

# THE *January 1, 2002* STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

## *Castlewellan Castle*

Christian Conference Center  
Northern Ireland



See "6th Biennial BRF Family Conference," p. 149.

VOLUME 78 • NUMBER 7



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The Standard Bearer (ISSN 0362-4692) is a semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August, published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc., 4949 Ivanrest Ave., Grandville, MI 49418.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to the Standard Bearer, P.O. Box 603, Grandville, MI 49468-0603.

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### SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

\$17.00 per year in the U.S., US\$20.00 elsewhere.

### ADVERTISING POLICY

The Standard Bearer does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$10.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business Office and should be accompanied by the \$10.00 fee. Deadline for announcements is at least one month prior to publication date.

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

Website for RFPA: [www.rfpa.org](http://www.rfpa.org)

Website for PRC: [www.prca.org](http://www.prca.org)

## Meditation

Herman Hoeksema

# Thy Mercy, O Lord\*

Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

Psalm 33:22

**N**ew Year's morning!  
Yet, there is nothing new under the sun!  
Old things have not passed

away, all things have not become new.

Still we move about and whirl around, with all men and all things, within the vicious circle of vanity, hemmed in on all sides by impenetrable darknesses, limited everywhere by things earthly and temporal, and there appears to be no way out.

Vanity of vanities!

It is still true, also on New Year's morning, that our eyes open upon a scene of labor and toil that yield no profit. Generations come

and go, children are brought forth with travail, men pass away in sorrow, and there is no progress from one generation to another. The sun rises and sets, and in its course through the heavens it witnesses the same scenes of fruitless activity and toil every day. All things earthly are like the wind, which "goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north, and whirleth about continually, and returneth again according to its circuits," or like the rivers that run into the sea without ever filling it.

\* This Meditation by the Standard Bearer's first editor was written for the January 1, 1940 issue of this magazine.



New Year?

Many there are, on the first morning of another year, who would fain see something new, who express the hope for something new, who bless their fellow-men as if there were a basis for the expectation of something new. Men also continue to boast that their houses shall stand forever.

And yet, there is no new thing under the sun!

All things are so full of labor that man cannot alter it!

As far as eye can see, the New Year bears the same aspect as the Old. It invites us to meet the same problems, to pass through the same labor and sorrow, the same sufferings and death. Man's days are still like the grass. Still his life flourishes as the flower of the field, with precarious tenderness, and still the winds blow and pass over it to snatch it away. And still its very place forgets that it ever was!

New Year?

Ah, but how old, how frightfully old do all things appear. For, even as of old, men reveal that the picture Scripture draws of them is true, and that they are filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, deceit, malignity; that they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; that there is none that seeketh after God, none that doeth good; that their throat is an open sepulcher, with their tongue they use deceit, poison of asps is under their lips, their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their ways, there is no fear of God before their eyes, they know not the way of peace....

But why say more?

The mighty trample underfoot the weak and boast of it!

The way of peace they have not known, though all profess to seek it!

New Year?

Ah, but how old, how hopelessly old is the world, and are all things that present themselves to our eyes!

Progress? Culture?

Ah, but how wearily and despairingly we move and whirl about in the vicious circle!

No, indeed, there is no new thing under the sun!

Vanity of vanities!



What shall we say then?

What shall be our attitude on this first morning of a new year?

Shall we just deliberately close our eyes to reality, to the woe and misery of the world, to the fact that there is, indeed, nothing new, and vainly meet one another with the blessing of a "happy new year" in the earthly sense of the word? Shall we just pull our wish-bones, and speak of wealth and prosperity, of life and health, of houses that stand for aye, of the coming glorious day of man?

Then, on New Year's morning we join the company of the blind that lead the blind!

Shall we put our trust in the basic goodness of man, or, perhaps, in the superficial goodness of a "common grace," and join our voice to theirs who boast of the progress of culture and civilization, of science and art, of the power and ingenuity of man, and who, in spite of the glaring fact that such horribly old things happen all about us, persist in their promise of a new day of peace and prosperity, because man's efforts will ultimately be crowned with success?

Then, on New Year's morning, our number is the number of mere man!

Six hundred and sixty-six!

Toil without rest! Efforts without success! The week without the sabbath!

Shall we sit down in dumb

despair, confessing that there is no hope, no light anywhere in the darkness, no life in the midst of this death, no way out of our misery and woe, no victory, no peace?

Then on New Year's morning we are of those who seek death and cannot find it!

But God forbid that we should either boast in man or despair because of him!

Rather, let the dawn of the first day of the year find us on our knees, humbly seeking the face of Him who revealed Himself in Jesus Christ our Lord!

Not to ask Him for things He will never give!

Not to seek the things that are on the earth!

But to leave all things to Him, if only we may be assured of His everlasting mercy!

Then all will be well!

For, our days may be like the grass, our life like the flower of the field. And all things may be vanity in this present world of sin. But from everlasting to everlasting is the mercy of the Lord toward them that fear Him!

Let, O Lord, Thy mercy be upon us!

According as we hope in Thee!



Thy mercy, Lord!

We hope in Thee only!

There is in this prayer, first of all, the expression of an attitude of humble dependence.

We feel helpless in ourselves, realize deeply that we can do nothing apart from Him. We are conscious of our ignorance and darkness, and we acknowledge that we do not know the way. We are like a man that travels in an utterly strange, mountainous country, intersected by hidden ravines and dangerous precipices. We cannot find our way. We are surrounded by dangers. All our self-confidence is gone. A guide we need. Someone we look for who does know the way out, upon whom we can



depend, in whom we can trust. We do not care to control things ourselves. We are wholly willing to leave all things to God, to follow where He leads, to depend solely on Him.

We hope in Thee!

And we are conscious of misery. We are in trouble, in darkness and death, in the power of sin and corruption. And, what is more, we humbly acknowledge that we are even wholly unworthy of God's favor, have nothing on which we might plead to be delivered from our wretchedness. All our pride is humbled in the dust. In the world there is such a thing as proud dependence. When we are conscious of our riches; when we can afford to reward our guide royally; when we feel that we can order him about and that we really do him a great favor by trusting in him and permitting him to lead the way — then, indeed, we are dependent, but pride is the chief characteristic of our attitude of dependence. Not so in this prayer. We hope in God; and we implore His mercy!

Humble dependence!

Dependence upon God who is God!

On Him of whose praise this psalm is full.

For He it is who made the heavens by His Word, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth; who gathereth the waters of the sea together in an heap, and layeth up the depth in storehouses; who spake and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast. He bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought and maketh the devices of the people of none effect. But His counsel shall stand forever, and the thoughts of His heart to all generations!

With whom shall He be compared?

He even fashioneth the hearts of men alike, and considereth all their works. But for His power all things are vain. There is no safety in the multitude of a host, in the

power and invention, in the ingenuity and wisdom of man. A horse is a vain thing and he shall not deliver anyone by his great strength.

But blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah!

And blessed is he who, in humble dependence, may look away from the creature, in order to confide solely in the Lord his God!

O Lord, we hope in Thee!

Thy mercy be upon us!



Thy mercy!

Thy everlasting mercy, which is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Thee, be upon us!

For, if that mercy be upon us, we need nothing more, we shall ask for nought else!

There is in this prayer the expression of an attitude of childlike trust, of a confidence that commits the way wholly to Him!

Blessed trust!

Ah, how often we are lacking in that quiet trust that is confidence in God! We would trust Him, then, in part only. Oh, we do seek His face, and we do implore His help, and we desire to be the objects of His mercy; but at the same time there are a thousand other things, vain things, things of mere man, of the creature, conditions, circumstances, on which we rely, in which we seek rest, or of which we are afraid. The assurance that He guides and cares is really not sufficient. His Word of promise alone cannot satisfy our soul. We want to see. We desire to understand. And besides, we would like to explain to the Most High just how our way should be, to dictate to our Guide just in what direction He ought to lead. When there is sickness we would have health; when there is sorrow we desire joy; when adversity meets us in the way we cry for prosperity; when there is war we pray for peace; and when, presently, the dark shadows of death grow longer and steal over

our soul, we want to live!

And the result is that we do not taste the joy of wholly trusting in the name of our God and of resting assured in the will of Him who assures us that all things work together for good to them that love Him, whom He has called according to His purpose.

The peace that passeth all understanding, and which is the sure fruit of committing the way to Him alone, does not set our soul at rest!

Thy mercy, O Lord!

Let it be upon us, and it sufficeth!

For, according to that mercy He loved us with an everlasting love! It is in His abundant mercy that He predestinated us to be made like unto the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren; that He purposes to deliver us from all our misery and make us heirs of the glory of His heavenly and eternal tabernacle, where there shall be no night, where the former things shall be forgotten, where He shall wipe away all tears from our eyes! It is in that abundant mercy that He gave His only begotten Son, that He sent Him into our death and darkness, that we might live in the everlasting light of His countenance!

And in that same eternal mercy He determined on your and my way, which must lead all of us and each of us individually to the glory, and to our particular place in the glory, which He would have us inherit.

That way may be a way of adversity, of suffering and sorrow, the way of death. But in His mercy it is the way to eternal life and glory!

Let that mercy, then, be upon us, Lord!

And it will quite suffice!  
Childlike trust!



For we hope in Thee!

And according as we hope in Thee, let Thy mercy be upon us.



There is in this prayer, finally, the expression of an attitude of calm assurance! Of the assurance that our prayer is answered, must be heard, that our petition is heard of God much more certainly than I even feel in my heart that I desire it of Him. For many things we may ask that we shall never receive, be-

cause we do not seek the things that are above but those things that are below, even in our prayers. But the prayer for His mercy, the prayer that He forgive our sins, that He deliver us from all our woe, that He lead us to His eternal glory, and that He cause all things to work together for our salvation —


that prayer cannot fail!

For we hope in Him! And this hope is also the work of His grace!

Never does He forsake the work of His own hands!

Blessed assurance! According as we hope in Thee, O Lord!

So let Thy mercy be upon us!

Now and forevermore! 

## Editorials

# 6<sup>th</sup> Biennial BRF Family Conference: An Invitation to Attend

Every two years for the past ten years, the British Reformed Fellowship (BRF) has held a weeklong family conference somewhere in the British Isles. This summer the BRF will hold the sixth such conference in Northern Ireland. The dates of the conference are July 20 – 27, 2002.

On behalf of the BRF and the Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland, which works closely with the BRF in putting on the conference, this editorial is an invitation to readers of the *Standard Bearer*, both in North America and all over the world, to attend. The conference was designed especially to bring together those in the British Isles who have a love for or an interest in the Reformed faith. But its outreach has been wider, and the BRF is delighted that this is so. In recent years, many young people have been attending the conferences. On their own testimony, they have enjoyed the conferences greatly. They have also made a significant contribution to the success of the conferences.

The BRF Family Conference is a happy combination of Reformed, biblical teaching; interesting, infor-

mative trips and tours in the area; good Christian fellowship; and simple relaxation—a vacation, or “holiday,” as they say in the United Kingdom.

The site this year is Castletown Castle Christian Conference Center in southeastern Northern Ireland. Featuring the magnificent Castletown Castle, the scenic conference grounds are situated in a 1300-acre forest park in the foothills of the Mourne Mountains. A lovelier, more commodious location would be hard to find. Five miles away is the Irish Sea at Newcastle, County Down.

Among the activities at Castletown are miles of nature trails for hiking, beautiful gardens, an arboretum with one of the finest collections of trees and shrubs in the British Isles, an 80-acre lake for fishing and canoeing, the world’s largest hedgerow maze, and an outdoor volleyball court. Nearby is Northern Ireland’s highest mountain, Slieve Donard, a challenging but possible hike for the occasional mountain climber.

A main purpose of the conference is spiritual knowledge and growth especially through the de-

velopment of an important biblical truth by Reformed speakers. The theme of this year’s conference is “Assurance of Salvation.” The theme will be developed in six speeches, given either in the morning or in the evening. The topics of the six speeches are the following: “Assurance: God’s Will for All His Children”; “Assurance and Election”; “Assurance and the Holy Spirit”; “Assurance and the Holy Life”; “Assurance and the Believer’s Struggle with Doubt”; “Assurance and Its Benefits.” The speakers will be Rev. Barry Gritters, pastor of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, Hudsonville, Michigan and Prof. David Engelsma, professor of theology at the Protestant Reformed Seminary, Grandville, Michigan. In addition, Rev. David Silversides, pastor of Loughbrickland Reformed Presbyterian Church in Northern Ireland, will give a lecture.

Lodging will be in the Castletown Castle. For those who prefer to lodge by themselves while attending the conference, Bed and Breakfast accommodations are available close by the conference center.



The conference will be of a relaxed nature. There will be plenty of free time for recreation with family and friends. For those who are interested, several trips have been planned. There will be a full-day trip to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum with a stop at the seaside town of Bangor. There will be half-day trips to Newcastle, Slieve Donard, and Tullymore Forest Park.

For information concerning the cost and other details and for reservation forms, interested persons

in North America should get in contact with Mr. Bill Oomkes, 6299 Wing Ave., Grand Rapids, MI 49512 USA. Telephone: (616) 698-6697. E-mail: [oomkes@iserv.net](mailto:oomkes@iserv.net)

Those in the British Isles and elsewhere should get in contact with Mary Stewart (who is very much involved in planning the conference and from whom much of the information in this article was received), 7 Lislunna Rd., Kells, Ballymena, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland BT42 3NR. Telephone: 01144 28 25 891851. E-mail:


[anmstewart@lineone.net](mailto:anmstewart@lineone.net)

Our heartfelt desire is that God will bless this conference for the promotion of the Reformed faith in the British Isles.

All those who attend the conference should make it a point to visit the Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland, sister church of the Protestant Reformed Churches in North America, on a Lord's Day. The congregation holds her worship services in Ballymena.

— DJE 

## Herman Hoeksema's Romans Sermons

ne of the major projects of the Reformed Free Publishing Association (RFPA) at present is the publication of a commentary by Herman Hoeksema on the book of Romans. The commentary will be titled, *Righteous by Faith Alone: A Devotional Commentary on Romans*. It will be a devotional commentary on the order of the author's commentary on the book of Revelation, *Behold, He Cometh*. The book is scheduled to come out early this year.

This is a work by the renowned theologian that has never before been published, with the exception of the exposition of Romans 9-11. It will be a new book, although the author has been dead for some thirty-six years. Because of who the author is, because of what the book of the Bible is that is explained, and because of the nature and content of the book itself, this publication will be one of the most important and worthwhile books that the RFPA has published.

### A Fascinating History

The story of the existence of Hoeksema's exposition of Romans

is fascinating. In the late 1930s, Hoeksema preached a series of sermons on the entire book of Romans. There were ninety-seven sermons in all, beginning with Romans 1:1-4 and concluding with Romans 16:25-27. Preaching the series must have taken nearly three years. These ninety-seven sermons are the content of the book that is soon to be published.

Internal evidence establishes the date of the series of sermons as the late 1930s. In a New Year's Eve sermon preached between the sermon on Romans 11:33-36 and the sermon on Romans 12:2, Hoeksema identified the year that was ending as 1938. In confirmation of this dating of the sermons are several references to Hitler and Mussolini in the later part of the series.

At this time, Hoeksema, who was born in 1886, was in his early fifties. He was at the height of his powers as an exegete, preacher, and theologian. This time was also the heyday of First Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, where Hoeksema was minister and to whom the sermons

were preached.

These sermons exist today because a member of First Church took them down as they were delivered, meticulously transcribed them in spiral notebooks, and saw to the preservation of these notebooks. The sermons were not recorded. Nor do Hoeksema's own outlines survive. When I began editing the manuscripts containing the sermons, I inquired after Hoeksema's own notes, or outlines. A search of Hoeksema's papers in the archives of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) failed to locate outlines of the Romans sermons. Evidently, these outlines have perished. If it were not for the farsighted, diligent work of the scribe who took the sermons down as they were preached and then preserved his copies, Hoeksema's valuable exposition of Romans would be lost to us.

The member of First Church to whom we are indebted for the commentary on Romans was Martin Swart. Swart and his family joined First PRC at the time of the common grace controversy in 1924, and he remained a member until his



death in 1977. Although he had only an eighth grade education, he became a learned man doctrinally—learned in the Reformed faith—under the teaching of Rev. Hoeksema and had a prominent place in First Church. He was elder many times. For many years he was president of the English Men's Society, which required him to write essays on profound theological subjects. A few years ago, the *Standard Bearer* published one of Martin Swart's essays.

Using his own system of shorthand, Mr. Swart took down the sermons as Hoeksema preached them. Old members of First Church report that the congregation and Hoeksema himself saw Swart, always in his accustomed seat, writing as Hoeksema was preaching. Immediately upon arriving home, Swart would write the sermon out in full using a pencil and sitting at the kitchen table. For an hour or so, he could not be disturbed. Later, he would transcribe the sermon in a spiral notebook, using an ink pen. At the top of each sermon are noted the text and the preacher. The notebooks are all numbered. And the handwriting is lovely and almost perfectly legible.

These notebooks survive. They survive because before his death

*Text: Romans 1:1-4*  
*Rev. H. Hoeksema*

*It is not known what is the beginning, and what is the origin of the Church at Rome. Certain it is that the Romish tradition, that Peter is the founder, and that he was the first bishop, cannot stand the test of scripture. We may believe, that if the Apostle Peter had been instrumental in establishing the Church at Rome, that at the time when Paul writes this Epistle, the Apostle Peter must still have been there, and that he must still have been, according to the Catholic claim, overseer of the Church. And that is impossible. For Paul would never interfere in an other man's work. And he*


*Excerpt from Hoeksema's first sermon on Romans  
 in the handwriting of Martin Swart.*

Martin Swart gave them to his son, Jim, who preserved them as carefully as had his father. A few years ago, Jim Swart was persuaded to give the RFPA access to the Romans sermons in these notebooks and the right to publish them in book form. For this permission, the RFPA is grateful.

To Martin Swart, we are deeply

indebted, for the Romans sermons of Herman Hoeksema are a treasure. The existence of these sermons and, presently, their publication are as significant and exciting as the discovery of a hitherto unknown series of sermons on Romans by John Calvin would be.

— DJE

(to be continued...) 

## Letters

### ■ H. Hoeksema and C. VanTil

**R**ev. Herman Hoeksema was a theologian and a thinker of no small ability. His formation of the Protestant Reformed Churches after 1924 showed that he was, together with Rev. H. Danhof, a leader of men. The Protestant Reformed Churches have continued to exist, even though a storm of separation agonized them.

Rev. Hoeksema and Dr.

Cornelius VanTil were mutual admirers. VanTil was a pastor in the Spring Lake CRC as his first charge.

When Professor VanTil attended worship services in Hoeksema's church, he would always sit up close to the front. Invariably, when Rev. Hoeksema would see him after he ascended the pulpit, he would always bow to him. It was a slow and dignified curtsy.

In 1993, on the one hundredth

anniversary of the founding of the Spring Lake congregation, VanTil attended and was a participant in the service.

G. VanderPloeg, my cousin, attended the celebrations. After the service, Dr. VanTil was accosted by VanderPloeg and was asked, "Do you still read the *Standard Bearer*?"

"Oh, yes," cried VanTil, "I read it all the time. It's the best theological journal around."

(Rev.) Nicolas Vogelzang  
 Rehoboth, New Mexico



## ■ A Militant Meditation


The current issue of the *Standard Bearer* (Nov. 15, 2001) throughout strikes powerful chords in the heart of the convinced, convicted child of God, but the first two articles ("Judgment over the Nations" and "Distress of Nations") specially deserve the widest dissemination. Such a formidable setting forth of the gospel commands to all who

hear that they must repent and believe not only causes the church to tremble and the world outside to seek shelter, but Satan must also quaver under such a barrage. On all hands he exults in evidence of apparent success as he deceives the nations, but quake he must when our Lord sends forth the cry of victory: "And when these things come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption

draweth nigh" (Luke 21:26).

Mark Nutter

A thankful reader from Texas

P.S. "Judgment over the Nations" is placed under the "Meditation" rubric, but it is hardly a quiet, contemplative reflection. If a set sectional heading must be honored in order to include such an article in the *Standard Bearer*, at least call it "A Militant Meditation." 

Day of Shadows

George M. Ophoff

# The Types of Scripture (3)

In our previous article we showed that those institutions and transactions of the old dispensation that are in Theology called *types* are in Scripture designated *shadows*. It is these Old Testament shadows, or prefigurations, which will be the object of our attention in our study of typology.

We now inquire into the character, nature, and function of the Old Testament shadows. In doing so we must take Scripture as our only guide, and not reason from premises to Scripture.

### Definition of the terms used to designate the shadows

Concerning the shadows of the old dispensation, Scripture furnishes us with firsthand information. We shall set out by taking a look at the terms which Scripture uses to signify the prefigurations of the Old Testament. The terms

simile (*parabolee*), shadow (*skia*), antitype (*antitypos*) are of importance. From these names we may derive a proper and adequate definition of the prefigurations under discussion. These very names are expressive of their character and function.

The types were shadows. A shadow is a deprivation of light, representing the form of a body which intercepts the rays of light. The shadow is unreal and lacks substance. The body is the reality. There can be no shadow without the body. The appearance of the shadow is absolutely dependent upon the presence of the body. If there were no body, there could be no shadow. Further, although unreal and unsubstantial, the shadow is nevertheless a representation of the body. Between the two there is a resemblance.

The prefigurations of the old dispensation were likewise not the realities. The body, so the apostle Paul asserted, is Christ. He is the truth, the reality, and the substance of the shadowy institutions and transactions of the Old Testament. Further, as there can be no shadow without a body, so there would

have been no types without the Christ. As the body casts the shadow, so the Christ is responsible for the appearance of the Old Testament types. The Christ even then was there. Israel, during its wanderings in the desert, drank from the spiritual rock which was Christ. So we read: "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (I Cor. 10:4). Thus, in the old dispensation Christ, as it were, was casting His shadow. He Himself did not appear until the fullness of time when the Word became flesh. Nevertheless, He was there, from the very beginning, yea, from everlasting. His anointing is a matter of eternity.

As the shadow is a representation of the body, i.e., its shadowy replica, so the Old Testament shadows were, likewise, copies, patterned after the body or model, Christ and the realities centering in Him.

Now then, the term *antitype*. The preposition *anti* signifies *over against* or *opposite to*. The meaning of the term *type* has already been given. A type is properly an *im-*

---

*George Ophoff was Professor of Old Testament Studies in the Protestant Reformed Seminary in its early days. Reprinted here, in edited form, are articles which Ophoff wrote at that time for the Standard Bearer.*



pression. The shadows of the Old Testament were impressions or images of objects and realities of a higher province. The shadows stood, as it were, opposite or over against the realities (the antitypes) of which they were the impression.

The term *simile*, literally *parable* (*parabolee*), also denotes that the shadows were pictures or images of objects of a higher realm.

There is one more term to which we call attention. The term *deiyima*, meaning a *thing shown, brought to view or representation*, is also used in Scripture to designate the shadows.

### **The shadows as prophetic images**

The above terms are not the only source of information about the character and function of the shadows. The epistle to the Hebrews is a commentary on the types. Let it be said that the terms which we have been studying do not compel one to conclude that the shadows of the old dispensation were images of events of a future epoch. In other words, the terms as such do not indicate that the shadows were prophetic images. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews makes it plain, however, that such was indeed the case. We quote the following: "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Heb. 8:7-10).

Mention is made of two covenants — the first, and the better. Peculiar to the former was the shadows. The better covenant consisted in this, that God put His laws into their minds and wrote them in their hearts. These were events of a coming day, however. Of these events, lying in the future, the types of the first covenant were shadows. It is plain that the shadows of the old covenant were at once prefigurations, that is, prophetic symbols of better things to come.

### **The shadows as symbols**

Now the question is in order whether the prophetic types or shadows of the old dispensation were also symbols — the term symbol now taken in the theological sense. That is, do the shadows not only (as *types*) prefigure future objects and events but also (as *symbols*) signify present realities? Our answer is ready. The elements constituting the sum total of the shadows of the old dispensation did indeed symbolize or signify present realities. The typical institutions and transactions served a twofold purpose. They prefigured future realities and objects of a higher province; and they exhibited to the believer of the old dispensation the spiritual realities of the covenant of grace and demonstrated to him the great principles of sin and redemption. Let us give a few examples: the rite of circumcision was a visible demonstration of, i.e., symbolized, regeneration; Levitical purity symbolized holiness; the fumes of incense, the prayers of the believers. The lamb and the priest, on the other hand, prefigured the Christ.

One can regard the slaying of the sacrificial animal as a symbol of the mortification of the old man of sin. This may be done. Scripture calls the sufferings and death of Christ that were typified by the sacrificial victim a model, pattern, or example of the sufferings of the believer in this world. "For even

hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example (*tupon*), that ye should follow his steps" (I Pet. 2:21). And then this Scripture: "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). Passages such as these clearly indicate that we may regard the crucifixion of Christ as a model or example of the crucifixion of the flesh by the believer. We are not losing out of sight that the death of our Savior was more than a pattern or example. His death was the meritorious cause of our salvation. We are also bearing in mind that there is a vast difference between the character, nature, and purpose of the sufferings of Christ and the sufferings of the believer.

Since the sufferings of Christ were an example of the sufferings of the believer, it follows that the types of the Old Testament may be looked upon as symbols of the believer's moral death.

Let us now connect up with our main thought. We said that the types of the Old Testament were at once symbols of existing or present realities. This must be true, for the shadows were prefigurations of future objects, events, and realities. Hence, there was a resemblance, as to form and content, as to the shell as well as to the kernel, between the shadows and the matters prefigured. It follows, therefore, that the shadows demonstrated the same great truths permeating the objects and events typified.

### **Character and function of the shadows**

We are now prepared to make a statement concerning the character of the shadows of the old dispensation. The shadows were phenomena which God caused to appear for a threefold purpose:

In the first place, they exhibited to the believers of the old covenant the fundamental truths of God's economy of redemption.


In the second place, the shad-



ows prefigured those objects and events of the gospel which were due to appear in the fullness of time.

Finally, the shadows of the Old Testament were made to appear for the benefit of the believers of the new covenant as well. To them also they are vehicles of much valu-

able instruction.

Thus not only the character but also the function of the shadows has been set forth. 

*In His Fear*

*Rev. Richard Smit*

## A Weapon of Mass Destruction

**T**errorist controlled aircraft, anthrax-laced letters, yellow cluster bombs, and cruise missiles we recognize as weapons of mass destruction.

Who has not recently seen terrorist-controlled aircraft, fully laden with jet fuel, puncturing skyscrapers and completely destroying them along with thousands of people? We are all fully aware of the potential for destruction and massive loss of life from a nuclear missile attack. We are shocked at the sight of explosions, destruction, large death tolls, and the grievous earthly suffering of men, women, and children. We shudder at the thought of a widespread epidemic sparked by bio-terror bombs. We tremble and worry at the thought of such weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists.

However, do we shudder similarly at the thought that we have in our own possession a weapon of mass destruction which can create more destruction and suffering than a worldwide terrorist network or a rogue nation?

Our tongue, when in bondage to the power of our sin, is a weapon of mass destruction.



We are warned in Scripture that the evil tongue is more deadly than many spores of anthrax. Disease-control experts inform us that when one is infected by anthrax and is treated promptly, he will recover. However, when one has been infected by a poisonous dart from our evil tongue, there is instant destruction and death in our victims. The Lord tells us that the tongue is "an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:8). Only a miracle by the power of the reconciling mercy and grace of Christ can restore them.

That means that the unruly tongue causes devastation on the scale of a weapon of mass destruction. The Scriptures show that the evil tongue is "a fire, a world of iniquity ... and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (James 3:6).

What makes this little weapon of mass destruction so terrifying is that, under the control of sin and Satan, the tongue is worse than a sly and vicious terrorist network. There is no warplane, no bunker-busting bomb, no elite military force that can stop this unruly terror. The tongue is something that no man can tame (James 3:8).

The false tongue is an untamable power to spread the poison of false doctrine against the church. The Lord warns His church of false prophets "who priv-

ily shall bring in damnable heresies" (II Pet. 3:1). By them "the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (II Pet. 2:2). Many there are that have been led astray by the smooth tongues of false prophets and teachers. Many are destroyed for lack of the true knowledge of Jehovah. Many wander hopelessly in a severe famine of the Word. Such is the doctrinal destruction which a false tongue can bring.

In addition, the terror that an untamable, ungodly tongue unleashes is also dreadful. The backbiting tongue (Prov. 26:28) efficiently destroys the brother's good reputation and often rashly judges and condemns the brother without his being properly and completely heard. The backbiting tongue will embellish stories, sensationalize the facts, and even, if necessary, slander the brother behind his back with all manner of half-truths. Instead of covering the transgression of the brother in love with wisdom, the evil tongue repeats the transgression to others. By this, very friends are separated (Prov. 17:9), and the blood of many runs in a steady stream.

One of the common results of the unruly tongue is the destruction of trust. We may have built up with someone a relationship of trust like a strong building. Then quickly, by that little weapon of mass destruction filled with burn-



ing hatred, we crush the relationship into a heap of rubble. Not only can we do that to our own relationships, but in short order we can also destroy the trust in the friendships of others. Sometimes our tongue cuts so deeply that a scar remains in the one we have injured until the grave. Former trust lies in a crumbled ruin. The fragile enjoyment of unity, peace, and love with brethren in the Lord is quickly fractured or completely shattered. Restoring former trust becomes a grievous task in the face of daunting obstacles.

Indeed, our little weapon of mass destruction can quickly damage marriages, homes, or friendships so that the spiritual life of that relationship more closely looks like a war zone. The spiritual landscape of the relationships of our school children can sometimes resemble the charred remains of a forest fire.

In addition to the damage we do to others, great damage is often done to our own souls by our sinful tongue. Our lying tongue can quickly get itself tangled up in great misery. Often the first lie must be covered up by a second, third, and maybe more. Farther and farther away from God we stray. Greater our misery mushrooms. More widespread the damage becomes.

Indeed, we ought to be frightened by that little weapon of mass destruction. Great is its power, and great is its devastation. Recognizing this weapon's potential, we must by the strength and wisdom of Christ keep it in check.

In that wisdom, let us heed the Word. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). "For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile" (I Pet. 3:10). Let us keep our tongues from evil, and our lips from speaking guile (Ps. 34:13).

Therefore, the Lord forbids that

we become spiritual terrorists who work mass destruction by a deadly tongue among His redeemed people.



Instead, our Redeemer and Lord requires that we use our tongues as a tool for good. The godly use of our tongues must be worth "choice silver" (Prov. 10:20), so that our tongue by faith is a "tree of life" (Prov. 15:4), full of delightful, refreshing, and good fruit to the hearers.

The Lord calls us to use our tongues to speak the truth in love and in wisdom. Negatively, that means that we may not gleefully dredge up "dirt" with which to load our tongues in order to launch deadly missiles on another for our entertainment or to make us look better. Even though the damaging stories may be true, yet when it is said, and said in hatred besides, it cannot profit. It can only damage us spiritually, not to mention the damage it will inflict on our victims.

Rather, the Lord commands us to speak the truth *in love*. That means that when we speak we must always do so in the consciousness of our God, who is love. We must be filled with a consciousness of His holiness and righteousness, and of the unfathomable love by which He sent His only begotten Son to redeem us from our sin. In that understanding of true love, we are called to speak as God's children who are knit unto Him in holy fellowship by His Holy Spirit. This principle reminds us that the love which must govern the use of our tongues must always be, first and foremost, the love of God. If that is not true, then our tongue is basically a weapon against God and His Word. Such a tongue, the Lord warns, He will cut out (Prov. 10:31). Let us use our tongues in

harmony with our Father's holiness, righteousness, and truth.

That means that when we speak in love, we must carefully choose our words. Perhaps, when asked a question by another about some other person, we must say nothing at all. Or, when we speak in love about another outside of his presence, we must speak in great humility and in the knowledge that our righteous Father hears every word we speak.

There may be occasions when we meet an unbeliever. We may have to confront someone walking in sin of some sort. Situations may arise when the truth of the Reformed faith and the glory of God's name are at stake. In those situations, we must speak the truth in love by using our tongue to give an answer of our hope or a proper rebuke in a desire for the spiritual welfare of the hearer.

Such a tongue, governed by love of Christ, is powerful for good. In Proverbs 25:15 we learn that "a soft tongue breaketh the bone." The soft tongue is compared to a hammer that pulverizes bones. One might think that once the tongue is under the dominion of grace, it no longer destroys. Yet, the soft tongue's great power and effect are good.

That soft tongue, which is directed by the love, longsuffering, and mercy of Christ is a mighty weapon to smash the hard bones of pride and unbelief in the wayward children of God. Among the communion of the saints, we must use our tongues for the spiritual welfare of our fellow saints. Perhaps we give a gentle rebuke, or at another time a hard admonition which cuts like a

knife. Though the immediate result by the working of the Spirit may be grievous and may even be met with resistance, yet the ultimate effect by the grace of God will be conversion, repentance, humil-

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ity, obedience, and peace in the children of God.

In addition, the godly tongue is a spiritual power to destroy the strongholds and evil works of the devil. A tongue speaking the truth shakes the foundations of the gates of darkness and leaves the wicked without excuse. A tongue governed by faith and the love of Jesus Christ will rebuke the works of the carnal world. When the child of God does that, he ought not be surprised by persecution or mockery from the world, because all that will live godly and speak the truth will suffer persecution.

Always the use of our tongues must seek the goal of edification. The apostle Paul admonishes us that there should proceed out of our mouths only that "which is


good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers" (Eph. 4:29). We must desire to build up our fellow saints by speaking to them those things which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. Or, when our fellow saints are in a grievous trial, we may by the godly use of our tongue "be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Cor. 1:4). This profitable use of the tongue is always pleasing unto the Lord.



Briefly, that is the calling which the Lord demands of us as His people. To turn from that calling

results in a tongue that destroys and causes strife, grief, problems, and much anguish. Obedience to this calling promotes spiritual healing, trust, peace, unity, and love among the saints, and it gives a faithful witness to those around us.

Indeed, what a blessing when our Lord Jesus Christ by His grace and Spirit grants us that spiritual maturity in the life of sanctification to use our tongues for building up one another and praising His name. Godly tongues like that are worth more than all the choice silver and gold that this earth can afford.

May the Lord call us by His irresistible grace to use our tongues as tools for good, for His glory and for the comfort of one another in our salvation in Christ. 

*Marking the Bulwarks of Zion*

*Prof. Herman Hanko*

## Desiderius Erasmus and Humanism (1)

### Introduction

**I**t is time to turn from the Medieval Period in the history of doctrine and concentrate on the time of the Reformation. The Medieval Period, with few exceptions, was a barren period theologically, and little can be learned from it when one is pursuing the development of the truth of God's Word. Heretics abounded, but the answers to heretics were not to be found.

The Reformation is a different sort of period. During the time of

the first generation Reformers, God, through them, restored His truth in the church and restored the church itself to what it ought to be to conform to the Scriptures. In the beginning of the Reformation, the work which Luther especially did in leading the church of Christ back to the fountain of all truth in the sacred Scriptures was work which had to, and did, point out the truth over against Roman Catholicism. But once that had been done, the Reformers were forced to deal with heretics of many different stripes, some of whom fought against Reformation doctrine from within the citadel of the Romish Church, and some of whom joined the Reformation movement, but, in the course of time, betrayed it.

One of the more interesting heretics was Desiderius Erasmus, sometimes called the Prince of the Humanists. He was a contemporary of Luther, in fact, sixteen years older than the German Reformer, but he played a major role in the development of Reformation truth.

### The Early Life and Education of Erasmus

While a Roman Catholic biographer claims that Erasmus was "a natural son of a priest," this is misleading and false. In fact, Erasmus was born out of wedlock, the youngest child of a Roman Catholic priest by the name of Gerard and a physician's daughter named Margaret. How many children these two had is not known.

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Erasmus was born in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, where his father served as a priest. His birth date was October 27, either 1466 or 1467.

Erasmus was well-cared for by his parents, until their death when Erasmus was yet a young boy. He was robbed of his inheritance by a guardian and was forced into a convent. Yet, in spite of these sad events, he received the best education available in his land. This education was first in the cathedral school in Rotterdam, then in Deventer, with the Brethren of the Common Life. This latter group was a significant and influential group of mystics who emphasized piety and inner religion rather than the cold, outward formalism of the Romish Church. Education among these people left an indelible mark on Erasmus.

He early showed a love for the ancient Latin classics and an amazingly retentive memory. These classics were, of course, the pagan classics of old Roman authors: Cicero, Livy, and the like. The school in Deventer was, though emphasizing inner piety, not averse to such study of pagan authors.

Nor ought it to surprise us that such studies occupied Erasmus. The Renaissance had taken Europe by storm, and the movement had been embraced by the church, presumably in an effort to baptize classical pagan culture with the religion of Rome. The Renaissance was characterized by a return to Greek and Roman classical culture, particularly the literature of these long-gone centuries. Many within the church not only attempted to incorporate the ideas of pagan thought into the theology of the church, but even saw in classical learning the means whereby the church could be cleansed from its corruption and reformed in morals and worship.

Erasmus, taken in by the lofty thoughts of pagan philosophers, poets, litterateurs, and essayists,

found himself in the latter camp. Erasmus was a man of the Renaissance.

### **Erasmus' Later Life**

After completing his studies with the Brethren of the Common Life, Erasmus was ordained to the priesthood. This was about 1490, when he was 25 years old. Although he remained an ordained priest all his life, he never assumed an active part in the work of a priest, nor performed even one priestly function. He never had a parish of his own, and the work of the parish ministry was totally foreign to him. He did, however, receive a papal dispensation to abandon his position as a monk and his oath to remain a member of the monastery. Perhaps the only good thing he gained from his life in a monastery was an intense dislike of monastic life and a bitter hatred for the corruptions he had seen all about him among the monks.

He chose instead to pursue his studies, chiefly in Paris at the famous University of Paris, where he earned his doctorate. By that time Erasmus became so enamored with his studies and with learning for its own sake that he resolved to spend the whole of his life as a free and independent scholar. And this is what he did – the rest of his life till he died in 1536.

### **His Interests**

Erasmus boasted of this fact. He boasted of the fact that he was free from home life, free from attachment to any school, free from family, free from any occupation, free from citizenship in a country, and free from the toils of daily work. He was a scholar, a professional scholar, one who could spend all his time developing his intellect and pursuing his studies in any direction he chose. He could write at leisure and never under the pressures of deadlines. He could write as he pleased and what he pleased and he needed to give

account to no one for what he wrote. He once wrote to a friend: "When I get a little money I buy books; and if any is left I buy food and clothes." He was what Paul would probably call a man ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth. He claimed to be and was a man of the world, a true cosmopolitan. No country could claim him. The church could not snare him, not even by offering him a cardinal's hat. He spoke and wrote in Latin. He never learned another language, either French or German or Italian. In fact, he spoke his native tongue, Dutch, with difficulty and poorly. But his Latin was elegant and stylish, and that was, after all, the language of Europe's intelligentsia.

This did not mean that Erasmus did not travel. He traveled to Italy, where he spent a few years and published a few works. He lived chiefly in Venice and came to think of it as the most beautiful city in the world. He made two trips to England, during the first of which he met such leading English Humanists as John Colet and Thomas More. During his second visit he occupied the chair of Lady Margaret professor of divinity in Cambridge, one of the more prestigious chairs in England's universities. He was offered a permanent appointment to this chair, and the whole of England would have been flattered if he had accepted. But he declined in the interests of maintaining his freedom.

Because Switzerland was the one country more than any other which welcomed freedom of thought, he finally settled in Basle, on the German French border. There Erasmus made a lifelong friend in Forbet, who became his printer and publisher, his confidant and friend.

### **His Errors**

Now, there are some things that ought to be said about all this.



The life of a scholar may be something which appeals to some people, and, indeed, it appealed to Calvin, who nearly had to be dragged into the work of the Reformation by Farel, the Reformer of Geneva. But Paul is not being complimentary when he speaks of those who are ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth. A man is given his place in the church to work on behalf of the cause of Christ and his own fellow saints. Study is good; but study without work in the maelstrom of the fighting kingdom here on earth is useless.

Erasmus would perhaps agree with what I have said, but he would also refuse to apply such a characterization to himself. He was persuaded that the evils in the Romish Church, and there were many, could be rooted out through genuine scholarly learning, preferably learning rooted in the past. This is not true. It is a sort of Humanist principle that man's improvement is rooted in education, a theory tried repeatedly in a foolish world that perpetually looks to its schools to solve the moral, ethical, and social problems of life. Erasmus was content to apply his principle to the church, and he was persuaded that a thoroughly educated

clergy, with the roots of its learning in Aristotle and Cicero, would automatically bring about morally upright priests and genuine reform in the church. He was dead wrong. It is a Pelagian heresy which leads men to think this.

Freedom to live as one pleases, to write and teach without any constraint, to be independent of any institution or country, may seem to some like an idyllic life; but it is wicked for all that, and is rooted in pride. The simple fact is that, especially in the church, God gives us the communion of the saints for a good purpose. Ev-

ery one of us needs the others in the household of faith. We may not and cannot be independent. If we insist on our independence we will go astray. The church of which we are a part, our responsibilities in it, our work on its behalf, our labors with others in the church, all act as a check on our natural tendency to dart off in this theological direction or that moral error. Erasmus' pride was also his intellectual downfall.

But his most serious flaw was his Humanism. In what is probably an oversimplification, Humanism teaches that man is the center of the universe: that he is given the world for his benefit, that he has the means to control it, that it is here for his personal enjoyment, and that his own personal welfare is the only legitimate goal of all his activity.

While I am not so much interested in all this now, this Humanism in the men of the Renaissance gave them a love for classical learning which lifted the writings of mere pagans to the level of God's own truth. In these pagan writers, so it was said, was to be found right knowledge, high moral standards, truth concerning God and man, a rich mine of learning which could be inte-

grated with the Christian faith to the enrichment of theology. The Roman Catholic Church as a whole accepted this view, and some of the leading patrons of such learning were Rome's popes.

It is not so surprising that Erasmus, along with his fellow Humanists, should think this; the same view is held today by those who hold to common grace. A grace of God, operative in pagan men and women, enables them to produce works of culture pleasing to God and of use to the church. Such grace, in the arena of thought and ideas, produces truth — no, Truth,


with a capital T. Already in my college days we were given instruction on how to bring about "the marriage of Athens and Jerusalem."

But let it be clear: this is Humanism. And Humanism destroys the church of Christ.

All of this does not mean that Erasmus did not gain fame, honor, and wealth in his lifetime. He was the most famous man in Europe. Every university, with the exception of those that hated his efforts to reform, coveted his position on the faculty. The learned and mighty of Europe counted it an honor if he would deign to answer their correspondence. Kings and princes sought his advice, and even they thought a personal interview with Erasmus was the epitome of honor. Popes and prelates did homage to his learning and wanted his counsel on ecclesiastical affairs. He was recognized as Europe's most learned man and was so adored that some came perilously close to deifying him.

Although in his earlier years he had to teach and depend on the kindness of wealthy friends for his livelihood, as his fame increased, so did his wealth. The rich and the famous, the powerful and the mighty, showered him with gifts and money, until he was so wealthy that he could, upon his death, leave a sizable estate.

Schaff writes, "He combined native genius, classical and biblical learning, lively imagination, keen wit, and refined taste. He was the most cultivated man of his age, and the admired leader of scholastic Europe from Germany to Italy and Spain, from England to Hungary."

We have described something of the life of Erasmus. But the one event in his life, which more than any other had its influence on the Reformation, is yet to be discussed. That must wait till next time. 

*Study is good;  
but study  
without work  
in the maelstrom  
of the  
fighting kingdom  
here on earth  
is useless.*



# Saving Faith — A Living Connection with Christ (1)

**A**s we continue our study of the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation, we come to the doctrine of saving faith.

For a man to be born again by the wonderwork of regeneration is quite obviously the work of God and God alone. We contribute nothing to our spiritual birth. The fact that God calls us from darkness into His marvelous light (II Pet. 2:9) must also be the work of God.

But when it comes to faith, many seem to think that we speak now of *man's* work in salvation. It is important, therefore, that we give careful attention to the Bible's teaching concerning saving faith.

## The Living Graft of Salvation

When treating the order in which the various benefits of salvation in Christ are applied, most theologians focus on the *activity* of faith. That is why faith comes after regeneration and calling.

But it is a serious mistake, and one that has had dreadful consequences in the church of our day, to look at faith only as that activity by which we lay hold of Christ. To look at faith merely as the act of believing is unavoidably to make faith *man's* work.

Faith is, first of all and essentially, the bond that unites us to

the living Christ. Faith is emphatically the work of the Holy Spirit by which He unites us with Christ, making us a partaker of the life of Christ. It is that to which the Heidelberg Catechism first speaks when it unfolds the truth concerning faith. In answer to the question (Q.20), "Are all men then, as they perished in Adam, saved by Christ," the Catechism answers, "No, only those who are ingrafted into Him, and receive all His benefits, by a true faith."

From our study of God's Word and from our own experience as Christians, one thing should be very clear: By the time the elect sinner comes to a conscious, active faith in Christ, much has already taken place.

There are many, many pictures in everyday life that point to this same phenomenon.

The skyscrapers that form the skylines of our major cities are much bigger than we see with our eyes. There are deep foundations, often several stories below the ground, which support the part that we see above the ground.

When you look at a flower or at the wheat growing in a farmer's field, you know that much has taken place before those plants became a beauty to your eyes. The seed was planted and sprouted. It took root and grew downward toward its life's source, before it ever broke through the ground and developed for the human eye to behold.

All of these examples serve as parables to illustrate this spiritual truth: By the time faith has become active in you as a matter of a certain, spiritual knowledge and a blessed, living confidence that all that wonderful salvation in Jesus Christ is also for you, there is very much that has already taken place in the hidden recesses of your heart. A wonderful, regenerating work of divine grace precedes the conscious activity of faith in the child of God.

Faith is active, of course. Faith is knowledge and confidence. Faith is believing, coming to Christ, persevering, obedience. Faith is all that and more! But, behind all that manifestation, behind all that spiritual activity, there is so very much!

## A Necessary and Inseparable Distinction

That is why a distinction in the concept *faith* is proper and altogether scriptural. When we speak of the principle or bond of faith and the conscious activity of faith, we do not separate the two. In the previously mentioned figures we speak of the foundation and the superstructure, the seed and the plant — distinguishing between the two but not separating. So faith and believing, principle or bond and conscious act, are related and inseparable but distinct.

That our Reformed fathers saw this distinction is evident throughout our confessions.

Not only is it evident where the



Heidelberg Catechism speaks of the graft of faith, through which we receive all Christ's benefits, but it is evident also in our Belgic Confession. There in Article 22, which speaks "Of Faith in Jesus Christ," we read of faith "which embraces Jesus Christ with all His merits, appropriates Him, and seeks nothing more besides Him." That, obviously, is the activity of faith. But in that same article, we confess this: "And faith is an instrument that keeps us in communion with Him in all His benefits."

And over against the Arminians, the Reformed church fathers at the Synod of Dordt in 1618/19 adopted this Article concerning faith (the Third and Fourth Head of Doctrine, Article 14): "Faith is therefore to be considered as the gift of God, ... because He who works in man both to will and to do, and indeed all things in all, produces both the will to believe and the act of believing also."

The establishment of that bond of faith is that which gives us the power to believe, just as sight is the power to see. You may not always be seeing. In fact, there are times when your eyes are closed. But even when your eyes are closed and you are not seeing, you do have the power to see. So it is with faith. Although one may not yet believe, and his faith may not be active, if the bond of faith has been established, he has the power to believe.

### Grafted into Christ

The figure of a living graft is a thoroughly scriptural figure. The figure is simply that of taking a twig or a shoot of a tree and grafting it into another tree. That twig or shoot then lives out of that new tree, drawing its life and growing from that tree into which it has been grafted.

So it is that, by being grafted into Christ, we now become part-takers of the life of Christ.

God through His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the living Christ, first

uses the knife and cuts, separating you and me from the world. That separation comes in one quick cutting! It is not so, as so many would have it today, that we are weaned away from our sin gradually, so that we more and more begin to do a little good. No, the Lord makes separation immediately, even beneath our consciousness, when, as we read in Ezekiel 36, He takes the stony heart out of our flesh. He cuts you out of the tree of unrighteousness and ungodliness. And the Spirit, having cut you off, then takes you, the shoot which He has cut off and prepared, and grafts you into the tree of life which is Christ.

This is absolutely necessary. Why? Because all things that work salvation for us, all the benefits that we must receive, are in Christ. They are literally *in Christ*, who has died for us and risen again, and who now sits at the right hand of God, having received the living Spirit to pour out into His church.

We must have Christ! We must be connected with Him "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." That is the importance and necessity of that graft.

That graft binds us to Christ, to His life. Paul writes in Galatians 2:20: "...I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." In Christ alone is life.

You understand that, don't you? Life is not found in this world of death. Life is not found in people or things. Life is only in Christ. And if we are to have life, we must be grafted into Him, to receive all our sap, our life and substance, from Him, and to bear the fruits of His grace in our walk and talk. Let no man deceive you. This graft, this spiritual, living graft, is a matter of everlasting salvation.

### John 15:1-5

So we read of that graft in the

figurative words of Christ in John 15: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:1-5).

There are a couple things in particular that I would have you notice about this text.

In the first place, you may already have noticed that Jesus speaks of branches in Him that bear no fruit. Those branches are dead; they bear no fruit; He purges them; they are removed and burned. How can that be? These are dead branches *in Christ*: "Every branch *in me* that beareth not fruit he taketh away."

If we shall properly understand that, it is important to remember always to view the church — whether that be the body or the tree or vine, the church of Jesus Christ — as an organism.

Bear in mind the picture of the tree. There can be no doubt that the Savior here has in view His church as it exists in the world and manifests itself outwardly. These branches which are cut off are not in Christ spiritually. Then they could never perish. But they are branches in Christ *in their past generations*. And as children of believers, these branches constitute a part of the church organism, not spiritually, but outwardly and organically.

That is precisely what you find in the natural vine. You have branches there which are indeed in the vine, and yet bear no fruit. Christ uses that illustration with reference to the church.






God's church in the world is one organism, one vine. There are in the one vine fruitful branches and unfruitful branches. In the one outward people of God there are Israelites according to the flesh and Israelites according to the Spirit and of the promise, as Paul puts it in his letter to the Romans. Therefore, the unfruitful branches are branches which are obviously connected to the vine outwardly, but which are not connected by a living graft.

That is why it is so important, when we consider the figure of the living graft, that we realize that the graft must be precisely a *living* graft, a *spiritual bond*. That is faith as to its essence.

That bond of faith is not merely a pipeline. Christ does not simply pour the blessings of salvation through a pipe into the sinner. Faith isn't to be likened to the pipe that comes from the road to your house, a dead tube that merely allows water to flow into your home.

Saving faith is a *living* bond, a *living* connection.

By being grafted into Christ, we become a branch of the living vine which is Christ. And the branch established with the vine by that living graft of faith stands connected to Christ and lives out of Christ. That is what we are talking about when we speak of being grafted into Christ. That is the bond of faith, the living graft of salvation. It is God's work, and God's work alone. 

## Feature Article

Rev. Charles Terpstra

# The Believer's Role in Public Worship: Active Participant or Passive Spectator? (1)

## Introduction

**T**he topic before us may seem to be one that is relatively simple and clear, even free of any controversy. Who would possibly dispute that the believer is to be an active participant in the public worship of God?! And who would argue what the believer ought to be doing in the worship service, namely, praising and thanking God through singing, hearing the Word, prayer, and giving?

But the fact is that this subject is worthy of special and separate treatment. This is true for several reasons.

For one thing, criticism has been made regarding the believer's role

in what is called traditional worship services. The criticism is that the believer's role is too passive and insignificant. The pastors and elders are the only leaders and therefore the ones really involved in the worship service. They get to do things, while the Christian in the pew just sits there, passively watching things happen. The regular church member does not have an active role in this type of service.

In response to this, the contemporary church has opened up the worship services to more lay-member involvement. There are worship teams, made up of members who plan and prepare and lead the services. Young people are being asked to lead services. Children are being given a more visible role in certain services. This is the trend because that has been the criticism. We want to address that criticism and that trend.

But another reason why this subject deserves to be treated is that there is a real danger that we,

too, not only *think* the same way, namely, that our role is entirely passive, but also *act* this way in the worship of God. That is, the danger is present that we not be truly active in our worship, but just show up and let things happen. Or that we would go through the motions, so that we are active but not in the right way. Or that we would participate, but not consciously and fervently and gratefully — so that we are not thinking about what we are doing and why and for whom.

This passive way of thinking and participating is reflected in the fact that we often think our worship services are boring, unexciting, and even dead. Or when we talk about what we got or did not get out of the service, as if things are simply happening *to* us instead of *by* us. That too betrays a passive mentality.

So we want to be critical of ourselves too. That's why we believe this subject is worth pursuing further.

*Rev. Terpstra is pastor of First Protestant Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan.*



## A Vital Role

We begin by facing that criticism we mentioned in the introduction: that the believer in the traditional type of worship service to which we are accustomed does not have an active role. We want to assert over against this that the believer does have an active role, even a vital role.

The argument is that, because the pastor and elders lead the services and do most of the external, visible acts of worship, they are the only truly active ones in worship. And along with that, that because the persons in the pew do not lead or perform most of the outward acts, they are not active in worship.

There are several reasons why this is wrong thinking.

First, the implication is simply wrong. Just because someone else leads in an activity does not mean the ones being led are not active and participating. That would be similar to arguing that because a teacher leads the students in learning, the students are not active in the classroom. Or that because a father leads in family devotions at home, the rest of the family is not active and participating. You sense the weakness, even silliness, of the argument.

There are good reasons why the pastor and elders lead us in worship. They are the ones called by God to do this; this is part of their office. They are to oversee the public worship of God and to lead the congregation in the various elements of the service. God does not give this calling to any and every member of the congregation.

Specifically, the pastor is given the authority to lead the service because he is given the right to speak on God's behalf to the people, in the salutation and benediction, as well as in the preaching of the Word. Again, the believer is not given this authority in the worship service.

Besides, to have the elders leading the worship service is doing all

things in decency and in order, as the Scripture directs (I Cor. 14:40). The service can quickly become a chaotic circus if all kinds of people are leading the worship. That is, in fact, what has happened in many Reformed and Evangelical churches today. As a parade of people go up and down the aisles and the platform of the sanctuary, the fear of God is lost and the worship of God is distracted from.

Having the pastor and elders lead the worship services also prevents other problems, such as members vying for control on worship teams, or striving to gain a more visible role in the service, or trying to introduce unbiblical innovations into the worship of God.

But now, to assert this position is not to say that the believers have no active role in the worship service. They certainly do. That is what has to be stressed at this point. That this is so is evident from several points of view.

In the first place, it is evident from the viewpoint of the believer's salvation. When God saves His elect, His purpose is to make them a worshiping people, a people for the praise of His glorious grace (Eph. 1:6). And that is what His grace actually accomplishes (cf. Is. 43:21; I Pet. 2:9). How then could we not be active in worship if this is what God by His saving grace has made us and given us to be?!

A.W. Tozer, in his great little book on worship (*Whatever Happened to Worship: A Call to True Worship*), puts it this way, "Jesus was born of a virgin, suffered under Pontius Pilate, died on the cross, and rose from the grave to make worshipers out of rebels! He has done it all through grace. We are the recipients" (p. 11).

Therefore God gives His people an active role in worship, because this is what He has saved them for. His grace makes them worshipers

and enables them to worship Him in spirit and in truth. And all of Scripture reveals that this is what the saved believer does: he worships God, actively, consciously, no matter his specific place in the service. If you stand in grace, you do and you must participate in the worship of God!

In fact, we may say that there cannot be worship apart from a worshiping people! Worship implies worshipers! That is how vital our role is in worship. It is important that we remember this truth. If we have lost sight of our role, let us look at our salvation! If we have fallen into a passive mindset with regard to our place in public worship, or are bored with our traditional style, let us look at the grace of God to us in Jesus Christ!

In the second place, that the child of God has a vital role in worship is evident from the viewpoint of what public worship is (the nature of worship). We have in mind here especially the relationship between worship and the doctrine of the covenant. Two things we wish to bring out here.

For one thing, public worship is covenantal because it is the gathering together of the covenant people of God. Worship is a corporate affair because the people of God in the covenant of grace are a body, the body of Christ, the church. They are not so many individual worshipers, to worship by themselves and on their own. But by virtue of God's covenant they are

formed into a corporate worshiping people. That is why we gather together for public worship.

But that means, then, that worship belongs to the whole congregation, not to just a few people in the congregation, say, the adults; not to just the pastor and the elders. No, worship is the business of the whole church: the office-

*How could we not be active in worship if this is what God by His saving grace has made us and given us to be?*



bearers, the adult confessing members, the young people and children who are baptized members, these all participate.

That is one reason why we do not take the children out of our services or have them come forward during the service for "children's church." They are part of the worshipping congregation; they do participate! The same is true of our young people. We do not have to have a special worship service led by young people to have them become involved in worship or to make them feel more involved. They too are members of God's covenant and therefore are part of the worshipping congregation! In every service, every member of the covenant of grace is a worshiper, an active participant. That, too, is the vital place God gives to His people in worship.

For another thing (still in connection with the covenant of grace), we must also keep in mind that worship is covenant fellowship between God and His people in Jesus Christ. Or, as some have put it, it

is covenantal dialogue between God and His people.


That is, in our worship God comes to dwell with us and to reveal His saving communion with us. He draws near to us as our sovereign Friend and calls us to meet Him as His friend-servants; He walks and talks with us by his Spirit and Word. And we draw near to Him to walk with Him and talk with Him. Worship is intimate, conscious, covenantal fellowship!

This, too, shows the important place God gives to His people in worship. The fellowship of the covenant is mutual; it involves and must involve our activity. If we understand worship to be so, then you and I also know we are not and cannot be passive bystanders or observers. Things don't just happen around us and to us; but we are engaged actively in holy communion with God! If this is what worship is, how could we just sit there and do nothing?! Or be weary and bored?! Or think the service dead?!

In the third place, the believer's vital role in worship is also evident from all that the Scriptures say about worship and from the words that it uses to describe it. In the Bible, worship is not just a noun; it is a verb, and a transitive one at that. "To worship" is to be active and do something. The various words for worship in the Bible mean "to bow down to," "to kiss the hand toward," "to serve," "to show fear to, to honor and reverence," "to praise" – all activities!

Our English word "worship" means "to ascribe worth to," which implies active participation. The word "liturgy" does not refer simply to the form of worship and the layout of the elements, but it literally means "work of the people," again, pointing us to their vital role in worship.

From these three perspectives, then, we see that God's people have a vital role in the worship of God. They are not passive spectators at all, but most surely active participants.

(to be continued...) 

*That They May Teach Them to Their Children*

*Miss Agatha Lubbers*

## Establishing Schools to Provide Reformed Covenant Education (9)

**T**his article completes the review of the critique by Herman Hoeksema of the Specific Principles adopted in 1925 by the National Union of Christian Schools. The final article in the critique was published in the *Standard Bearer* of July 15, 1932.

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The previous article (Article 8) contained a review of the critique by Herman Hoeksema of NUCS Specific Principle 5. "The all-embracing objective of the school is to promote the glory of our covenant God: (a) by seeking in humble dependence upon God to equip the pupil for his supreme task, namely, to realize himself as God's image-bearer (2 Timothy 3:17); and (b) by seeking in that same dependence upon God to re-

constitute the sin-perverted world by realizing God's Kingdom in all spheres and phases of life (Matthew 6:33). This is possible at least in principle through Christ, who is not only the Creator (as the Logos) but also the re creator (John 1)."

The principle states that the all-embracing objective of the school is to promote the glory of our covenant God and to "equip the pupil to realize himself as God's image-bearer" and to "reconstitute the



sin-perverted world by realizing God's Kingdom in all spheres and phases of life." Although these statements may have some ring of the truth, we concurred with Herman Hoeksema that this is an incorrect principle because the student cannot realize himself as God's image-bearer and he cannot reconstitute the world and realize God's kingdom. This is God's work, not man's work.

Statements like those used in Specific Principle 5 arise from the belief of many in the Reformed camp who teach that natural man has not lost completely the image of God. Many believe the image of God can be understood in a wider sense than "true righteousness and holiness." However, it should be observed that the Reformed confessions are very specific in their instruction concerning the image of God in man.

The Canons of Dordt, in Articles 1-4 of the Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine, say that man was originally formed after the image of God. But man revolted from God and he forfeited his original excellent gifts. There remain in man the glimmerings of natural light, but it is a light that man in various ways renders wholly polluted. He holds it in unrighteousness, doing which he becomes inexcusable before God.

The Heidelberg Catechism is very specific in its instruction concerning the image of God in man. The Catechism defines the image of God as follows: "God created man good, and *after His own image, in true righteousness and holiness, that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him, and live with Him in eternal happiness to glorify and praise Him*" (Lord's Day 3). All this, man lost and instead became wicked and perverse. Instead of being the image-bearer of God, he became the bearer of the image of his spiritual father, Satan.

The Reformed confessions and the Scriptures teach that only those who are regenerated and are in

Christ Jesus are bearers of the image of God. The Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 3 teaches that we are so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness, except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God. Colossians 3:10 teaches that man can live as an image-bearer of God only because he is "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

Principle 5 could have been made much more specific and true to the Word of God if it had used the language of the Reformed confessions and the language of the Scriptures. Ephesians 2:5 declares concerning the child of God that he is "made alive in Christ," and it does not speak of "equipping the pupil to realize himself as God's image-bearer."

It may appear to some that the critique of Hoeksema is overly critical. Nonetheless, it is absolutely essential that the specific principles that describe the task of Reformed Christian schools be accurate and be in agreement with the Scriptures and the Reformed confessions. The language of Specific Principle 5 is very similar to the teaching of the postmillennial Christian Reconstructionists, who advocate the need for "culture transformation" and who speak of the need for "kingdom builders" preparing the world for the coming of Christ. If Hoeksema were living today, when the ideology of the Christian Reconstruction movement has become so prominent, he would oppose with vigor the teaching of those who advocate "culture transformation" and a "triumphant world-and-life-view." He would oppose the postmillennialists, who assert that Christ cannot return until the world has been prepared for Him and all institutions have been reconstructed or reconstituted and made Christian. Considered from this perspective, one ought to understand and appreciate Hoeksema's critique of Specific Principle 5 and his revision of this

principle. In the revision he wrote that the task of the school is to "equip the pupil with that knowledge and wisdom which is necessary in order that he may be able to walk in the midst of the world worthy of the vocation wherewith God calls His people." This is the language of Scripture and the confessions.

In this connection we ought to notice that students in a Reformed Christian school must be taught, when they pray "Thy kingdom come," to believe what the Heidelberg Catechism teaches concerning the coming of the kingdom. Lord's Day 48 says concerning this as follows: "Rule us so by Thy Word and Spirit, that we may submit ourselves more and more to Thee." This means simply that Protestant Reformed Christian schools must teach the students that are ruled by the Spirit of God to live God-fearing lives in every area of human existence — the home, the school, work, government. It is in this way that the kingdom comes. The Reformed Christian student must learn that the rule of God and the coming of the kingdom begins with a personal commitment to the teaching of Scripture and that the "kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).



This brings us to the consideration of the Specific Principle 6 adopted by the NUCS in 1925.

"In determining the Course of Study to be offered, in preparing the lesson material, in giving daily instruction, the above purpose should be considered as the all-embracing objective. To accomplish this great task, the teacher must have the fear of God in his heart, and the determination to live it out in his profession, and he must utilize to the full whatever light God's special revelation sheds upon the various realms of human knowledge."

Concerning this statement



Hoeksema says that the last part of the principle, which describes the necessary qualification of the teacher, presents something very desirable. A teacher must have the fear of God in his heart and he must have the determination to live it out in his profession. Hoeksema states that, although this may be desirable, and this is the kind of teacher the school board ought to employ, it is possible that one who does not have these qualities can be successful in carrying out the Course of Study.

This is formally true, i.e., that the teacher who does not have the qualities cited in Specific Principle 6 can carry out the Course of Study. However, I have learned after fifty years of work in the Christian school that it is requisite that the Christian teacher must be a God-fearing man or woman. God commands that all His people must live what they confess, and such consistency is especially true for teachers. Teachers must be good examples and live their instruction. The apostle Paul, speaking to Titus on the isle of Crete, commands him to be a good example of the doctrine that he teaches. "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned..." (Tit. 2:7, 8). Although the apostle Paul is addressing a minister in the church, the qualities that he describes are the qualities that are requisite for teachers in the Christian school.

In his critique of Specific Principle 6, Hoeksema states that the circumscription of the qualifications of the teacher cannot serve as the working principle for the school boards in the appointment of teachers. To prove his contention, Hoeksema applies to the members of the school boards the Latin phrase that he indicates is well known in ecclesiastical circles: *De intimis non judicant curator scholae grammaticae* (i.e., school boards do not judge the secret things of the

heart). Because no one can know the secret things of the heart, school board members cannot discern the inmost recesses of the heart of the teachers they employ. It is quite impossible for anyone to know whether the applicant for a teaching position has the fear of God in his heart and whether he has the determination to live it out in his profession.

Although all of this is true, it is true that just as one knows a tree by its fruits, so the school board will soon know the teacher by his works. God certainly uses weak and sinful means, but the impenitent and proud will not last long in the school where parents and school boards desire teachers that are both good instructors and good examples to the students.

With these reservations and special concerns I present Principle 6 as it was revised by Herman Hoeksema.

6. In determining the Course of Study of the Christian School the principles heretofore set forth should be adopted as the basis for the entire curriculum. And of the teacher, upon whom rests the responsible task of carrying out this Course of Study, it shall be required, that he present a testimonial from a consistory of a Reformed Church and a diploma from a Reformed Normal School. It shall also be required of him that he express full and whole-hearted agreement with the basic principles heretofore set forth and that he declare his purpose to make of the teaching profession no stepping-stone, but his life-task.

The essence of Principle 6, rewritten by Hoeksema, has become determinative for the Protestant Reformed Christian schools. Because this principle was written in 1932, almost seventy years ago, some aspects of the statement have been modified in the practice of the schools. In the first place, Protestant Reformed Christian schools require that the teacher be a confess-

ing member in good standing in a Protestant Reformed church, not merely a Reformed church. In the second place, a diploma from a Reformed Normal School is not the norm. The Normal School (the name given to teacher training colleges in the days when this principle was written) does not exist. Many of the teacher applicants for positions in the Protestant Reformed Christian schools have graduated from public universities that train students for work in the state or public schools, and therefore the instruction the students have received is totally humanistic. Some applicants who have graduated from colleges that are Reformed in name have not received training that is distinctively and consistently Reformed. In the third place, teachers are not required to declare that they intend to make of the teaching profession their life-task. School boards cannot do this, and teachers have left the teaching profession with legitimate reasons.

At the end of his series of articles written in the early 1930s Herman Hoeksema presented his entire platform of principles as he had revised them. Although these principles have been published in previous articles, the first five are republished here for your study and consideration.

1. The Bible is from the beginning to end the written Word of God, given by infallible inspiration. All school administration, instruction, and discipline shall be based on it and permeated by its teaching, for we acknowledge that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.
2. God, who created and sustains all things and governs them according to His sovereign counsel; who is triune and, as such, lives an eternal covenant-life of friendship in infinite perfection; from eternity chose and in time forms a people unto Himself, to stand in covenant-relationship unto Him in Christ Jesus their Lord, that they might walk in all good works which He ordained for them and



in all their life in the world should be to the praise of His glory, children of light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

3. From a fallen and wholly depraved human race, and in the midst of a world that lieth in darkness, a crooked and perverse generation, God saves His elect, establishing His covenant with them and their children in the line of continued generations, forming them by His sovereign grace in Christ into a people of Himself, that they might be His friends, and, living in every sphere of life from the principle of regeneration through faith, they should show forth His praises and walk as children of light in the world.

4. In the midst of and in distinction from the evil world that lieth in darkness and is perverse in all its ways because of sin, it is the calling of the people of God to live by grace from the principle of regeneration according to the will of God in every sphere of life, individual, family, social, industrial, political, and ecclesiastical, so that they may be children of light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Hence, they insist that all the education, that must prepare their children for such an all-sided Christian walk in the world, should be adapted to this purpose.

5. It is the objective of the Christian School to furnish the pupil with an education which in all its branches is rooted in the principle of the fear of God as the beginning of wisdom; and thus to co-labor, in its proper domain, alongside of and in distinction from the home and church, to equip the pu-

pil with that knowledge and wisdom which is necessary in order that he may be able to walk in the midst of the world worthy of the vocation wherewith God calls His people, and that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.



The Protestant Reformed Churches were only seven years old when the articles that have been reviewed were written — articles that resulted in the composition of the revised specific principles written by Herman Hoeksema to regulate Reformed Christian instruction. Herman Hoeksema prepared the seminal statements as revisions of the specific principles of the NUCS because he believed the original principles contained concepts that were developed under the influence of the theory of common grace. This theory, which the Christian Reformed Church had adopted in 1924, states that God has a favorable attitude toward all men, and that God performs a gracious work upon the hearts of unbelievers in the world without saving them. Thus they are not totally depraved and have not lost completely the image of God. In this way God restrains sin in reprobate man so that he is able to do good deeds and therefore lead an outwardly good life and produce a good culture. The idea of common grace advocates is that the Calvinist would, for the sake of God, redeem

and reconstitute all the spheres of this secular world. This Herman Hoeksema and those who followed him could not accept, and for this reason he wrote revised principles that would articulate the truth as it is confessed in the Protestant Reformed Churches. This is the reason he believed Protestant Reformed Christian schools should be established.

It is urgent therefore that those responsible for the establishment and maintenance of the Protestant Reformed Christian schools and all Reformed, Christian schools vigilantly study and apply the principle that were developed early in the existence of the Protestant Reformed Churches by Herman Hoeksema. Although we must not end with these principles, these are principles that give direction to the instruction and administration of the schools. In this way the Protestant Reformed Christian schools will continue to grow as genuinely Reformed, Christian schools.

Our prayer to God is that this series of articles will remind those responsible for the schools (parents, board members, teachers) concerning their high calling faithfully and properly to apply these Reformed principles and truths in the instructional program. The Protestant Reformed Christian schools may be small and seem to be of little importance in the world, but our calling is to be true to the faith once delivered to the saints.



## News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

### Minister Activities

Our seminary has informed us that the faculty has licensed Mr. Bill Langerak (Hope PRC, G.R.) and Mr. Paul Goh (from our sister church, ERCS) to speak a word of edification in the churches. We

thank God for giving these men the necessary gifts to advance to this part of their training for the gospel ministry.

From a trio of the Revs. C. Haak, C. Terpstra, and M. Vander

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



Wal, the congregation of the Trinity PRC in Hudsonville, MI has extended a call to Rev. Haak to serve as their first pastor. Rev. A. Brummel declined the call he was considering to become the next pastor of the Lynden, WA PRC. Rev. R. Cammenga also declined the call extended to him from the Byron Center, MI PRC to serve as their next pastor. Rev. M. VanderWal has accepted the call he received to serve as pastor of the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA.

### Congregation Activities

**O**n Sunday evening, November 18, Rev. Doug Kuiper and his family bid farewell to the congregation of Byron Center, MI where he had been pastor for six years. He chose as his parting word to the congregation to preach on Acts 20:32 under the theme, "Commending You to God." After the evening service there was a light lunch, followed by a farewell program.

The weekend after Thanksgiving Day the Kuiper family moved from Byron Center to Randolph, WI, where Rev. Kuiper was installed as the 11<sup>th</sup> pastor of the Randolph, WI PRC on Sunday, December 2. Rev. C. Haak conducted that installation service and preached on John 12:20-22, under the theme, "Sir, We Would See Jesus." Randolph's consistory planned a brief welcome program for the Kuipers on Friday, November 30, which coincided with their annual Fellowship Supper.

The same Sunday that Rev. Kuiper was preaching his farewell in Byron Center, Rev. A. den Hartog was being installed at the Hope PRC in Walker, MI as associate pastor, to be minister-on-loan to Singapore. Immediately following the evening service, in which Rev. denHartog preached his inaugural sermon, there was a short program, which included some singing and an account of Rev. denHartog's life history as Rev. R. VanOverloop gave it. This pro-

gram of welcome to the entire denHartog family was followed by an open house for them at Covenant Christian High School.

We can also report here that the denHartogs continue to be busy with plans to move to Singapore. After their farewell to the congregation of Hope PRC in Redlands, CA on November 11, where Rev. denHartog served as pastor for 11 years, they traveled to Grand Rapids, MI for installation and then returned to Redlands, and planned to be there until they leave for Singapore on January 21, D.V. However, this is subject to change depending on approval of work permits and dependency passes from the Singapore authorities.

In the latest new addition update from the Grace PRC in Standale, MI, we find that the siding on the outside of the building is finished, the duct work looks done, the a/c unit is in, some electrical work is in place, with dry wall and insulation to follow soon.

The congregation of the First PRC in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada joined together for a potluck supper in late October. This get-together was hosted by their Library Committee and was intended as a fundraiser for their library. After the meal there was a short speech on the Reformation geared towards the children, followed by a short Reformation Singspiration.

### Mission Activities

**R**ev. W. Bekkering and his family planned to leave for Ghana on December 5. He preached his inaugural sermon the Sunday before in the Hull, IA PRC. Remember them, along with the Moores and Bleyenbergs, as they make the adjustments to Ghana and continue in the work there.

In late November Ghana also welcomed delegates visiting the mission field from the Hull congregation and the Foreign Mission Committee of our churches. Mr. H. Hoksbergen and Mr. A. Kooiker,

along with their wives, spent nearly three weeks there. While they were there they took in as many activities of the mission as possible, along with visits in the homes of members to talk about the work there and their lives under the Word.

### Young Adult Activities


**T**he Young Adults of the South Holland, IL PRC hosted a Fall Young Adults' Retreat at the Amerihost Inn in Hammond, IL on Friday and Saturday, November 30, 31. Rev. A. Spriensma led the discussion on "The Christian's Responsibility in the Time of War."

### Young People's Activities

**L**ast month you no doubt heard some wonderful Christmas music. Perhaps your church choir gave a concert, or you went to a presentation of Handel's Messiah. But none of that inspiring music can compare to the program presented by children and young people with special needs in our churches on November 30 at the Faith PRC in Jenison, MI. My sincere thanks goes to the young people of Faith, who once again this year hosted that concert. What a wonderful evening, and what a wonderful testimony of God's covenant faithfulness.

### Food For Thought

"Nothing lies in our hands with such uneasiness as time. Wretched and thoughtless creatures! In the only place where covetousness were a virtue, we turn prodigals."

—Joseph Addison 



# THE STANDARD BEARER

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## Announcements

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

Faith Choral Society would like to express its Christian sympathy to Mrs. Anne Griffioen in the death of her mother,

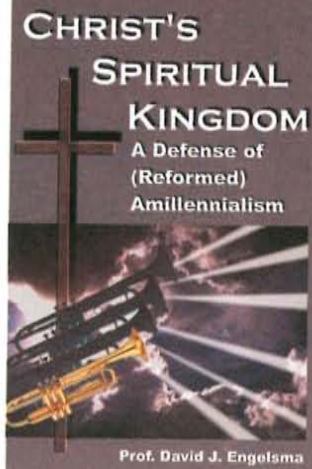
#### MRS. ALICE VEENSTRA.

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (Job 19:25).

Mike Kooienga, Pres.

### TEACHER(S) NEEDED:

Heritage Christian High School in South Holland, IL is now in its first year of operation, teaching freshmen and sophomores. As we plan for the addition of a junior class for 2002-2003, we see our greatest faculty needs in the areas of math, science, business and technology, and foreign language courses. Interested individuals, please contact our Administrator, Ralph Medema, at (708) 339-1733 [rmedema@earthlink.net] or Education Committee Chairman, Bill DeJong, at (708) 946-6126 [bill@dejongequipment.com].



The 22 chapters of *Christ's Spiritual Kingdom* appeared originally as a series of editorials in the *Standard Bearer*. The Evangelism Committee of Redlands PRC has undertaken the publication of these articles in book form, out of the conviction that it will be useful in the defense and promotion of the Reformed faith, fundamental to which is a sound doctrine of the end-times.

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## Reformed Witness Hour

### Topics for January

Date	Topic	Text
January 6	"Our Lord's New Year Exhortation"	Luke 21:34-36
January 13	"Men for these Times"	I Chronicles 12:32
January 20	"Fearfully and Wonderfully Made"	Psalms 139:14
January 27	"Love's Fear for Christ's Bride"	I Corinthians 11:3

### NOTICE

The Federation of Protestant Reformed Christian Schools is seeking applicants for the position of Executive Director of the Federation of PRC Schools. In general, the Executive Director has the responsibility to maintain a strong network of communication between the Federation Board of the PRC Schools, its committees, the boards of member schools, and our teachers, and to implement the work and projects of the Federation. To receive further information concerning this part-time position, please contact Gary Nienhuis at (616) 453-0817 or by mail at 1406 Su-Lew, Grand Rapids, MI 49544.

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