that his mind had reached out into the beginning of which the first verse of Scripture speaks would nevertheless be forced to extend in his own thinking the mysterious line of time back of this beginning, and thus to give the lie

to his own statement by the question, "And what was before this beginning?" A beginning before which there is no time, with respect to which it is even absurd to speak of a *before*, no human mind can possibly comprehend; and no mere philosophy and human science can ever

approach this beginning.

In the second place, we must not conceive of this beginning in such a way that it took place and had existence without the will and creative power of God. It did not merely "happen." When the creative Word first proceeded out of the mouth of God, time and the beginning of time were created. Time with all its change, time with all its succession of moments, time with all its advance toward an end, time with all its development, is itself a creature of God's hand which came into existence by His almighty will and according to His eternal decree. And time is the creature which conditions the existence of all creation. It is in that time that the creature lives and moves and acts and develops, according to the counsel of God, and changes and increases and decreases and disappears, also according to that counsel.

In the third place, that very term "in the beginning" points us already to the end, to the omega of all things. This world is not eternal. It had a beginning; and it shall have an end, when, in the day of Christ, the heavens shall be rolled up as a scroll, and the very elements shall melt with fervent heat, in order to make place for the new creation, in which heaven and earth and all things shall be united in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. The very term "in the beginning,"

*A beginning  
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comprehend.*



therefore, reminds us that, according to the counsel and will of God, the Creator, creation shall run through the course of history. It reminds us too, moreover, that while all created things were originally one harmonious whole and stood in their pristine perfection at the end of creation-week, nevertheless that first creation was not God's final purpose. God had prepared a higher purpose and glory for the works which He created in the beginning. And that higher purpose was exactly that all things, both in heaven and on earth, should be united in Christ as the glorious Head of all creation and as the Head of His church, and that, too, along the way of sin and grace. The relation between creation and Christ is such that Christ in the counsel of God is the Firstborn of every creature, who prepares the way for all the other creatures and is destined to be the Heir of all things. In that sense all things are created unto Him and through Him, according to Colossians 1:15ff.

In that same light, the relation between creation and redemption is such that creation was adapted by God to His purpose of redemption from the very beginning. Redemption is no repair work; and Christ is no afterthought of God. On the contrary, creation from the beginning is adapted to the final purpose of God's counsel.

Hence, while according to that counsel and will of God it is indeed true that the original creation is one, so that one creature was adapted to the other, and so that all things, finally, through man, were adapted to God as man's covenant friend — yet, according to that same counsel, all creation is also formed in such a way that it can become the stage for the tremendous battle of sin and grace and for the higher revelation of the virtues and praises of God in Christ as the Firstborn from the dead, and in the work of redemption through Him, and, finally, in the gathering together of all things in heaven and on earth in

Christ. When God created the world in the beginning, He had the end, His eternal kingdom and tabernacle, in mind. To glorify Himself in Christ and the church and to perfect all things on the higher, heavenly level of the new creation — that is the original design of the Creator. When He created the first world, He had the final world in view. When He created the first Paradise, He did so with a view to the ultimate and everlasting Paradise of God. The first man, Adam, was made an image of the last man, Christ. The Creator is also the Redeemer, and He made all things with a view to redemption. Moreover, because this is true, creation is throughout Scripture the image of recreation, and the earthly is the image of the heavenly.

It is in this sense that we must understand the "beginning" of Genesis 1 as the beginning of all history, and in particular as the beginning of all sacred history. □

*Special Article*

*Prof. Herman Hanko*

## A Pastor's Heart (2)

*(Second installment of a speech delivered at the Officebearers' Conference in South Holland, IL, March 2, 1993)*

### Requiring Specific Gifts (cont.)

Certain gifts are also required of a pastor/minister which have to do with himself.

A couple of texts speak directly to this. In I Timothy 1:6, Paul urges upon Timothy: "that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands." And in 4:16 he writes to his spiritual son: "Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine;

continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

The pastor must pay attention to his own spiritual life. If he is to care for the people of God, he can do so only after he has taken care of himself. Caring for himself involves care for his own spiritual life, that is, his own life of fellowship and communion with God in Christ.

Three things especially are involved in this.

The pastor must have time for his own private and personal devotions. How true this was of Luther. Often he would rise at 3:00 in the morning to spend three hours in his devotions. When questioned on the matter by a colleague who could not imagine that

Luther could spare so much time for devotions when his pace was hectic and his schedule crowded, Luther replied: "The busier I am, the more time I need for prayer."

It is interesting that Paul, in nearly all his epistles, speaks of the fact that he is constantly in prayer, not only for himself, but for the churches to which he writes. He prays for and over his congregations.

Such spiritual care also involves meditation. Meditation is neither prayer nor devotion. Vinet (*Pastoral Theology*, tr. by Thomas H. Skinner, Ivison & Phinney, 1854) tersely but accurately defines meditation as "getting into the middle of things." Meditation is not day-dreaming. The Psalms speaks more than once of

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meditating on God's works. The Scriptures are the object of our meditation, but particularly as they cast their infallible light on us in our calling and place in God's vineyard. But meditation requires solitude, and solitude is a scarce item in a busy minister's life.

Taking heed to oneself involves also self-examination. Roman Catholics, I am told, require of their prelates daily examination of conscience. By this they mean that one carefully examines all his activities of the day in the light of Scripture that he may come to know his own heart with its motives, its thoughts, its activities, in order to weigh them in the balances of God's mercifully cruel scrutiny of us. I recommend it as most conducive to developing a pastor's heart.

To possess a pastor's heart requires gifts which are needed to deal with God's sheep. While Scripture either mentions or implies many of these, I call your attention to three which are of outstanding importance.

One of these is surely the gift of self-denial. This calling to self-denial is implicit in Paul's admonition to Timothy (II Tim. 2:3) to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The opposition a minister faces requires self-denial of a particular kind, for he must, in the face of great provocation, remain a shepherd, something not easily done. And faithfulness in one's calling requires self-denial of a most strenuous kind as he, in obedience to Christ, spends himself in the ministry of the Word.

In close connection with self-denial is what James M. Hoppin (op. cit.) calls "complete indifference of heart for temporal goods." While much could be said of this, I only remind you of the fact that Paul lays this down as a qualification for bishops, and warns against the dangers of riches in frightening words (II Tim. 6:10, 11). And no pastor/minister can ignore Ezekiel's warnings to those who use the minis-

try to shear the sheep.

A pastor must know the power of sin and grace. If you would ask me who, more than any other, taught me the power of sin, I would have to say, surprisingly, Rev. George M. Ophoff. His whole character did not seem to be the kind which would lead him to have a profound understanding of the operations of sin in our natures. But he did. He taught me the crucial truth that a man's strengths are, as often as not, also his weaknesses. He taught me the strength of sin as it works its hardening power in our lives. He taught me what we could call the "ripple effect" of sin, as sin in us touches the lives of countless others — something more true of ministers than of most others because of their position in the church of Christ. A pastor/minister must understand this.

But he must also understand the power of God's grace. He must not only understand that grace is indeed a power sufficient for every need, but he must understand that God is pleased to give His grace, not as a medicinal dose of antibiotics, to be taken one teaspoon at a time, four times a day, but as grace which works through the deepest and profoundest of struggles. God's people must understand grace.

A pastor/minister must keep up with the times. I recall a student who graduated from a seminary full of promise, destined to assume leadership in the churches, but who was, after several years, caught in the backwaters and forgotten in

some unincorporated cluster of houses in the prairies of the mid-West. When I quizzed an older pastor about what happened, the answer was simple: "He lost his effectiveness, and his ministry became irrelevant, because he lost touch with the times." We are dealing with sheep. We are doing so from the relative security of our studies. Our sheep are

out there. They face the world every day of their lives. We had better know what is going on out there.

I have a couple of quotes which sum it all up.

Gregory of Nazianzen said it all centuries ago:

We must first be pure, and then purify others; be taught, then teach others; become light, and then enlighten others; draw near to God ourselves, and then induce others to approach him; sanctify ourself, and then make others holy (quoted in Hoppin from Vinet, pp. 423, 424).

The faithful servant of Christ, the teacher of the gospel, is a man of sound mind, burning with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of men, one taught by the Holy Spirit, experimentally acquainted with the ways of God; one who seeks not the things of men, but men themselves; not his own things, but the things of Christ; of chaste and unadulterated manners; by his example teaching the virtues of piety, modesty, gentleness, zeal, prudence, gravity; one who, like a candle set upon a candlestick, gives light to all who are in the house, to all who are desirous of salvation; both showing the way of life, and on gospel terms dispensing the blessings of grace and peace. Withersoever he goes, there is light; wherever he turns his steps, there is salvation; when he opens his lips, there is the salt of grace; everywhere beloved, respected, and not less the means of imparting consolation to others, than a solace to himself (Vitringa, quoted in Fairbairn, pp. 90, 91).

### Expressed in his Work

A pastor's heart is expressed in his work. That expression of his heart is revealed on the pulpit. If it is not revealed there, he will never be effective in his personal labors among the sheep. His labors effectively reveal his pastor's heart even though there is truth to what Charles Bridges wrote so long ago (*The Christian Ministry*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1967). The words were written in 1830 and are a description of the pew, but remain true today.

*... faithfulness  
in one's calling  
requires  
self-denial  
of a  
most strenuous  
kind ...*



Every ... minister is conversant with the fact, how very little our pulpit discourses are comprehended, retained, or applied by [the person in the pew]. There is a sort of mental deafness among the mass: so that, except the word is brought to them in the smallest parcels, and with the most direct application, the sound only is heard; while the meaning is never fixed upon the mind with an intelligent or permanent apprehension (p. 350).

This very fact ought to give incentive to us to labor diligently in preparation for our preaching. Pastoral work begins on the pulpit. All other work in the congregation is of no avail if the pulpit is considered of secondary importance. All individual pastoral work must be built upon, and I dare say, receive its power from, preaching. From the pulpit the sheep are cared for, fed, attended to in their needs, encouraged in the battle of faith, strengthened in weakness.

A pastor/minister spends time in his study. In John Henry Jowett's book, *The Preacher: His Life and Work* (quoted in *The Epistles of Peter*, Kregel

Publications, 1993, p. 7), he makes the startling statement: "If the study is a lounge, the pulpit will be an impertinence."

One with a pastor's heart is one who, above all, recognizes the determinative character of preaching. Preaching is God's way of ministering to the sheep, of fulfilling all the many callings implied in the terms used to describe him, in showing that he truly has a pastor's heart.

If he is too much outside his study, because the work in the study seems dreary, because it lacks glamour, because it seems to be removed from the personal contact with people his soul craves; if a pastor/minister is influenced by current trends in which he is more counselor than preacher; if he is magnetically attracted to the intensity of person-to-person contact, at the expense of the hard work of wrestling with Scripture and making good sermons; if work in his study appears to him to be drab and uninteresting; if any or all of these things are true, then he demonstrates by his activities that he lacks a pastor's heart.

In anticipation of the high qualifi-

cations required of a pastor, Fairbairn writes:

If the portraiture ... of the ideal of a Christian minister be too high to warrant the expectation of its being fully realized amid the difficulties and temptations of a present life, it is at least what should be constantly aimed at (p. 90).

I close with a poem found in James Spencer Cannon (*Lectures on Pastoral Theology*, New York: Charles Scribner, 1853):

A skilled workman he  
In God's great oral vineyard: what to  
prune  
With cautious hand, he knew — what  
to uproot:  
What were mere weeds, and what  
celestial plants  
Which had unfading vigor in them,  
knew;  
Nor knew alone, but watched them  
night and day,  
And reared and nourished them, till  
fit to be  
Transplanted to the paradise above.

□

Decency and Order

Rev. Ron Cammenga

## Deacons' Meetings

*"The deacons shall meet, wherever necessary, every week to transact the business pertaining to their office, calling upon the Name of God; whereunto the ministers shall take good heed and if necessary they shall be present."*

*Church Order, Article 40.*

### Introduction

No mention is made in Article 29 of the *Church Order* of deacons' meetings as a distinct ecclesiastical gathering: "Four kinds of ecclesiastical as-

semblies shall be maintained: the consistory, the classis, (the particular synod), and the general synod." Deacons' meetings are not a separate ecclesiastical assembly in the strict sense of the word. They are really an extension of the consistory.

As far as the background of Article 40 is concerned, already the Synod of Dordt, 1574, called for meet-

ings of the deacons: "Each week the deacons shall meet together to discuss fruitfully the matters concerning the poor." The Synod of Dordt, 1578, decided: "The deacons shall meet together every week or as often as necessary, in order to deliberate concerning whatever pertains to their office and shall do their counting every month or else according to cir-

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cumstances in the presence of the consistory." The Synod of Middelburg, 1581, ruled: "Similarly, the deacons shall meet every week in order to transact the business pertaining to their office." The Synod of the Hague, 1586, decided: "Similarly, the deacons shall meet every week in order to transact the business pertaining to their office prayerfully, to which the ministers shall take good heed and if necessary be present." The Synod of Dordt, 1618-1619, adopted our present Article 40.

Article 40 prescribes separate deacons' meetings in congregations where the diaconate is of sufficient size to make this possible. Article 37 of the *Church Order* provides for the inclusion of the deacons in the consistory. The last part of the article reads: "Whenever the number of elders is small, the deacons may be added to the consistory by local regulation; this shall invariably be the rule where the number is less than three." In cases where the deacons are added to the consistory, separate deacons' meetings are not usually held.

But when there are a sufficient number of deacons, this should be done. Then the deacons should meet separately, the elders should meet separately, and the elders and deacons should meet together. Generally separate deacons' meetings should be held in congregations where the number of deacons is four or more.

### The Nature of Deacons' Meetings

The deacons' meetings are to be formal meetings. The deacons are not merely to meet informally as may become necessary, perhaps after a Sunday worship service or before the consistory meeting. But these are to be official meetings. They ought to be held on a set date, at a set time, in a set place. The meetings ought to be publicly announced in the church bulletin. Minutes of the meeting are to be recorded in a minute book. Officers are to be elected and function at the meetings: President, Secretary, Vicar (Vice-All or General Adjunct). An adopted agenda ought to be followed.

These meetings have as their pur-

pose: "... to transact the business pertaining to their office." Specifically, the deacons' meetings are to be concerned with the work of the deacons, the work of the collection of the alms, and the distribution of benevolence. Things belonging to the business of the general council meeting ought not to be considered at the deacons' meetings. The "business pertaining to their office" is described in *Church Order*, Articles 25 and 26.

This business would include:

1. Benevolent Fund report.
2. Reports of committees that met with individuals and dispensed alms.
3. Consideration of requests for benevolence with appointment of needed committees.
4. Cases that ought to be investigated.
5. Reports of visits to the elderly, the widows and widowers, and the shut-ins.
6. Causes outside the congregation: sister churches, individuals from another church who might have requested help, even non-Christians (Gal. 6:10).

The deacons' meetings are to begin by "... calling upon the Name of God...." The meetings are to be opened with prayer. Although not specifically mentioned, there ought also to be the reading of Scripture. This should be done by the president of the deacons. The deacons' meetings should also be closed with prayer. This provision of Article 40 is intended to be a reminder to the deacons of their absolute dependence upon God in carrying out the work of their office.

In addition, this provision also serves to protect the spiritual nature of the work of the deacons. Their office is not just the distribution of money. But their office is the administration of the mercies of Jesus Christ. The deacons are in much need of wisdom and grace properly to carry out this important work in Christ's church.

There are distinct advantages to holding separate deacons' meetings. One advantage is that the deacons are

afforded more time for consideration of their work. Too often when matters pertaining to the deacons are considered at the general consistory meeting, along with all of the other matters the consistory must deal with in an evening, the work of the deacons gets short shrift. In addition, the poor in the church are given somewhat freer access to the deacons if regular monthly deacons' meetings are held. Also, because the work of the deacons is largely dealt with at the deacons' meetings, these matters are eliminated from the agenda of the regular council meetings. Having deacons' meetings does mean one more meeting a month for the deacons. But usually the council meetings do not last so long as otherwise they might.

### Supervision by the Elders

The last part of Article 40 reads: "... whereunto the ministers shall take good heed and if necessary they shall be present." This provision was added by the Synod of the Hague in 1586. The intention was that the deacons' meetings should be supervised by the consistory. The minister(s) were to be present for supervision as well as for consultation and advice. It would be good that Article 40 were revised, so that instead of reading "minister" it reads: "... whereunto the elders shall take good heed...." Generally, in churches where there are separate deacons' meetings, the minister takes his turn in rotation with the other elders in attending the deacons' meetings.

The deacons' meetings fall under the supervision of the elders. As much as the minister and his work and the work of each elder and committees of elders falls under the supervision of the consistory, so does the work of the deacons. For this reason Article 23 specifies one of the duties of the elders to be "... to take heed that ... the deacons faithfully discharge their office...." And Article 25 requires of the deacons that "they shall render an account in consistory..." of their distribution of benevolence.



For this reason an elder must always be present at the deacons' meetings. He has only advisory vote, that is, only the right to speak. He is to serve the deacons with his counsel, as well as report to the next consistory meeting.

### Division of Labor

When separate deacons' meetings are held, the following names are the best to designate the various bodies in the local congregation. First, there is the consistory. This is the ruling body of the minister(s) and the elders. The articles of the *Church Order* that speak of the "consistory" refer always to the ministers and the elders, in distinction from the deacons. (Cf., for example, Articles 4, 5, 10, 37.) Other names for the consistory include: elders' meetings, restricted consistory — in Dutch, *smalle kerkeraad*. Second, there is the diaconate, or body of deacons. Third, there is the council. This is the body of minister(s), elders, and deacons combined. This is the designation of the *Belgic Confession of Faith*, Ar-

ticle 30, "... also elders and deacons, who, together with the pastors, form the council of the Church...." Other names for the council include: the general or full consistory — in Dutch, *breede kerkeraad*.

Generally, the division of labor will be in line with the peculiar offices in which the officebearers labor. This means that the deacons' meetings will deal with matters of benevolence, the elders' meetings (consistory meetings) with the oversight of the congregation. And the council meetings will deal with those matters common to the labors of the officebearers in the local congregation.

The following is a suggested division of labor.

Diacons' meetings:

1. Counting of offerings.
2. Matters of benevolence in the local congregation.
3. Other matters of benevolence.
  - a. Sister churches.
  - b. Other causes.
4. Visits to sick, aged, and widows.

Consistory meetings:

1. Matters of Christian discipline.
2. Oversight of the preaching (including catechism classes) and the administration of the sacraments.
3. Confessions of faith, requests for baptism, admittance to the Lord's Supper, membership transfers.
4. Family visitation.
5. Decisions respecting delegates to the broader assemblies.
6. Report of elder present at the deacons' meeting.
7. Visits to sick, aged, and widows.

Council meetings:

1. Financial reports and matters pertaining to the general finances of the congregation.
2. Various standing committee reports.
3. Matters dealing with building, grounds, and property.
4. Nomination of officebearers.
5. Calling of a minister.
6. Matters to be brought on congregational meetings.
7. Annual church visitation.
8. *Censura Morum*. □

Strength of Youth

Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

# The Fear of Single Life

"Let's talk about dating!" was the suggestion I made at the beginning of one of our Young People's meetings. There followed a little laughter and then silence.

"OK, let's talk about *not* dating." A little more laughter and some more silence.

We never did pursue the subject, since our meeting was canceled in

order that our Sunday School could practice for its Christmas program. It probably should have been pursued, and perhaps still can be — in *all* our Young People's Societies. But then, maybe it is too touchy a subject. Dating is a difficult area of life. It is fun ... and yet it can cause plenty of heartache. There are rules, both spoken by parents and unspoken by peers ... and yet there are no rules. "All is fair in love and war!" — so it is said.

But if heartache belongs to those who date, even more is this true of those who would like to date but seldom, if ever, do. One of the great-

est fears a Christian young person faces is: Will God fulfill my desire to marry? Here is the hard fact: Most of us, but not all of us, are going to find a life's mate. There may be some who are not so much troubled by that, because marriage is to them not such a vital part of life. But, to most, the prospect of never marrying is a painful one. I want to marry ... but perhaps I will be one of those who are left behind.

Neither is this a foolish or unwarranted fear. It is not one the answer to which is: "Oh, come on; what a silly thing to worry about!" It is a legiti-

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mate fear because it flows out of the noble and highly honorable desire to find a godly spouse with whom we can establish a covenant home and family. In contrast to the wicked who would rather live in wantonness and fornication, covenant young people want to marry because they see in marriage security and happiness. They have witnessed that in their own families. They have observed the love of God in the various relationships found within the home. They have been a part of a home and family where mother and father love each other and bestow that same love on their children. They reflect on the good times they had in their own family, even though they may not be too quick to admit it. Covenant youth see for themselves, firsthand, what has been preached to them from childhood on, that God chooses to carry on His covenant friendship in the generations of believers. For that reason, in the heart of covenant youth is the knowledge that marriage is the first step to a life of happiness and contentment. As active members in the church they want a piece of that inheritance which God gives to covenant families.

Now, it is true that there are legitimate exceptions to this rule. The apostle Paul was one of them. He saw no necessity in his life to marry; and the Lord used him mightily as a single man. In fact, Paul went so far as to render this advice to single men in I Corinthians 7:32-33: "But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife." This same advice Paul gives to young women in verse 34 of this chapter. There are those, therefore, that for one reason or another choose not to marry. These have no fear of single life, but on the contrary view it as favorable.

But it is safe to assume that this is the exception to the rule. Most young people, both men and women, look forward to a rich, rewarding life within

the marriage bond. They take seriously the Word of God when it teaches them, "He that findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor with the Lord" (Prov. 18:22). Or, "God setteth the solitary in families" (Ps. 68:6). So, the desire to marry is noble and good.

But though it may be one's desire to marry, it is not always the will of God for him or her to marry.

This can happen in the life of a young man, first of all. He may repeatedly ask for dates and be turned down. Or he may go out on dates, yet find that it never seems to "click" with him and his dates. He then becomes discouraged and dates less and less. As he grows older there are fewer young women available to date (Or are there? Maybe he should open his eyes!), and as a result he begins to fear that the single life is in store for him.

The scenario is worse in the case of a young woman. A young man has a job and career he can pursue which will keep him busy enough. A young woman, however, may go through high school with no other desire but to marry. But no one asks her out. Or if a few do, then these do not ask her again. All of a sudden she finds herself out of high school, somewhat out of circulation, and still with the simple desire to marry and raise a family. She becomes discouraged and oftentimes desperate. What should she do? How frightful life seems to be with no prospects of marriage on the horizon.

What often complicates all of this is that these young men and women begin to judge their value as a person in light of whether they are married or not. They begin to feel inferior, worthless, and undesirable. "Why doesn't anyone want me? Am I that bad? What did I do wrong? And what can I do to change things? There is no way I want to go through life single!" How hard and long we can agonize over such questions!

*But though it may be one's desire to marry, it is not always the will of God for him or her to marry.*

Are there solutions to this fear of living single? Yes. Maybe not exactly the solutions we are looking for, but solutions nonetheless.

These solutions are not to be found, however, in some of the sinful ways which spiritually weak young people in their insecurity might pursue to avoid the possibility of living a single life. In the first place, the solution is not to be found in popularity. Too often a young person convinces himself that if only he can be popular, then he will be able to go out on all kinds of dates with whomever he pleases. Somehow he must impress his peers

and show them that he is "bad." If I am a young man I might reason to myself, the guys that seem to get all the "hot" girls are the ones who throw parties, get drunk, and even go so far as to commit fornication. That must be the solution to finding a girl to marry. Or, if I am a young woman, I might be led to think that the only way I am going to catch a guy is by doing these same things. I have to act as if I am enjoying myself at these drunken bashes. I might even have to give myself to the sinful lusts of some ego-inflated goon who likes to brag about his exploits, because if I do not I may be left behind. No one is going to want me in the end and I will never get married!

This certainly is not a solution! God will not bless young people who walk in this sinful way. And even if they get married these sinful actions will haunt them the rest of their married lives. And, believe me, these sins of youth can be awfully painful to a child of God who later in life comes to a deeper understanding of how horrible these sins were!

Is it not true, however, that even though we may not be those who go to such an extreme, nevertheless we still view popularity as a solution to living a single life? We find ourselves attempting to climb this ladder of popularity no matter what the cost to



others, and no matter whom we hurt and shun in order to gain a higher place on that ladder. We look down on the "geeks" of our class and join our classmates in making fun of them. Maybe we feel this boosts our own popularity. Then, too, perhaps we are not willing to go to the sinful extremes of others, but we are willing to compromise our own principles when our peers pressure us to walk in sin with them. We simply cannot refuse them when they press us to go with them to movies, a bar, or what have you. After all, if we do not go with them, then *we* will be considered a geek, and then *we* will probably never get a date. There *has* to be a little compromise of our faith, we feel, because this is the only way we are going to be able to catch a guy or girl. And often times (sad to say) this does land us that date. But if we think this is the solution to securing for ourselves a husband or a wife, we are wrong. Can we truly expect God to bless us when giving in to sin and going places and doing things He tells us not to do? This will not assure us of a life's mate; it will only serve to leave scars that we will carry with us all our lives.

One other solution that many foolish young people may seek, especially as they grow older, is to lower their standards in what to expect in a life's mate. For fear that they will never marry, a young woman or man may settle for something less than a God-fearing mate. Oh, they may start out with high spiritual standards, but as time goes on and there are no successful dates then that young person begins to lower those standards. They may even consider an unbeliever as a possible mate. Young people, you are precious in the sight of God! You have been bought with a great price, the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and are therefore of great value to God. Never ought you to feel so worthless as to settle for something

less than the spiritual best! You may not fully understand it now, but take it from a pastor who has had to deal with damaged and broken marriages: You do not want to settle for an unbeliever or one who is so spiritually weak that you and your children will suffer untold heartache and pain! Especially is that true when we consider that marriage is for life! This is not a solution to single life. Single life is a thousand times happier than marriage to an unbeliever!

The true solution to our fears can be found in one unshakable truth: that whatever God sends us in this valley of tears He will turn to our advantage (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 9).

Ah, yes, your response is anticipated: "Those are nice words and I believe them, but that does not alleviate the pain and the hurt I feel. That does not alleviate my fear that I may be single my whole life when I do not want to be." I know. But, is this not where our faith really kicks in? First of all, we have to take to heart what Jesus teaches us in Matthew 6:34: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." This calls for patient, quiet perseverance. We may not look at the future and fret and worry about what may or may not happen. Faith leaves the future in the hands of God.

As young men and women we must continue to live for Christ and remain faithful to His cause and kingdom in this world. We must rely on God. If it is His will for us to marry, He will guide the events of our lives in such a way that we will meet and marry that young man

or woman He has chosen for us. We need not fear. Nor ought we to force the issue. We must simply follow the Lord's guiding.

And that points us to another act of faith: simple, childlike trust in the

will of God. How bitter we can become at times when a certain relationship does not work out the way we want it to. How bitter we can become toward the person who broke off what we thought might have been a good relationship. How bitter we can become with God. "Why does not my dating life seem to go the way I want it to?" Don't you understand, that when we say this we are not viewing the situation through the eyes of faith? Faith looks away from ourselves and at God, and ultimately rests in His will for us. I know that does not make life easier, but it does give us contentment in our way. God's will is being done for us.

Do not forget either that the Lord's will for some is that they remain single their whole life (Matt. 19:12). This means that God has a purpose for that person *as a single person* in His church. If God's will for us is to marry, He will show us in due time. But until that time we must labor to find our purpose and place in God's church. A single person is, after all, a valuable and necessary part of the church of Jesus Christ. God has placed in the body of Christ all kinds of members, each having his own function and place in the particular circumstances of life in which God leads them. As members of Christ's body we all have an important function, no matter who we are. The church would be incomplete without us.

Never ought the fear of being single turn us from our place and function in the church. Never ought that fear take away our joy. God knows what is best for us. And when we are burdened, then we must cast our burdens on the Lord, knowing that He will sustain us. With that confidence all our fear will fade away and be replaced by thankfulness. How is that possible? Because when we trust in God He will make us realize that single life also can be as fulfilling as married life and can bring us great reward. □

*Single life  
is a  
thousand times  
happier than  
marriage  
to an  
unbeliever!*



## Book Review

*What is Faith?* by J. Gresham Machen. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1991. 262pp, \$9.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Steven R. Key.]

This book contains the material of a course of lectures which was delivered at the Grove City Bible School in the summer of 1925. There are only eight chapters in this book of some 262 pages. The chapters, therefore, are somewhat lengthy, giving thorough development to their themes.

One who would contrast faith with knowledge — something frequently done today — will be struck by the introductory chapter of this book. This is not a book for one content with a superficial, feelings-oriented Christianity.

J. Gresham Machen, Presbyterian scholar from the early part of this century, begins with a scathing denunciation of the anti-intellectual tendency of his age — something which is still pertinent nearly 70 years later. He confronts what he observed as a decline in education, assisted by absurd teaching theories and general laziness in learning. This growth of ignorance is a detriment to the strength and stability of the church. Prior to developing the truth that our Christian faith must have substance, Machen writes:

...In one sense, indeed, we are traditionalists.... But on the whole, in view of the conditions that now exist, it would perhaps be more correct to call us "radicals" than to call us "conservatives." We look not for a mere continuation of spiritual conditions that now exist, but for an outburst of new power; we are seeking in particular to arouse youth from its present uncritical repetition of current phrases into some genuine examination of the basis of life; and we believe that Christianity flourishes not in the darkness, but in the light (p. 18).

Thus Machen points out that one of the chief purposes of this book is to

break down the false distinction which has been set up between knowledge and faith, and to restore to its proper place sound doctrine and the primacy of the intellect.

The approach which Machen takes in this consideration of the biblical truth of faith is an interesting approach. He develops, first of all, the subject of "Faith in God," in which he points to the truth that faith has substance. Faith lays hold on God who is the Creator-Redeemer who reveals Himself to us, and more particularly to our minds.

The heading of the next chapter is "Faith in Christ." Here Machen develops the truth that faith in God depends completely upon Christ's redeeming work. There is a serious fault, however, in this section. Here Machen falls into the error of a double-track theology. While he emphasizes that God is the Father of some and not all, he also states that "the door of the household of faith is open wide for all men to come in. Christ died to open that door, and the pity is that we try to close it by our failure to spread the invitation throughout all the world" (p. 86). There is, therefore, a failure to show the relationship between faith and sovereign election. Furthermore, there is a failure to develop faith as the *work of God* in His people.

This error, sad to say, surfaces again in the subsequent chapters, and runs as a current through the book. Machen fails to understand the distinction that our Heidelberg Catechism makes, e.g., between the bond or power of faith which God establishes when He grafts us into Christ, and the activity of faith.

The focus of the book is entirely upon the activity of faith. And although one could certainly write a book on that aspect of faith, the failure to grasp clearly the idea of faith as a work of God leads to the error of making faith the work of man. That is the unavoidable consequence of double-track theology — double-track, because Machen himself wants

to hold to two mutually exclusive teachings at the same time. On the one hand, he wants to maintain that salvation is entirely the work of God. He writes, e.g., on page 173: "The very centre and core of the whole Bible is the doctrine of the grace of God — the grace of God which depends not one whit upon anything that is in man, but is absolutely undeserved, resistless, and sovereign." Excellent! But Machen denies the very truth of that statement when he writes (p. 143): "And faith consists simply in our acceptance of that wondrous gift (the gift of salvation through the cross of Christ — SK). When we accept the gift, we are clothed, entirely without merit of our own, by the righteousness of Christ...." He makes faith, therefore, a condition unto salvation and indeed unto justification, a condition that must be fulfilled by man. With that we heartily disagree!

We heartily agree, however, with what he writes on page 180 (which contradicts completely what he had written on page 143): "Faith is not regarded in the New Testament as itself a meritorious work or a meritorious condition of the soul; but it is regarded as a means which is used by the grace of God: the New Testament never says that man is saved *on account of his faith*, but always that he is saved *through his faith* or *by means of his faith*; faith is merely the means which the Holy Spirit uses to apply to the individual soul the benefits of Christ's death" (emphasis is Machen's).

In spite of the above-mentioned inconsistencies and errors, which are certainly serious, the discerning reader can certainly gain much from this volume. Reformed pastors are encouraged to read it prior to preaching from Lord's Day 7 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

The book also has a thorough subject and textual index, a feature which is always appreciated by this pastor. □



**Congregational Activities**

Before we go any further into this issue of the "News," there is one update that should be made from the February 15th "News." That is that the date set for the organization of the Bauer group has been moved back to the 2nd of March. That's one week later than was reported here last time.

The consistory of our Hope PRC in Walker, MI recently extended an invitation to young adults and young married couples of other area PR congregations to join them in their Monday evening Bible Class led by Prof. Hanko. The present discussion is on prayer.

The young singles of our Grandville, MI PRC met recently after a Sunday evening service to discuss a pamphlet by Prof. D. Engelsma on the covenant. Nothing very unusual about that — except for the fact that Prof. Engelsma was also there, to help lead the discussion and, presumably, to answer any questions that might arise about what he had written.

The Consistory of the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA recently decided that the elders will now come to the front of the church to shake hands with the minister immediately following the benediction. The purpose for this change, prompted partly by suggestions from members of the congregation, was to make for a more visible presence of the elders at the worship service, especially in their signifying by a handshake with the minister their agreement with the Word preached. The elders will also take part in greeting the congregation at the door after the worship service.

The Choral Society of our Grandville, MI PRC presented a program for the enjoyment of their con-

gregation as well as visitors from other congregations on Sunday evening, January 30.

**Young People's Activities**

The Young People's Society of our First PRC in Holland, MI recently discussed a timely topic for after-recess. They took a long hard look at contemporary gospel music.

Several of our other Young People's Societies have been busy these past few months with projects to help raise funds for this year's YP Convention. The young people in our First PRC in Edgerton, MN sponsored a soup supper in December. Southwest PRC's young people held a pancake breakfast in mid-January. And the young people of our Lynden, WA congregation, this year's host society for the convention, sponsored a hostess dinner for the enjoyment of their congregation.

**Evangelism Activities**

The Evangelism Society of our Byron Center, MI PRC invited all area congregations to attend a meeting after their evening service on January 23, to hear Mr. Dan VanderKlok speak about work he has done at the Kent County Jail. Visitors were encouraged to come with questions.

**School Activities**

At the last meeting of Covenant

Christian High School's P.T.F.A., in Grand Rapids, MI, members were able to meet together and hear Dr. Leroy Stegink, the head of the Education Department at Calvin College, speak on the timely topic, at least for Michigan residents, "School Reform in Michigan and How It Affects the Schools."

The P.T.A. of our Hope PR Christian School in Grand Rapids, MI, met together on February 3 to hear Rev. W. Bruinsma speak on the topic, "The New Age Movement."

**Ministerial Activities**

The congregation of our Loveland, CO PRC has extended a call to Rev. R. Dykstra to become their next pastor. Rev. Dykstra presently serves our churches as pastor of the Doon, IA PRC.

We also want to extend our congratulations to Seminarian Allen Brummel and his wife, Crysta, on the birth of their first child, a son, Dean Ray, born January 23.

*Food For Thought*

"My whole outlook upon everything that happens to me should be governed by these three things: my realization of who I am, my consciousness of where I am going, and my knowledge of what awaits me when I get there." □

*D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS****RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Adult Bible Society of Faith Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Noorman in the death of his brother,

**MR. HAROLD NOORMAN.**

May they take comfort in Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

Rev. K. Koole, President  
Jan Talsma, Secretary

**NOTICE!!**

All standing and special committees of Synod, as well as individuals who wish to address Synod 1994, are hereby notified that all material for the 1994 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches should be in the hands of the Stated Clerk no later than April 1. Please send material to the Stated Clerk:

Rev. M. Joostens  
2016 Tekonsha S.E.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

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



### TEACHERS NEEDED!!!

The Board of the Reformed Heritage Christian School Association is inviting applications for a full-time teacher/administrator position (grades 1-8) which will begin in August of 1994. Applicants for a second full-time teaching position are sought as well. Successful applicants must be committed to the Reformed faith, biblical inerrancy, 6-day creation, male headship, the antithesis between Christianity and the world, and covenantal theology. Teacher certification and experience are strong pluses. Applicants should send a letter of application and resumé to either: David Kloosterman, 5630 Powderhorn, Kalamazoo, MI 49009 (phone: 616-375-5751), or Curt Veldman, 3503 Huron, Kalamazoo, MI 49006 (phone: 616-344-2998).

Our association plans to open a new Christian school in the fall of 1994. We are explicitly committed to the Three Forms of Unity, and to biblical doctrines such as are described in the teacher qualifications listed above. Our association is composed of parents and individuals from Independent Reformed, Protestant Reformed, Orthodox Presbyterian, and Christian Reformed congregations.

### TEACHER NEEDED!!!

Covenant Christian High School is urgently seeking applicants for teaching positions for the 1994-1995 school year in the following areas: Science, History, English, and Choir. Consideration will be given to both part-time and full-time applicants. Those interested should contact Agatha Lubbers, (616) 453-5048 (school) or (616) 458-2057 (home), or Rick Noorman, (616) 457-6087. Applicants may send a letter of application to the school at 1401 Ferndale S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On March 1, 1994 (February 29), **MR. and MRS. HENRY KAMPHUIS** celebrated 50 years of marriage. We rejoice with them, and thank God for the many years they have shared. We thank them for their covenant instruction through the years and pray for God's continued blessing on them.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him and his righteousness unto children's children" (Psalm 103:17).

- \* Roger and Phyllis King
- \* Roger Kamphuis
- \* Jim and Beverly Langerak
- \* Don and Mary Kamphuis
- \* John and Sally Kamphuis
- \* Bob Kamphuis
- \* Dan Kamphuis
- \* Tom and Irene Kamphuis
- 31 grandchildren
- 7 great grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Michigan

### TEACHER NEEDED!!!

The Protestant Reformed Christian School of Loveland, Colorado is accepting application for a 4-6th grade teaching position for the 1994-1995 school year. Those interested in applying should send their application to the school: 705 E 57th St., Loveland, CO 80538; or contact Glen Griess: (303) 669-4835 or Ron Koole: (303) 667-9440.

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

We would like to express our Christian sympathy to Uncle Rich and Aunt Betty Bloem and Jan and Keith Gort in the death of our cousin,

#### JAMES DAVID BLOEM,

who was taken to his eternal home on February 4, 1994.

May you be comforted by the words of Revelation 14:13, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

Lovingly,  
The Kuiper family  
nephews and nieces

### IN MEMORIAM

On January 17, 1994, it pleased our heavenly Father to call our beloved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather,

#### SIMON ONDERSMA,

to his heavenly home.

"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psalm 73:24).

- \* Gordon and Elaine Ondersma
- \* David and Nancy Ondersma
- \* Harvey and Marilyn Holstege
- \* Raymond and Barbara VanTil
- 21 grandchildren
- 13 great-grandchildren

Hudsonville, Michigan

### NOTICE!!

All students enrolled in the Protestant Reformed Seminary, who will be in need of financial assistance for the coming school year, are asked to contact the Student Aid Committee Secretary, Mr. Larry Meulenberg, O-342 Begole St. S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504. (Phone (616) 453-8466.) This contact should be made before the next scheduled meeting of March 17, 1994, D.V.

Student Aid Committee  
Larry Meulenberg, Secretary

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Society of Faith Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Harv Holstege and family in the passing of his brother,

#### MR. JAY HOLSTEGE.

May they take comfort in the truth that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

Rev. K. Koole, President  
Jan Talsma, Secretary