

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Meditation — Jerusalem's Mourners Rebuked

Editorials — A Continuing Calling

The Nature of the Atonement

Barth's Doctrine of Scripture

Assurance of Covenant Membership

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School will have openings for teachers in the Kindergarten, 1st, and 3rd grades, and for a part-time teacher (4 hours per day). For further information, contact the undersigned:

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MEDITATION—

Jerusalem's Mourners Rebuked

by Rev. M. Schipper

"And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves for and your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

Luke 23:27-31

Via Dolorosa!

Way of Sorrow!

The Way of the Cross!

On that way the Saviour was walking in the most literal sense of the word when the incident took place which is related in our text!

What a contrast this exit of Jerusalem made to the royal entry only the Sunday before, called: Palm Sunday! Then, you remember, He made His triumphal entry into the city of David riding upon an ass's colt, accompanied with a great procession, multitudes of people waving palm branches and calling exuberantly,

"Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" Now it is Good Friday morning, and He makes His exit as a worthless evil doer! One worthy to be executed! And that, too, under the shrill cry of a wild mob, led by a Roman guard, with two malefactors, to be hanged on a cross!

How quickly and drastically the scenes change!

From the praetorium, where the soldiers had mocked and oppressed Him, and where He had been sentenced to death, Jesus is led through the midst of the city. Most probably this exodus was over the longest route. It was the custom of the day to make a public spectacle of the condemned. So the victim was paraded through the streets with a sign on his back, identifying him with his crime. Out to the place of the skull He is brought!

Two things, the evangelist informs us, that deserve special attention! Two things that stand out as happening along the way!

The first relates to Simon, the Cyrenian, who was forced to bear the cross after Jesus. A most beautiful example of discipleship!

The other, concerns Jesus' rebuke of Jerusalem's weeping daughters! And it is this scene that especially calls our attention now!

* * *

Jerusalem's mourners rebuked!

Not unusual was the fact that a multitude of people should be present on an occasion of this kind! Nor was it unusual that at such times there should be women weeping!

Yet now all was quite out of the ordinary!

Not only does the text imply that here was a multitude exceeding great, but especially we observe the oddity that the women were weeping for Jesus! Were there not two others who were being led away to be crucified? Yet the Lord indicates that the weeping was not for them, but for Himself!

Strange, too, that the Lord does not sympathize with it!

Rather, it merits His stern rebuke!

Jerusalem's daughters sharply rebuked!

They were not those honorable women who had followed Jesus during His ministry and served Him of their goods. For such the Lord has no rebuke, except to Marthas who, in distinction from the Marys, are more concerned about feeding Jesus than they are that Jesus should feed them! Such will get from Him a loving rebuke. But these women are not of those who, realizing that the Lord had not a place to lay His head, softened His pillow, and carefully drew a blanket over Him while He rested. They are not of those who presently stand afar off at the spectacle of the cross on the hill of the skull!

Nor are they just women, women one could find anywhere throughout Judea or Galilee!

But daughters of Jerusalem!

Of Jerusalem that always stoneth the prophets, and killeth those who are sent unto her! Of Jerusalem that is apostate!

And they weep!

A peculiar and a particular lamentation!

O, indeed, it was common occurrence to see weeping women on occasions such as this. Perhaps out of curiosity they would follow such a procession, and out of sympathetic emotion for the condemned they thought to lend pity to the accused, or request leniency of the oppressors!

But here was no ordinary lament!

Their emotions run away with them when they see Jesus! No doubt they saw a difference between Jesus and the other two who were going with Him to their death. Was not innocence written all over Jesus's face? Indeed, He was the Lamb that is led to the slaughter! And that innocent, spotless Lamb stood out, even though His holy beauty shone through a bloody brow, and a face that was marked with pain and suffering! Even Pilate had attested to His innocence! How different He appears from those other two! They were evildoers, with guilt imprinted in every wrinkle on their faces. And now look at Jesus! The difference is too great to go unnoticed!

Their eyes well with tears, and their voices break forth with loud wailing!

Their crying is evidently well-meant! They want Jesus to know that their lamentation was especially for Him. And so the Lord also interpreted it!

Weep not for Me!

Sharp, and apparently cruel rebuke!

Could not the Lord reward their seeming kindness with some semblance of appreciation? Whereas all the rest were venting their vile hatred and screaming their anathemas, could He not at least be thankful that there were some who had an ounce of sympathy? Should He not rather have complimented them for their special interest? Is not this rebuke entirely out of place?

No! A thousand times, No!

O, indeed, weeping is necessary! It is surely the time for weeping!

But not for Jesus!

Weep not for Me!

Why not? Especially for two reasons!

In the first place, Jesus did not need their sympathy! If anyone must show pity, He must, not they! Besides, what He now suffers, He is doing of His own will and choice! Moreover, this suffering will be the way to His glory! Should that ever be an object of pity, and evoke tears of sympathy? Indeed not! Rather, it was proper to rejoice and to sing with holy joy!

And secondly, Jesus did not desire such weeping! Tears of tender feelings which are not the expressions of conscious guilt and repentance, He counts as worthless. And if these women had had a consciousness of their own and their nation's sins, it would have been better to have wept for themselves. And there is reason for them to weep over themselves!

But weep for yourselves and for your children!

Notice how this rebuke covers more than one generation! Jesus evidently saw the children carried on the arms of Jerusalem's daughters. These children, perhaps more than the mothers who bear them, were presently to witness Divine retribution and judgment

for Jerusalem's sins. Not so, that the children must suffer for the sins of their parents. The Lord is righteous to give unto every man as his work shall be! But we must remember that in the generations of the wicked sin develops. Such is definitely the case here. These daughters are the children of those who always killed the prophets. That sin is developed in these daughters who are of Jerusalem which was now slaying the One of whom all the prophets spoke, the Son, the Heir. And their children would presently walk on in that same sin even in the light of the New Dispensation, behind the day of Pentecost and the enlightened Gospel age! And with this fuller revelation make themselves yet more guilty when they walk in the sin of their sires!

If Jerusalem's daughters, therefore, would see their own end and that of their sinful generations, they would begin weeping now and never stop weeping!

Indeed, this is a deserved but sharp rebuke!

* * *

A significant reason!

For, behold, the days are coming!

Days of judgment! Not merely, you understand, judgment of the last day, when God shall judge all the secrets of men! That, too, of course! That day is coming! But the Lord evidently has in mind a judgment that was imminent, and contemporaneous with that generation! Prophetically the Lord is pointing to impending doom for these daughters and their children! Literal destruction of Jerusalem, which is always a precursor of the final destruction and judgment that cometh upon all the world! Days they will be when the righteous shall be acquitted, perfectly justified; but the wicked justly condemned. As surely as the wicked have earned just judgment by their wicked acts, so shall they receive just retribution!

How terrible are those days which the Lord predicts!

So terrible shall they be that they shall call the barren blessed! Never before was it ever said that the barren are blessed! Always she that was barren was considered accursed! But now, she that has no children will be better off than she that has borne them! Not, you understand, does the Lord mean to say that in the judgment the barren woman is more blessed than those who gave suck. Rather, He is only stating the sad wish of those who are lost, just as He does in the remainder of the prophetic announcement.

"Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us." This can only mean not only that they will want to hide from the face of the Judge, but more particularly, they will express the hope of annihilation; sudden death, when that judgment comes.

Impossible wish!

For the mountains will not fall on them, neither shall the hills cover them in that day! All of this prophetic and descriptive language must serve to depict the awful anguish that shall come upon this generation, and all other wicked generations in the day of the Lord's wrath!

Surely there is reason for Jerusalem's daughters, who represent the wombs out of which the wicked generations of the church are born, to weep and howl

for the miseries that shall come upon them. There is no possibility of escape. Swift and sure is the judgment! And they will surely say these things!

And the ground for this prophetic announcement?

"For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

Figurative language!

The green tree! That is Christ and all who are living in and out of Him! Christ is the living tree; believers and their spiritual seed, who are bound to Him by a living faith, are the branches. The church in the narrowest sense of the word, according to the election of grace with Christ as the Head, is the green tree!

The dry wood! All who come into contact with the Christ and His cross as its enemy! Whether Jew or Gentile, all who through history have crucified the Christ and continued to do so, they are the dry wood. Apostate Jerusalem, of whom these daughters are representative, is the highest development of this dry wood that always killed the prophets and those sent unto her!

Once was the dry wood green! Originally, from the organic and historical point of view, it had its origin in the green tree. Historically all the dry wood can be traced to believing parents. The tree in history produces green but also dry wood; not only Abel, but also Cain; not only Jacob, but also Esau; not only believers, but also unbelievers; not only elect, but also reprobate!

Always the dry kills and tortures the green. The green must seal its faith with its blood! And now they were killing the most glorious representative of the green tree, its beauteous Head!

And what they did to my Lord, they will do always to all who believe in Him!

But it shall not continue forever!

Green wood will not burn! The fire cannot consume it! Its persecution only enhances its beauty and makes it more glorious!

But oh, that dry wood!

When it is cast into the fire of God's wrath it shall consume away as tinder in the flame!

Therefore let Jerusalem's daughters, yea, let all the wicked weep! For the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and they shall be destroyed forever!

But let the righteous rejoice, even when they see their Saviour treading the *via dolorosa* to Calvary! From thence He shall be raised up to give them life out of death, in order that they may grow into a fruitful bough and bring forth fruit that shall be unto the praises of Him Who loved them even unto death!

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of Doon Protestant Reformed Church wish to express its sympathy to Mr. Elmer Van Den Top, in the passing of his Brother-in-Law

MR. EILERT BLOEMENDAAL

May the Lord graciously comfort and sustain the sorrowing ones.

Rev. R. Decker, President
Minard Van Den Top, Secretary

EDITORIAL—

Protestant Reformed Education

A Continuing Calling

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Anyone at all acquainted with earlier volumes of our *Standard Bearer* will know that frequently, both in the editorial columns and in the other departments, the necessity of Protestant Reformed education for Protestant Reformed children has been stressed.

One way of emphasizing that necessity is to place it in the context of our baptismal vow and its "...to the utmost of your power...."

Not infrequently past editorials put it this way: *Wherever and whenever the Lord makes it possible, or opens the way, Protestant Reformed people should establish and maintain their own schools.*

That remains the editorial stand of the *Standard Bearer*.

Perhaps the reader wonders why this is brought up. Let me explain.

First of all, let me explain my purpose. My purpose is not to apply some kind of editorial "pressure." I do not believe that I possess such influence. If I did possess it, I would not care to use it. Nor would I think much of a school that resulted from pressure tactics. My purpose is rather to encourage our people to consider the matter of Protestant Reformed education very seriously and honestly in the light of the question: *does the Lord open the way for us here and now?* I believe that is a god-fearing approach.

In the second place, let me explain my reasons.

You will notice that the title of this article makes mention of *a continuing calling*. This suggests, in the first place, that the ideal has not been reached, and that therefore we must continue to strive toward the ideal of Protestant Reformed education for Protestant Reformed youth.

I refer in this connection, in the first place, to those areas where we already have established our own grade schools. In these areas our calling continues not only to provide for our schools with unflagging zeal but also to strive that the education given in those schools is in every respect more and more thoroughly and distinctively Reformed.

Secondly, I refer to those areas where our parents have not yet succeeded in establishing their own schools. In some of these areas it may undoubtedly be said that the time is not yet ripe and the way is not yet open. In other areas it begins to appear increasingly that the way is indeed open and that the establishment of a school is a very real possibility. I have in mind, as an example, our people in Northwest Iowa, where, I

understand, there are rather definite plans in the making. In all such areas, whether in Northwest Iowa or anywhere else, I would earnestly urge and encourage our people to consider their calling and to act in harmony with the criterion mentioned earlier in this article: *wherever and whenever the Lord opens the way, Protestant Reformed people should establish and maintain their own schools.*

But I have another and very important aspect of this continuing calling in mind. That is the possibility of Protestant Reformed Secondary Education (high school education) in the greater Grand Rapids area. This also is an aspect of our *continuing* calling. It is consistent that where we establish primary schools, we also establish secondary schools. I say this also with the qualification: wherever and whenever the Lord opens the way. But I hasten to affirm that it is my sincere conviction that the Lord is both opening the way and pointing the way in this regard.

On the principal side of the ledger, consider the fact that the high school education of our children is, in effect, Christian Reformed. There are no two ways about this. They expect this, and we expect it. For the high schools are largely controlled by a Christian Reformed constituency. But with a view to our Protestant Reformed children that can only be less than satisfactory; and it is becoming less and less satisfactory. It always grieves me to see the primary education of our Adams and Hope schools followed by an education in high school that is not consistent with that of their first nine years.

On the practical side of the ledger, moreover, there are several favorable considerations also. Certainly, in the greater Grand Rapids area our Protestant Reformed constituency is sufficiently numerous to establish and maintain a high school of our own. Undeniably, a high school is no little undertaking; and its establishment, due to the difficult level of education and due also to the fact that it can draw its student body from only three grade levels,—its establishment is a bit different than the establishment of a grade school. But we surely have enough potential supporting families, enough young people, and also enough potential secondary-level teachers to go ahead. I believe, too, that the Board has done considerable investigation and planning (as reported in a recent news letter), and that, whether we begin with only the tenth grade and add a grade each year, or, if the support warrants

it (as it surely could), we begin with all three grades immediately, — it is entirely within the realm of possibility to provide both a good quality of education and an education that is in harmony with our Reformed principles. I believe, too, that our Protestant Reformed young people, who undoubtedly will have to face increasingly severe difficulties and temptations in the world in the midst of which their education must prepare them to live covenant lives, are worthy of the best education we can provide them, even if it means sacrifice on our part. Indeed, anyone who views present day trends in education and in the world in general with both eyes open must conclude that such a Protestant Reformed high school education is a sore need.

Frankly, what this movement for secondary education needs at this stage is the added impetus of broader

backing and dedicated support. I am informed that the plot of ground for the school is almost paid for and that the society will have a modest fund left over toward building costs. This is precisely the time for that added "boost" that will, so to speak, put the project "into orbit."

In general, therefore, let all our people, and in particular, let those in the greater Grand Rapids area continue to consider their duty in the light of the sound rule that *wherever and whenever the Lord opens the way, Protestant Reformed people should provide Protestant Reformed education for Protestant Reformed children.*

And: let us consider the fact that we have a *calling*, — from the Lord, Who has never yet put His faithful people to shame!

EDITORIAL—

THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT: Limited or General?

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

SCRIPTURE AND SATISFACTION (continued)

There are still more terms which Scripture uses in connection with the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ which very plainly include the idea of satisfaction.

Scripture speaks of the atoning work of Christ as an act of buying, purchasing, paying a price, and as an act of redeeming, even as a slave is purchased and becomes the property of the purchaser, or as a slave's liberty is purchased through the payment of a price. The Greek terms (*agorazein* and *exagorazein*) are related to the Greek term for "market" (*agora*), and these terms are often used in relation to commercial life even in the New Testament. There are several passages where these terms occur with regard to the work of redemption. II Peter 2:1 speaks of those who "deny the Lord that bought them," or, as is also possible, "deny that the Lord bought them." In Revelation 5:9 we read of the "new song" of the four beasts and the four and twenty elders at the occasion when the Lamb standing as it had been slain took the book with its seven seals out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." The Lamb, therefore, has redeemed us, purchased us, to God; and the purchase price was His blood. We may note here, by the way, that this text also makes a distinction which

very definitely points to the fact that this redemption by the blood of the Lamb, or atonement, was limited, particular: for He has redeemed us *out of* every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. I Corinthians 6:20 employs the same language: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." And in I Corinthians 7:23 that same fact of purchase, redemption, is mentioned: "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." The second and related term (Greek: *exagorazein*) is also rendered by "redeem" in our King James Version. This term means essentially the same as the former term, except that it views us as slaves, purchased out of bondage and unto liberty. This term, therefore, also includes the idea of the payment of a price, and therefore the idea of satisfaction. Thus it is used in Galatians 3:13 and Galatians 4:4 and 5. In the former passage we read: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." And in the latter passage the Word of God tells us: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The following remarks from the "Theological Dictionary of the New Testament," Vol. I, page 126, are pertinent: "In Paul, of course, the divine Purchaser does not pay only in appearance as in sacral redemption, but in the

most bitter reality, so that the parallel breaks down at the decisive point and there is thus a great difference. In respect of the seriousness of the purchase, Christ is to be compared to the one who actually pays And everything depends on this. In this liberation from the curse of the Law, the essential point is that it confers both an actual and also a legally established freedom ensuring against any renewal of slavery. The claim of the Law is satisfied."

Finally, I call your attention to the terms *reconcile* and *reconciliation*, terms which occur rather often in Scripture in connection with the atoning and redeeming work of Christ. Significant in this connection is the well-known passage of II Corinthians 5:18-21: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This same idea of reconciliation occurs elsewhere, as in Romans 5:10 and Colossians 1:19-21. The idea of reconciliation as set forth in II Corinthians 5 may be briefly explained in the following remarks: 1) It is evident that the apostle refers here to a very specific historical event. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself; that was nineteen hundred years ago, at the cross. There our reconciliation was accomplished. This is also confirmed by verse 21. 2) Reconciliation is a covenant idea. It presupposes a relation of friendship and love between those that are to be reconciled. Even among men one cannot speak of the reconciliation of complete strangers; there must be a previously existing relationship in order to speak

of reconciliation. And in divine reconciliation that previously existent relationship is that of God's eternal covenant. 3) Reconciliation implies that this relationship has been violated, so that it cannot function. There is something in the way. Estrangement and alienation have been caused. The cause of that alienation is our sin and guilt. 4) Reconciliation requires that the cause of that alienation is removed, so that the alienation itself is removed, and so that the bond of friendship and love can properly function. And in divine reconciliation this can only be accomplished by the actual removal of the cause of estrangement, namely, sin and guilt. In other words, God's justice with respect to sin must be satisfied and the state of His people must be changed from one of guilt to one of righteousness. This change God Himself accomplishes through the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. How? "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

With this I conclude the discussion of the first essential element in the nature of the atonement. Let us remember that our main interest in this discussion is this question: is the nature of the atonement of Christ such that it is limited or not? Dr. Daane maintains that it is unlimited, that is, general, that is, for all men. He now faces the question, in the light of Scripture and the Reformed confessions: how, if the nature of the atonement is actual satisfaction of divine justice with respect to sin,—how can the atonement be general, unless salvation itself is also general, so that all men are saved? To escape this consequence,—the consequence which he has so vehemently denied,—it seems to me that he must deny that the nature of the atonement is that of satisfaction. But to do the latter is to deny the atonement itself. And this is certainly neither Reformed nor Scriptural.

CALL TO ASPIRANTS TO THE MINISTRY

All young men desiring to study for the ministry of the Word in the Protestant Reformed Churches, and who have not already been pre-enrolled, are asked to appear before the Theological School Committee on its next meeting, which will be held, the Lord willing, Fri., March 11, 1966 at 8 P.M. in the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church, 1535 Cambridge Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The qualifications requisite to enrollment are the following:

1. You must present a letter from your local consistory certifying that you are upright in walk and pure in doctrine.
2. You must present a certificate of health, signed

by a reputable physician.

3. You must be a graduate from High School, being able to show that you have completed a one-year course in History General and Church History; and that you have completed the following College courses: Latin—two years, Greek—two years, German—two years, Philosophy—one year, Psychology—one year, Logic—one semester.

All correspondence relative to the above announcement should be sent to the undersigned:

Secretary of the Theological School Committee
Rev. M. Schipper,
1543 Cambridge Ave., S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH—

The Doctrine of Creation Days or Periods

by Rev. H. Veldman

We now continue with our discussion of God's creation of the heavens and the earth, calling attention to the question whether the "days" of Genesis 1 are to be viewed as ordinary days or as periods extending over thousands and millions of years. In our preceding article we first called attention to the significance of the word "YOM" in Genesis, the Hebrew word for day. And, secondly, we called attention to the fact that the concordistic theory, the Period-Theory, compels us to distinguish between the first three days and the latter three days of Genesis 1.

Before we continue with our discussion of this concordistic theory, permit me to return to what we wrote in our preceding article about the use of the word, YOM. We wish to add a brief observation. The reader will recall that we called attention to 2 Peter 3:8 where we read that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day. The reader will also recall that we made the remark that the advocates of the concordistic theory take peculiar delight in quoting the first half of this passage, namely, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and that, therefore, the "days" of Genesis 1 may very well have been periods of a thousand years. We now wish to ask this question: Presuppose once that we read in Genesis 1 that the Lord created light in a period of a thousand years, would these advocates of the Period-Theory be willing to concede the possibility that these thousand years may have been one day? Why not? Does not 2 Peter 3:8 teach us that a thousand years are with the Lord as one day?

We now proceed with our grounds in support of our contention that the days of Genesis 1 are to be viewed as ordinary days of twenty four hours. Thirdly (we quoted two grounds in our preceding article), assuming that the days of Genesis 1 are periods, tremendously long periods of thousands or millions of years, what must we say of Adam? Would not the conclusion be unavoidable that he must have attained unto a certain immortality, a not being able to sin? Adam and Eve were created upon the sixth day. If this day were as long as these period theorists would have us believe, then the conclusion is certainly warranted that he would have reached the "not being able to sin." Standing solidly in the Cause of the Lord for thousands and thousands of years, warding off successfully every

attempt of the devil to lead him away from God's commandments, he certainly would have attained unto that perfection. But this is not all. Assuming that Adam and Eve lived so long in the state of righteousness, may we not assume that children would have been born to them in that state of perfection and righteousness? And, of course, these children, we assume, would have become spiritually immortal also. Besides, assuming that Adam had sinned after the seventh day, and the sixth day had lasted thousands and thousands of years, would the sin of Adam affect these thousands upon thousands of humans born in the state of righteousness? One may object that all this "reasoning" is rather silly and far-fetched. To this we answer: that is exactly what happens when one departs from the literal reading of the Word of God. Refusing to subscribe to the wisdom of the Lord, one simply falls into the folly of sin. Depart from the clear teaching of the Scriptures, and the result will be inevitably that one will be confronted by all kinds of absurdities. Adam and Eve must have been busy thousands of years in the "keeping of the garden," protecting it from all the attacks of the evil one before they enjoyed their first sabbath day. One might also be led to believe that our first parents really did not need that sabbath day, inasmuch as by that time they had attained unto spiritual immortality, the never being able to sin. The fact, let us say, that Adam and Eve would have become spiritually immortal, that thousands of people would have been born in the state of perfection, would surely have made the fall inconceivable and impossible.

In the fourth place, the supporters of the Period-Theory point to the seventh day. They declare that, whereas the Lord God is still resting of His works of creation, the seventh day could very well have been a long period of time, and that for this reason it is very well possible that also all the other days of the creation week were long periods of time. This argument, of course, completely fails to make any sense. Fact is, the Lord is not only resting today, but His creative work is finished. He has ceased from creating, will not create again. If, then, the seventh day is a long period of time because the Lord has ceased from creating, then the seventh day is not only a long period of time, but it is eternal, without end. And if all the days of

creation are equal in the sense that they are all such long periods, then we cannot escape the absurdity that all the days are equally eternal. This means that we are still in the first day; indeed, we are still in the first day, if all the days are eternal. All this, of course, is nonsense. This is not the meaning of the seventh day. The Lord had hallowed the seventh day. This was the day when the Lord and the creature (Adam) He had made rejoiced together in the Lord's perfect work. And, as we shall see later, this seventh day was certainly an ordinary day of twenty four hours.

In the fifth place, we have already called attention to the fact that God not only created the universe, but that this creation of the universe also included the creation of time. It is, of course, because of God's creation that we have our days, week and years. It surely did not require the Lord an entire day of twenty four hours, for example, to create the light or the firmament. The light and the firmament, etc., were called into existence by the word of the Lord and by the breath of His mouth. It is not an accident, we understand, that our days are as long as they are, of twenty four hours. And it is also no accident that our years are as long as they are. But the Lord also created the week. This is very obvious from the fourth commandment, to which we will call attention later. It is of the Lord that the earth turns upon its axis once in twenty four hours, and that the earth turns around the sun in the time allotted to one year. But the Lord created the week when He hallowed and set aside the seventh day to be a sabbath day. Thereby God called into existence the six-day work-week and the sabbath, the order of six plus one.

In the sixth place, to believe that the days of creation are periods means that one must inevitably fall into the error of evolutionism. There are, to be sure, those advocates of the concordistic theory who claim to reject the error of evolutionism. Evolutionism means that things have developed of themselves, that one species developed into an entirely different species, that finally the monkey developed into a man. It is claimed by these period theorists that the Lord created all the species. But, advocating the theory that the days of creation were long periods of thousands and millions of years, what do we have here? This, that the mighty speaking of God was a speaking that extended over millions of years! The Word of God, we know, in Genesis 1 and also in Psalm 33, declares that by the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth, and also that the Lord speaks and it is and He commands and it stands. But, what a strange speaking of the Almighty we have here! Man, it is contended, did not develop from a monkey! God made Adam by His almighty, creative power! But, this forming of Adam by the Lord extended over millions of years? Is this the Scriptural account of creation as set forth in Genesis 1? There we read: "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." Ask a child how long it required the Lord to make light, and he will tell you that it required Him just as long to make light as it took Him to say it! And this applies throughout the first chapter

of Genesis 1. Hence, how majestic is Scripture's account of the creation in Genesis 1! How marvellously and wonderfully Genesis 1 speaks of the almighty power of our God! And we will have occasion presently to call attention to other Scriptural passages. One thing is sure: that the speaking of God extended over thousands and millions of years is nowhere to be concluded from the Word of God!

In the seventh place, what a strange impression this concordistic theory leaves upon us as far as the work of the Lord is concerned! Then we have the utterly strange presentation that the Lord, in creating a building, constructs such a building that it has but one story above the ground and thousands of stories below the ground. We mean the following. We believe, of course, that Christ will return upon the clouds of heaven. We do not believe that the world is gradually being prepared for the kingdom of God and of His Christ, and that, slowly but surely, sin and misery and wars and death, etc., will be removed and be replaced by the wonderful kingdom of God in Christ. This is the heresy of post-millennialism. We believe in a personal and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the clouds of heaven, and that then we will have the perfected kingdom of our God in Christ in a new heaven and a new earth. Then all that which is old shall have passed away and everything will have become new. When He will return we do not know. Only the Father knows the hour of the coming of the Son of Man. Let us presuppose that the coming of Christ into the world in Bethlehem took place in the center of history, that approximately two thousand years remain before His return at the last day. In the light of history and the signs of His coming which are held before us in the holy Scriptures, this is hardly conceivable. One can hardly believe that another two thousand years must elapse before His final appearance. But let us assume this merely for the sake of argument. The world, then, beginning with Adam's fall, will have existed, shall we say, some eight to ten thousand years when Christ returns to make all things new. This is just like a carpenter or a builder who, when building a house, builds one floor above the ground and a basement of some thousands of stories below the ground! How strange! What builder builds in such a manner! And this should characterize the Divine Builder and heavenly Architect! From all this we may safely conclude that the concordistic theory, that the days of creation are long periods of time, involves us in all kinds of monstrosities, and that it does not compare with Scripture's sublime and majestic account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

In addition to the grounds we have mentioned in this article and in our preceding article, we now wish to conclude by calling the attention of our readers to the fourth commandment. It is hardly necessary to quote the fourth commandment. We do wish to emphasize that the ten commandments were proclaimed into the ears of the people by the Lord and given by the Lord to Israel through Moses upon the two tables of stone at Mt. Sinai during Israel's sojourn from the land of Egypt to the land of Canaan. In this fourth command-

ment we are told that the Lord created all things in six days and that he rested upon the seventh day, and also that He hallowed the seventh day; we are to do all our work in six days and rest upon the seventh day. One wonders what Israel thought when these commandments were proclaimed in their ears, whether they concluded that these creation days were periods. Surely the days in which the people of God were to do all their work and the seventh day in which they were to rest and cease from all their labours were ordinary days of twenty-four hours. And if we read that we must labour six

days and rest upon the seventh day because the Lord created all things in six days and rested upon the seventh, must we not apply the sound principle of exegesis that the same word in the same connection must have the same meaning? One therefore violates the holy and infallible record when he would maintain that the days of creation were long periods of time. The concordistic theory certainly violates the clear language of the Word of the Lord as set forth in the fourth commandment.

ALL AROUND US—

The World on Divorce

The Institute of the Church

News Briefs

by Prof. H. Hanko

THE WORLD ON DIVORCE

The problem of divorce and remarriage has always been a difficult problem — even (and perhaps especially) in the world. Those who are not Christians recognize the fact that the foundation of all society is the stable family. Divorce breaks down the family. It breeds bitterness, broken homes, delinquency and tragedy. Hence, even the world recognizes that the preservation of society requires some sort of solution to the divorce problem.

Time recently devoted an "Essay" to the subject of divorce. *Time's* chief interest was the wide variety of divorce laws in different states and the antiquated character of many of these laws. But in the course of the discussion, some interesting points were made.

Concerning the prevalence of divorce, *Time* informs its readers: Roughly 400,000 U. S. couples are being divorced each year. About 40% of them are childless; the rest have some 500,000 children, two-thirds of them are under the age of ten. More than 6,000,000 Americans are now divorced or separated, and divorce seems to breed divorce: probably half of all divorced Americans are the children of divorced parents.

While this sounds like a very bad situation, we are informed that it is not really so bad after all:

It is not really as alarming as it is often made out to be. The rate of divorce in the U. S. has actually held rather steady for 15 years, and the vast majority of Americans still stay married "until death do us part." The rate hit an all-time high of 18.2 divorces per 1000 existing marriages in 1946, when many hasty wartime marriages were dissolved. Since then it has dropped to 9.2 per 1,000, not much above the 6.6-per-1,000 figure that was the norm in 1920.

We are told also that, while at one time, society as a whole frowned upon divorce, and even the laws on the

books were really geared to discourage divorce, all this has changed.

The real scandal is not that so many Americans resort to divorce. It is that so many of the laws of the land are sadly out of step with the growing recognition that, for both married couples and society, divorce is often preferable to a dead marriage....

Though Roman Catholics get fewer divorces than others because of their church's proscriptions, they are not very far behind the Protestant breakup rate because of desertions, separations and annulments....

Americans are more relaxed, tolerant and realistic about divorce than they used to be. Though vestiges of social stigma because of divorce still remain in small U.S. communities, most of the nation long ago decided that a happy divorce, when such can be accomplished, is better than an unhappy marriage, or what (one author) called "holy deadlock"....

The gradual weakening of religious strictures against divorce has also tended to make it more acceptable; all but the most fundamental U. S. Protestants now accept civil divorce — and the "new moralists" go even further. In destructive family situations... "divorce is the good thing to do: not merely excusable, but rather the greatest of all goods. The divorce rate is a social symptom of increased respect for personal freedom and for genuine marriage commitment."

That is a far cry from Christ's unequivocal condemnation of the Mosaic right of Jewish husbands to banish their wives at will: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." The bonds of Christian matrimony have been slowly loosening ever since the 12th century church began granting annulments and separations....

Time's plea is therefore not simply that the laws governing divorce be brought up to date, but that they be also liberalized to the extent that divorce can readily be granted to anyone who can't make marriage

work. And in this, evidently, the majority of the churches in this country concur.

However, to determine whether or not a marriage can work, *Time* proposes that there be "a complete new approach that totally banishes 'fault' and all its sleazy consequences. The most sensible solution would be a system that readily grants divorce only after skilled clinicians confirm that a marriage is beyond repair. In many cases, divorce might be harder to get; in all, it would be far more humane."

All of this, as *Time* readily admits, carries the whole institution of marriage far away from the Scriptural truths concerning this union which is a picture of the relation between Christ and His Church. Inasmuch as the world promotes this, it inevitably erodes the foundations of society; to the extent that the church supports this, it departs from her only foundation—the Word of God and loses her right to exist. Obviously the world has no real solution to this problem. The solution is, after all, to be found in the words everyone pushes aside: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." How important it becomes to maintain the purity of marriage and instruct our children diligently in its holiness and importance.

THE INSTITUTE OF THE CHURCH

In a recent issue of the *Presbyterian Journal* two articles appeared (articles with which the editorial staff of the *Journal* did not agree) which spoke of the office of the ministry. The first was a weary and soul-wrenching cry of discouragement written by a minister in despair over the fruits of his labor. The second article (written by this same minister) gives a brief description of his conception of what religion really is. In this second article the author makes some statements concerning the institute of the church which are worthy of some attention. He writes:

...I believe that our local church must be willing to relinquish her present forms if this seems to be the movement of the Spirit in our mid-century. By forms, I mean our traditional patterns of worship and preaching....our traditional patterns of speech and language, including our creeds, and our traditional patterns of evangelism....

I am not too committed to preserve the institution in the forms which we now have. I am committed to preserve the institution in some form.

I should be very happy for the laity to run the institution the way they feel led by the Spirit of God in order to strengthen it, and to assist them in any way I can. In assisting the laity to run the church I can assist in helping to interpret how the Christian faith applies outside the church....

I believe, therefore, it may be better for us to use our "captive" time from 9-12 on Sundays for our leadership and some of our people in other ways than public worship....

I believe the church should take part in the revolutions of our day. The local parish should not be detached from the social revolution. If it believes this revolution is from God, it should actively be engaged in supporting it and identifying itself with it. If it believes it is of the devil it should officially throw all of its weight

against it. To be detached from it is to forfeit our place in mid-century affairs.

I personally believe the social revolution of our day, for all of its errors and difficulties, for all of its mistakes, is the stirring of the Spirit of God, and that we should support it, even if this should prove detrimental to our institutional life.

All of this could pass unnoticed if it were not for the fact that there is an increasingly loud cry to dis-pense with the institute of the church in this modern day. This article is but one voice among many others pleading with the church to discard the institutional life. The cry is heard in practically every denomination.

It is perhaps impossible to tell whether this spirit will grow; whether there will indeed be a day when the church no longer exists as institute in the world. But it is well to be warned of the danger. Without the institute there would no longer be officebearers appointed by Christ to rule over God's heritage and serve the cause of Christian mercy. Without an institute there could not possibly be any longer the official ministry of the gospel, the administration of the sacraments and the exercise of Christian discipline. Without the institute of the church there would be no rules and regulations, no "Church Order" so that no longer would things be done "decently and in good order." In short, this would be the end of the Church in every respect.

It is obvious that the tendency is in this direction. The offices in the church scarcely exist, in most places substituted by a certain "board of directors"; the ministers preach a social gospel, involve themselves in social issues and substitute for the means of grace "programs" of entertainment. Christian discipline is lost and will probably never be brought back; instead of decency and good order, anarchy prevails. The drift is there; the institute is in grave danger. And the trend spells the end of the Church.

NEWS BRIEFS

—Eugene Carson Blake, stated clerk of the United Presbyterian Church, and famous for his "Blake-Pike proposals" of merger, was elected the new leader of the World Council of Churches in the place of Visser 't Hooft. It took this large ecumenical (and apostate) body a long time to find a leader of their choice. But the pick was made of a man who will, with his passionate dedication to all forms of ecumenicism, advance the cause of the WCC.

—The *Yearbook of American Churches* is about to be released. The book gives its annual summary of statistics compiled by the National Council of Churches. The statistics show that 123,307,449 or 64.4% of the population of this country are members of churches. This is a gain. The major groupings are:

Protestant	68,299,478
Roman Catholic	45,640,619
Jewish	5,600,000
Eastern Orthodox	3,166,715
Buddhism	109,965

Protestants break down as follows in the ten largest denominations:

Southern Baptist	10,598,429
Methodist Church	10,304,184
National Baptist Inc.	5,500,000
Episcopal Church	3,340,759
United Presbyterian Church	3,292,204
Lutheran Church - LCA	3,131,062
National Baptist	2,668,799
Lutheran Church -	
Missouri Synod	2,650,857
American Lutheran Church	2,587,204
Churches of Christ	2,250,000

The figures are quoted from *Christianity Today*.

-- Some of our people may be acquainted with the fact that there is an organization of scientists in this country which devotes itself to a Christian interpretation of science maintaining the infallible inspiration of Scripture, its authority also in all matters of science, creation of specific kinds by God within the creation week, the universality and historicity of the Noahchian flood. The organization is not open to laymen; but, from the *Banner* we have learned that the publications of this organization can be obtained by those interested in these important questions by writing Prof. W. H. Rusch, 4090 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105.

HEEDING THE DOCTRINE—

Barth's Doctrine of Scripture

-5-

by Rev. D. J. Engelsma

The doctrine of an infallible Bible, Barth labels "Docetism." At the same time, he maintains that the church escapes this heresy only by acknowledging Scripture to be an error-prone book. One's first reaction to the charge is to ask what "Docetism" can possibly have to do with the doctrine of Holy Scripture. Docetism is the heresy of denying the humanity of Jesus Christ. Those guilty of this heresy either outrightly deny or subtly emasculate the truth that Jesus Christ is "very man." Jesus, according to them, was merely the appearance of a man or in one or another way was deficient in genuine humanity, lacking, perhaps, a human spirit.

The reason why Barth introduces the subject of Docetism into the controversy over Scripture is that he conceives of a strong parallel between Jesus Christ and the Bible. As Jesus is both very man and very God, so also the Bible is both genuinely human and truly divine. To deny or in any way weaken the humanity of the Bible, therefore, is to make oneself guilty of the heresy of Docetism. A denial of the Bible's humanity not only shows that one also has grave difficulty with Jesus' genuine humanity, but such a denial is itself an attack on Jesus' humanity. So intimately are Jesus and Scripture related. Deny Scripture's humanity and, by that very fact, you have denied Jesus' humanity. By the Bible's "humanity," Barth understands not only the fact that God used men to write the Bible but also that the Bible is fallible, just as the men God used to write the Bible were sinful, fallible men. It belongs to genuine "humanity" to be fallible. Therefore, if anyone denies the fallibility of Scripture, he denies Scripture's humanity. And since the strong parallel exists between Scripture and Jesus,

one who denies the humanity of Scripture denies the humanity of Jesus, at the same time. Such an one has succumbed to the dread heresy of Docetism.

To men whose view of Scripture is that of the *Belgic Confession*, "we call such writings holy and divine Scriptures" (Art. III), or of the *Westminster Confession*, "...God (is) the Author thereof; ...it is the Word of God." (Chapter I, Art. IV), this argument may appear so poor as scarcely to deserve refutation. Yet, it is worth careful consideration. First, this argument for a fallible Bible serves notice that the struggle within the Reformed community over the matter of the doctrine of Scripture has taken a new turn. In former times also, there have been men within the Reformed community whose teaching contradicted the Church's confession of an infallible Bible. But they usually, if not always, insisted that they were in full agreement with the Church's confession of an infallible Bible. When the Church opposed their teachings by asserting that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, they readily agreed, although, in fact, their teaching was incompatible with that doctrine.¹ They were on the defensive. Now, it is quite different. Now, those who deny infallibility are on the offensive. Not they who deny, but those who assert infallibility are the heretics.

Secondly, Barth's argument for the Bible's inviolable humanity is worth careful attention because it has gained and, even now, is gaining widespread support. Although I intend to look more closely at this document later, it may be noted, at this point, that the proposed "Confession of 1967," drawn up as the *credo* of Presbyterians whose present confession concerning Scripture is that of the *Westminster Confession*, expresses, overwhelmingly, the humanity of the Bible.

"The words of the Scriptures are the words of men, conditioned by the language, thought-forms, and literary fashions of the places and times at which they were written. They reflect views of life, history, and the cosmos which were then current, and the understanding of them requires literary and historical scholarship..." ("Confession of 1967," Part I, Section III, B.)

It is far, far more than a curious fact that, whereas the historic Reformed creeds assert, exclusively, the divinity of the Bible, this creed will assert, exclusively, the humanity of the Bible. The committee which composed this confession explains the significance of the confession's statement on the Bible to be that, under this confession, scholarship will be "uninhibited by the doctrine of inerrancy."² With the adoption of this confession, thousands of Presbyterians will be committed to the doctrine of the Bible's humanity, a "humanity" of fallibility.

One does well, therefore, to consider Barth's argument for a Bible that is genuinely human and, therefore, fallible.

The very first objection that must be lodged against Barth's view concerns his designation of Scripture as human. Barth likes to assume that friend and foe alike will agree to use the bare expression, "human," in describing Scripture. By no means, however, is this the case. To call the Bible "human," to speak of a human, as well as a divine, element in the Bible, or, even to speak of human authors of the Bible is, in itself, to take a step in the wrong direction. That the Reformed fathers used this or similar language, from time to time, can in large part be ascribed to carelessness. For us, who live in a time when the battle-lines are clearly drawn, to use such language would be not only a careless inaccuracy but a foolhardy wrong. Nor does such a description of the Bible make it impossible for one to do justice to the fact that God used men to write the Bible, to the fact that men wrote, not as automatons, but as consciously active persons so that their personalities are reflected in the books they were used to write, or to the fact that the language of the Bible is thoroughly human language.³ It is striking and highly significant that the Reformed confessions, although recognizing full well God's use of men to write the Scriptures, are unanimous in their failure ever to speak of a "human Bible" or of the "human part of Scripture." The Reformed confessions regard the Bible only as divine and maintain but one Author of the canonical books, God Himself. To call Scripture a human and divine book is to imperil the truth that the Bible is exclusively the Word of God. With this confessional estimation of the Bible, the "Report of the Committee on Inspiration to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod of 1958" is in agreement. This "Report" declares:

"...we may not say that Scripture is both human and divine or that it has a human element and one that is divine. Scripture is wholly divine though given in its entirety through the instrumentality of men."⁴

If it were granted that a strong parallel exists between Jesus and the Bible so that, just as Jesus is

very God and very man, the Bible is both divine and human, it would not necessarily follow that Scripture is fallible. One can do battle with Barth within his own framework of thinking. He contends that, like Jesus, the Bible is human. If, for a moment, we grant this claim, we can put the question to Barth whether the humanity of Jesus implies that He was error-prone, that is, sinful. Jesus was genuinely human without being sinful. Similarly, the Bible is human without being fallible. As the Holy Spirit, in the miracle of the incarnation, guarded the humanity of Christ from defilement of sin, the Holy Spirit, in the miracle of inspiration, protected the humanity of the Bible from error. In keeping with Barth's own presuppositions, therefore, to say that Scripture has errors implies that Jesus was sinful.

Even though we reject Barth's strong parallel between Jesus and the Bible, we conceive of a most intimate relationship between Jesus and the Scripture. The Bible is Jesus' Word, that is, not only the Word about Jesus but also the Word He spoke. Our attitude, therefore, must be the same towards both. That one attitude is the attitude ruled by faith. When Jesus says of Himself that He has no sin, we believe Him and view the whole of His life and works in the light of His claim to be sinless. The result is that we do not find any sins in His life. Now, if someone were to set aside this claim of Christ in order to scrutinize His life and works "objectively," he would find many sins with which to charge Christ. Exactly this was the procedure of the wicked Jews of Jesus' day. They examined Jesus' life empirically, deliberately disregarding Jesus' claim to be the sinless Son of God in our flesh. Of course, then, they spotted many sins. He broke the Sabbath, hob-nobbed with sinners, violated the law and blasphemed. They condemned Him to feath for His sins.

The only alternative to a believing acceptance of Jesus' claim to be sinless, as expressed in the question of John 8:46: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" is the direct repudiation of that claim in unbelief. To disregard Jesus' claim in order to proceed to an "openminded" examination of the evidence of His life is the way of unbelief which cannot but result in the conclusion that Jesus' original claim was a lie.

It is the same with the matter of Scripture's claim to be the Word, inspired of God, and unbreakable. A man can disregard this claim in order to research the Bible, openmindedly, and thus on the basis of the contents to discover for himself whether the Bible has errors or not. But such an one can spare himself time and trouble. He will find many errors and contradictions and much foolishness. He will conclude that the Bible errs. Then, if he is pious, he will begin to explain how this does not affect the *basic* realities of our comfort and salvation. In fact, the errors he will find do not exist. But they will exist to the satisfaction, even the sincere satisfaction, of one who chooses this way, just as there were sins in Jesus' life, as far as the Jews were concerned. For the disregard for Scripture's claim to be the inspired, inerrant Word of God is the way of unbelief. We may even go so far as to

say that there is analogy between the Jews' being offended at Christ's claim to be God, looking, as they were, at His humanity without faith, and Barth's being offended at the Scripture's claim to be the Word of God, looking, as he is, at the human language of Scripture without the prior acceptance that it is the divine Word.

We conclude this section of "Barth's Doctrine of Scripture" with a quotation from Barth and a question directed to this quotation. On page 529 of Volume I, 2, of the *Church Dogmatics* Barth states: "As truly as Jesus died on the cross, ... the prophets and apostles ... in the act of writing ... were ... capable and actually guilty of error in their spoken and written word." Our question is: "If the prophets and apostles were capable and actually guilty of error in their writing of Scripture, how 'truly' did Jesus die on the cross? What certainty do we have that He really died, as an historical fact and as the Savior of men?"

FOOTNOTES

1. One need think only of Dr. R. Janssen and the struggle of the Christian Reformed Church with him in the early 1920's. Despite all his vitiating of Scripture he could insist that he held the doctrine of an infallible Bible. ("Wij gaan er van uit dat de Schrift de onfeilbare Godsopenbaring is." Cf. R. Janssen, *Voortzetting van den Strijd*, p. 5.)

2. p. 29 of the brochure, "The Proposal to Revise the Confessional Position of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America."

3. That the language of the Bible is "thoroughly human," John Calvin emphasized more than once, expressing this fact in the memorable phrase, "God Stammered." What Calvin intended to point out was that, in using human language, the language of men, God condescended toward us, in great mercy. God used language to reveal Himself that is limited in its capability to convey the glorious riches of the great God. But Lester De Koster may not use this vivid expression of Calvin to insinuate that Calvin might have backed the proponents of a fallible Bible. (cf. *The Reformed Journal*, June, 1959, p. 4). What may not be lost out of sight is the fact that "God stammered" so that for all the "roughness" and "meanness" of the Bible, its veracity (inerrancy) may not even be questioned.

I cannot find De Koster's reference to such an expression of Calvin in Calvin's commentary on John 20:25. Calvin writes as follows in his commentary on John 3:12: "(God) condescends to our ignorance; and, therefore, when God prattles to us in Scripture in a rough and popular style, let us know that this is done on account of the love which he bears to us."

4. "Acts of the Fourth Reformed Ecumenical Synod of Potchefstroom, South Africa, August 6-13, 1958," p. 53.

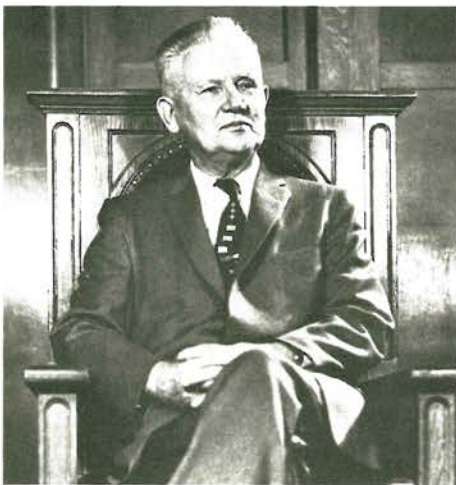
ANNOUNCEMENT

In response to several inquiries and suggestions, the Board of the R.F.P.A. is happy to inform our readers that pictures of our late Editor-in-Chief, the Reverend H. Hoeksema, are now available.

There are two poses available, accompanying this announcement and marked as No. 1 and No. 2. These pictures come in one size, 8" x 10", and are suitable for framing.

To obtain a picture, please follow carefully the following instructions:
1) Be sure to give your own name and address. 2) Specify which picture you want, No. 1 or No. 2 3) Enclose \$2.00 for each picture ordered.
4) Send your order to our business manager:

Mr. James Dykstra
1326 W. Butler Ave., S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507



No. 1



No. 2

TRYING THE SPIRITS—

DOUKHABORISM

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

The name comes from the Russian *dukhabortsy*, meaning "spirit-wrestlers," which signifies in the divinity of man the struggle of his soul with the god within, thus disclosing an inherent albeit unphilosophical pantheism. An illiterate peasant cult, it stems from the *Raskolniki*, schismatics, from the established Russian Orthodox Church. It denies the objective, written Word of God and the sacraments. It also rejects government, which it regards as a Pharaoh persecuting the Hebrews in Egypt. In fact, all external authority, including that of the Bible, they reject. Anarchistic and anti-authoritarian they are, recognizing no rule, no leader, except reason and conscience, and abjuring war, taxation, education, law courts, police regulation and the modern order of society. Here lurk the seeds of an innate nihilist philosophy. They also abstain from animal food, intoxicants and tobacco. This latter practice is not in the interest of health or holiness, but, as it is charged, because they are extremely masochistic, that is, they delight in the constant infliction of pain and suffering upon themselves. It is further believed that for this reason they claim to be living examples of the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, and are built not on the foundation of the apostles, but of the Twelve Death Angels.

One of the early leaders of the band was Kapoustin. He claimed to be a reincarnation of Christ, reminding us of Hinduism, Theosophy and Baha'ism. He established the practice of community of property in opposition to the "iniquity of private ownership," the root of all evil. Yet he and his family controlled large communal estates. (In Communism, The Party controls the people.) But in Canada their Communist life failed again and again. Under this leader in 1841-44 the cult was banished from Russia for its crimes, especially that of assassination. The principles of Communist class struggle and revolution are imbedded in this cult.

Another notable character was Verigin, who in 1892 was banished to Siberia where he learned Leo Tolstoy's Communism. He named the cult "The Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood," and taught the equality and brotherhood of man, that all people of the world are children of God. He was regarded by some of the ignorant members as a super-man.

The Veriginite Dukhabors migrated, some to Cyprus, and some to Canada, in 1898. One authority sets their number at that time as 7,363, another as 7,427, while their present number in Canada is adjudged by some to be 20,000, others put the figure at 11,759 while still others claim that number to be from ten to twenty per cent too high. The 1951 census records the total of 8,170.

The Catholic Encyclopedia says that the Dukhabors in Canada are "good colonists." They are said to be generally well-mannered, hospitable to strangers, rather passive, showing a smiling politeness. It is also said that a spirit of resentment is harbored against all of the outside world, and that particularly the women, who live a more sheltered life than the men, are more aggressively hostile to outsiders. The extremists among them, the die-hard Sons of Freedom, who claim to be pacifists, are notorious for their Ku Kluxer tactics, their nudist protest pilgrimages, arson (i.e., burning of property, their own, the neighbors and the government's) and dynamitings. Also a good bit of extortion, exploitation and hoodlumism goes on among their own number.

Despite what is factually reported in the first paragraph, it nevertheless remains true that the Dukhabor people feel the need of a leader or a group strong enough to support and direct their lives. They feel lost without a directing hand of authority. Many, not able to make it on their own, independently in the outside world, have found it necessary to return to the group, usually to the hatchetmen of the society, the Sons of Freedom. The leader is a dictator, as a despot is usually preferred by the peasant stock. He is an autocratic god who tells them what to do, and who grants them permission for certain privileges, as, e.g., to move to another location. The leaders do not, it is true, have the usual passivity and dependence of the herd instinct peculiar to these people. But they have no real positive leadership ability, having so many native negative and nihilistic tendencies which qualify them only as experts in arson and dynamiting, or similar violence and degradation. In addition, their leadership is hampered by cut throat competition, which like Mexican generals or South American politicians, they vie with one another for the positions of prestige and privilege.

One other chief characteristic of the Dukhabor is said to be that of inborn hostility. This is outwardly manifested in his peculiar acts of violence, burning, bombing, fighting, shooting and naked demonstrations. Some modern psychiatrists claim that this hostility originates in the parent-child relationship. The Dukhabor child cannot express the great hostility he has for his parents. They control the child with threats of punishment, and repress him with threats of love withheld. The child, as a result, attempts to put up a front of love for his parents, even for everybody, and tries to convince himself that he does not hate anyone. Dukhabor hospitality is then said to be a way to deny, more to themselves, than to others, these hostile feelings. They mean to say, "We don't hate, we love. That we eat and drink with you proves it." The deep-seated reason, then, that these people hate the whole world is because they really hate their parents, are too ashamed to admit or show this, and so take out their resentment on others, or on inanimate objects, as, for example, the dynamiting of a bridge.

It is a natural human trait, even in the so called "incorrigibles," to desire approval and love. Perhaps it is true that a maladjusted man's hatred of the world is but a manifestation of his longing to be loved. But he himself is helplessly caught in the death-trap of hate. He is prone to hate God and his neighbor; he is hateful and hating his fellow man. For this reason he cannot love naive Joseph (Gn. 37:4, 5), nor any one else. He is a natural born misanthropist, and that because fundamentally he is enmity against God—he hates God! The Dukhabor is a picture of the natural man. He knows he is in the clutches of a power beyond himself. But he neither will nor can do anything about it. He admits, "We know we are crazy." He wants love, but is unlovely, is hateful, and consequently is not loved, not by the unsympathetic world about him, nor even by the members of his own flaming hate-society, nor by the despotic leaders who constantly and consistently misguide this cult down the road of rejection, depravation, degradation, ruin and destruction.

Dukhaborism has no theology. It is highly mystical, and therefore has an exclusive individualism. God speaks directly to the soul of man, hence he is answerable to no other authority but the light of his own soul. He has a negative sanctimoniousness according to which he is supposed to practice no smoking, no drinking, no dancing, no meat eating, no owning, no voting, no schooling, and, at times, the indispensable mark of Dukhaborism, no clothing. The ideal includes no possession or cherishing of family life. Parents are addressed as "old man" or "old woman." Husbands, wife and child, regarded as sisters and brothers, are equally shared with all in the desired communal life, so proving perfect unselfishness and freedom from envy and lust. This does fly in the face of Holy Writ, but that matters not; God speaks immediately to the soul of every man severally as He will, telling them what to do, whether it be to burn property or to strip themselves naked in public. For each one is led by the dictates of the Christ within. Not only "the kingdom of God is within you," but God himself is within. Hence

everyone has infallible direct revelation. No one could be more absolutely right, nor more completely free of mistake than a Dukhabor. Missionaries have done little with the Dukhabors since they assume that human personality has little place in the Christian life, reason is discounted by them, logic is unknown to them and thinking is sinful.

The Bible is ostensibly revered, but actually belittled, never read publicly in Dukhabor meetings, interpreted mystically and sometimes destroyed in Bible-burning ceremonies. Creeds are rejected, and theologians are simply unknown. Crass superstition is found among them, such as belief in "luck," supernatural signs and premonitions, the evil omens of the Black Cat, the Red Rooster and the Bogey Man, as well as the use of magic, incantations, conjuring up catastrophes (e.g., tornadoes), putting curses on people, and seeking of "divine" healing.

The essential trinity is denied. Hence the Son is not co-equal with God, but "Christ" is merely the experience of mystical religious feeling in the heart. The virgin birth is denied, as also the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit. God is not a personal being, nor a distinct being objective to man. Hence Dukhabors do not bow to God in heaven, they bow to the god in each other. Theirs is a worship of man. They do not reverently worship, they merely acknowledge the spark of the divine in the human mind. Prayer is inward. It is not addressed to God as an independent being. In time of need Dukhabors do not ask for strength; they feel strength surging through their being. They feel God's presence, rather than to invoke it; they neither praise nor thank him. Like the Quakers (who at times come to their aid), they have no minister, no pulpit, no preaching. The doctrine of the Fall of Man is rejected. Nor is the biblical doctrine that Satan instigated the Fall accepted. Adam's sin was that he clothed his nakedness. Sin is viewed through Pelagian bi-focals as weakness which can be overcome, to sinless perfection, by determined dedication. Like Christian Science, evil is regarded as an unreality. Yet it is also believed that since God ordains everything, He also ordains evil, including their forms of it, dynamiting, disrobing and arson, which is all attributed to the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. Of course, in a Pelagian system there is no need for missionary endeavor. Simply follow the teaching of Jesus and the world will be transformed into the kingdom of God.

The doctrine of substitutionary atonement is scorned on the ground that it destroys Christianity as a moral force in the world, and that it nullifies man's responsibility for his own acts. In Dukhaborism there is no resurrection, no eternal punishment, no hell or heaven. At death there ensues a period of soul-sleep for six weeks. Then the soul, which had a pre-existence, and is sometimes reincarnated, is free from the bondage of the flesh. But there is no future life. This life alone they live for. Death is the gateway to the Unknown. These "spirit-wrestlers" are busy striving to that end, burning and bombing themselves into their desired attainment of Nirvana, the blowing out of the candle of being.

IN HIS FEAR—

INASMUCH

by Rev. J. A. Heys

When these lines appear in print "the season of giving" will for weeks have been a thing of the past. However, they are written a few days before Christmas and were suggested by the hustle and bustle to be seen in stores of every type across the land. Stores and means of transportation are crowded. Money flows freely and often lavishly for gifts for all the family and a host of friends. Each year the list becomes bigger, and one begins to wonder how it all can continue.

It makes good business. But does it really have anything to do with Christmas, and is it actually the spirit of Christmas? Although the wise men came a year or two after Christmas and to the house rather than to the stable with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, you do not read of the shepherds doing so and of being instructed by the angels to do so. The angel simply told them to go and see the Gift which God had sent forth into our flesh. They then went home glorifying God. Their gift was one of praise and adoration, of thanksgiving and glorification. But did they exchange gifts and bestow gifts upon men? Then, too, does it now a month after Christmas seem rather out of place even to talk about Christmas and the giving of gifts? But Christmas is not such a transient thing, and the joy of Christmas is not so temporary that it is gone in four weeks. The true Christmas spirit will continue till the next celebration of Christmas. It will be as welcome and refreshing in July as it is in December. The desire to help, to serve, to give gifts will be as strong during the hot summer days as on the crisp winter night that marks our Christmas day in this region.

Although we do not like the name of Christmas, we like to point out that Christ is in that name! The influence of the Roman Catholic Church upon the Protestant church world is to be seen in that name. Although we are vehemently opposed to the idolatrous mass of the Roman Catholic Church as a worship of a creature—bread and wine—instead of the Creator, we still speak of the mass of Christ's birth and contract it into Christmas. It is not always easy to coin a name for an object or an event, but Christmas could and should certainly be replaced with a word or phrase that retains the Christ and links it up with His birth, perhaps, Christ's Birthday, even as we speak of New Year's Day. The point we wish to make, however, is that the spirit of Christmas, and the giving at that time must and does have Christ in it.

Walking through a congested aisle of a department

store, seeing the hustling, somewhat enthusiastic groups of buyers, the thought struck us which in one word we placed at the head of these columns. How much of this exchanging of gifts, if indeed any of it, will be characterized by the Christ Himself in those memorable words which He spoke? "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." And is there indeed such giving today? Are we to suppose that He looks down from His throne on high and smiles upon all this commercialization and all this giving of gifts and says to each and all that they have done this unto Him? Jesus was not speaking of giving our children and friends luxuries and gifts without which they could easily live. He was speaking of the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, the sick, the prisoner. He was not speaking of *exchanging* gifts but of bestowing them upon those who could not return them. The hungry and thirsty could not feed you and give you drink. Were they in such a position they would not be thirsty and hungry themselves. The naked could not dress you in silks and satins, for they had nothing to cover their own naked bodies. The sick and the prisoner could not return your visit and exchange a visit with you. They were confined to their beds and to their cells. And a giving of gifts that stops on December 26 is not one of which Jesus says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of these least of these, ye did it unto me."

The poor we always have with us, Jesus also said. The sick, we will all admit, are here in countless numbers, and prisons have not yet become outmoded although they have been glorified. In our own land and in far off lands there are the naked, the hungry and the thirsty. Here at home there are contributing factors for the situation that the deacons of the churches find none upon whom to reveal the mercy of Christ. Insurance policies and social security are ahead(?) of the Church, and to a great extent have replaced the office of the deacon in the Church. And men are as a rule too proud to go to the deacons but prefer to receive from the world.

Widows in need there still are. Aged couples in institutions of mercy and convalescent homes are not a rare but a common thing today. Men out of work or working on a greatly curtailed schedule can be found. And, if in our own churches we are looking for a place to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the "sick" and "prisoner", our Covenant God has given us the brethren and sisters in Jamaica to help. We have had the privilege the last few months

to speak in behalf of these brethren and sisters and their need in almost all of our churches in Classis West from Lynden, Washington through the Dakotas, Colorado, Mid-west and Illinois, showing in full color the labors performed last Spring by Mr. Harry Zwak and the undersigned; we pleaded for material help to these *whom our God has brought across our path*, whose need HE has shown to us and of whom HE says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me." Dare we turn away and look the other way? Dare we close the door and say? "But, Lord, this is not dramatic enough. Please give us another field." Congregations of ours have sent in the past and recent past to their relief. Congregations are preparing more bundles to be sent in the near future. Let them consider the "Inasmuch" of Jesus and be sure of their reward in the day of days.

Let us also remember the "Inasmuch as ye did it *not* to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." We have and we will receive the heartfelt and sincere thanks of the brethren and sisters in Jamaica. They will not return food and drink to us and give us clothing in return. They are confined to their island and thus as the sick and imprisoned cannot return the visit, they will not be able to come to our shores and make fancy speeches and make dramatic displays of gratitude. They are a humble, sincere people who love the Lord and live in childlike trust and dependence upon Him. They praise Him every day. They displayed a refreshing spirituality in our presence. And we have no reason to believe that it is not there every day and in all their lives. The children displayed a seriousness and spirituality that it would be a delight to see also in our own covenant seed.

But there is another side and a deeper side. After all, naked we came into this world and with an empty stomach, and naked we shall leave with empty stomachs. And whether we go through this life with a full stomach or one that knows good nourishing food only now and then is not too important. Whether we have sickness and disease and are left alone in our grief and sorrow or whether we are surrounded by sympathizers and comforters in our woes is not our deepest concern. Inasmuch as we have alleviated these natural afflictions, we have served our God and King. How much more true it is when we share our spiritual bread with those who are spiritually hungry and our spiritual drink with those who are athirst spiritually! How much richer is the thought that we have done it unto Christ Himself inasmuch as we have brought in the preaching the clothing of the righteousness of Christ to the naked, visited with the Word of God those who are spiritually sick and in the prison house of sin and death! How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace. But also how blessed are these feet. Great shall your reward be in the kingdom to come.

Let us never put the material above the spiritual. Let us share with others the heritage of truth which is ours. And whereas there are these brethren and sisters with the same tongue and language as ours (and it is so easy to converse with them) and they pray and plead

and cry as hungry and thirsty souls for the truth in the richness which our Covenant God has been pleased to give it to us, let us bend every effort. Let us leave no stone unturned. Let us with all the facilities and powers at our disposal share with others — in Jamaica but also here in our own land and wherever our heavenly Father gives us an open door — inasmuch as it is service to our Glorious King.

Our Mission Committee is at present arranging for additional sending of this spiritual bread and drink, this truth of the righteousness of Christ that clothes us and makes us whiter than snow, this truth that speaks of the healing balm for the troubled soul and takes the believer out of his prison to give him liberty and freedom to serve his God. May our people pray for fruit upon these labors. May our churches take a keen and abiding interest in it and be thankful that we have such an open door where the truth we love and cherish is received with open arms and accepted as the Word of God that it is. It was refreshing to find yet in this day and age those who listened with bated breath, having travelled many a mile *on foot*, are willing to be taught and who received the Word with all gladness. We could have wished for the sun to stand still and the days to be longer to be able to satisfy rather than — as was often the case of necessity — to disappoint. And still today the expressions of gratitude for the Word and the work of our churches continue to pour in. May our churches remember that inasmuch as we did this to these, we have done it unto Christ.

Foot note:

After reporting of the work in the Mid-West and showing the brethren and sisters in Jamaica together with their churches in full color, one of our ministers — I wish I had obtained his permission to publish his name, but not having thought of asking him at the time when we showed the pictures in his church and being at the moment unable to do so, I will not willingly offend — suggested that our Sunday Schools and Catechism Classes use their collections for the Jamaican children. A splendid idea to get our children to be mission-conscious. It was in itself interesting how eager the children were in all of our churches to see the pictures of the work in Jamaica. They have an interest in the field, and now they have also seen some of the children of this beautiful island. Let them also have a goal and an active interest in the cause of God's Church as it is to be found in every nation, tongue and tribe. Inasmuch as they will do it to the least of these, they also will do it to Christ.

The same holds true for the many societies in our churches across our country. The labor will not be in vain. It can never be, since the Lord has been raised from the dead to His reward. And He promises us that He will come quickly with that reward. Inasmuch as we have done this to Him, we shall in God's grace share in His reward.

And once again we ask? "Dare we ignore the other side?" Inasmuch as ye have *not* done it to one of the least of these, ye have not done it to me". We have heard the cry for *spiritual* help. We have seen the need for material help. "The eye cannot say unto the

hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble are necessary." I Corinthians 12:21,22.

Never mind a reward in this life. Never mind that this will not get us praise of men (although *these* needy will surely express and have expressed their heartfelt thanks to us). Mind the "inasmuch". And let us be thankful ourselves for a people that is eager to be

taught and a field where it is manifestly true and confessed, "How beautiful upon the mountains (these mountains as well that rise almost up out of the sea to form wave after wave from shore to shore) are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things." There you have the Christmas spirit that never dies. Inasmuch as we have done it in His fear, He will reward us in His grace.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD (Psalm 68:11)

The 'All Men' In Mission Preaching

by Rev. C. Hanko

From all of our previous discussion on this subject there can be no doubt but that Christ brought the ransom for the sins of His people, His own sheep, the church, His Body, the children of God, those given to Him by the Father, the *many*.

There are many passages of Scripture that point this out very clearly. I shall mention a few.

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a *peculiar people*, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14.

"The good shepherd giveth his life for his *sheep*." John 10:11.

"Even as Christ also loved the *church*, and gave himself for it." Eph. 5:25.

"The *church of God*, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20:28.

"He is the saviour of the *body*." Eph. 5:23.

"That Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the *children of God* that were scattered abroad." John 11:51,52.

"And for their sakes (*whom thou hast given me out of the world*) I sanctify myself, that they might be sanctified through the truth." John 17:19.

"To give his life a ransom for *many*." Matth. 20:28.

From all these passages it is evident that Christ died, both as to the intent as well as to the result, for those given to Him by the Father. He shed His blood for the very purpose of redeeming and sanctifying many sons unto the Father.

Yet those who want to maintain a universal atonement will produce as many passages from Scripture, or possibly even more, to maintain their contention that Christ died for the whole human race. There are many passages that might appear to be in flagrant contradiction to the passages quoted above, since they speak of Christ laying down His life for "all", or for "all men", or even for "every man." Allow me to mention a few of these.

"Who gave himself a ransom for *all*." I Tim. 2:6.

"The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of *us all*." Isaiah 53:6.

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon *all men* unto justification of life." Rom. 5:18.

"And that he died for *all*, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." II Cor. 5:15.

"That he by the grace of God should taste death for *every man*." Heb. 2:9.

"To reconcile all things to himself." Col. 1:20.

The question demands an answer: how is it possible to harmonize these apparent contradictions? On the one hand, Scripture speaks of the fact that Christ died as a ransom for *many*. Matth. 20:28. On the other hand, it speaks of the fact that Christ died as a ransom for *all*. I Tim. 2:6.

The remark has been made that if the term "whole world" does not refer to the whole human race, and if "all men" does not mean all men head for head, and if "every man" does not mean every individual that ever lived upon the earth, how can the man on the street ever understand the Bible, and how can a missionary make himself understood by the illiterate on the mission field? Is it not much simpler to grant that when Scripture speaks of "all men" it means all men without exception?

It has also been maintained that both statements are true, yet in a different sense. We can say that in a sense Christ died for all men, and in another sense He died only for the elect. Therefore when Christ speaks of laying down His life for His sheep He does not exclude the rest of humanity. And when He prays in His high priestly prayer for those given to Him by the Father, He does not exclude the rest of the human race.

In that strain the Remonstrants wrote years ago, saying, "When Scripture states that Christ died *for all*

this refers to the fact that He *accomplished* reconciliation, and on the other hand, when it says that Christ shed his blood only *for many*, this applies to the *application* of it, *which is not for all.*" Amesius, as quoted by Dr. A. Kuyper in "Uit Het Woord", vol. III, page 196.

Some such distinction Prof. Dekker must have had in mind when he wrote, "There are, therefore, three senses in which we may legitimately speak of the atonement as being universal in design, i.e., the *sufficiency* and *availability* of salvation for all men and the divine *desire* that all will receive it. The only point at which Scripture and the Reformed confessions point to a limited design in the atonement is at the point of *efficacy*. Only there can a doctrine of limited atonement be formulated which does not do clear violence to Biblical teaching concerning the universal love of God." Reformed Journal, December, 1962)

Dr. A. Kuyper refers to this distinction as made by the Remonstrants as an untenable position that is a mere playing with words. For, he goes on to say, by thus splitting in two the work of salvation, so that the accomplishment of reconciliation and the application of it are separated, then Christ ceases to be the fountain of our salvation, and His "It is finished" is an untruth on Jesus' lips. If salvation is merited for many, but is realized in only a few, then the accomplishment of reconciliation is only half realized by the suffering and death of God's Son, and without the application, instead of serving toward our salvation, only makes our condemnation the greater. (See, "Uit Het Woord", vol. III, page 197.)

We can agree with that. But let me add, that Prof. Dekker and all those who wish to make the distinction mentioned above, must prove from Scripture that this distinction always applies. Let them prove that whenever Scripture speaks of Christ laying down His life as a ransom for all, this refers *only* to the sufficiency, the availability, and the divine desire to save. While on the other hand, whenever Scripture speaks of Christ laying down His life for His sheep, as a ransom for many, it refers to the efficacy of the atonement. I am going to show in this article that this is not true. And that is certainly not a simple distinction that appears so obviously on the surface that the casual reader of Scripture will recognize it. Nor is this a simple distinction that can be made to the uneducated unbelievers in the mission field with the patent statement, "Christ died for you."

Anyone who reads Scripture carefully must soon realize that there is no contradiction at all between the statements that express that Christ gave His life as a ransom for *many* and those that teach that Christ gave Himself as a ransom for *all*.

First of all, these are many passages in Scripture that show plainly that "all" or "all men" cannot mean every member of the human race. I will quote just a few.

"And he departed and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him; and *all men* did marvel." Mark 5:20. Here the very context limits the "all men" to the people of Decapolis. But even so, no one would insist that this statement must be inter-

preted to include every single individual in Decapolis, babies and all, as if without exception they all marvelled at the power of Jesus. We do not even do that in our daily conversations.

"And they came to John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and *all men* come to him." John 3:26. Here again the "all men" must be limited to the Jews of that day. And we can safely exclude many prominent Jews, such as the scribes and Pharisees. The text refers plainly to all kinds of men.

"And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to *all men*, as every man had need." Acts 2:45. Here the "all men" is limited by the very context to those within the group of believers.

These examples could readily be multiplied. But why quote more? We all know that the term "all men" is most generally limited by the context. Rarely do we meet the term that it is not immediately evident even to the casual reader that this is limited to a certain group. And those rare cases in which it is not perfectly evident must certainly be interpreted in the light of the overwhelming testimony of Scripture that Christ's atonement is for His people.

Let me briefly touch upon a few of the passages referred to above to show that this is actually the case when Scripture speaks of Christ as a ransom for all men.

In I Tim. 2:6 Paul writes that Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all. A glance at the previous verses will show that in verse 1 of this chapter the apostle speaks of making prayers for *all men*. Immediately he qualifies this by saying that he has in mind particularly kings and all those who are in authority. Evidently the church had been neglecting to pray for their enemies and those who despitefully used them. Paul is therefore referring to *all kinds* of men. And he still has all classes of men in mind when he says in verse 4, "Who will have *all men* to be saved." So that when he informs us that Christ died as a ransom for all, he especially wants to impress on us that Christ died as a ransom for all the elect, no matter what their class or position may be.

In Isaiah 53:6 the prophet is speaking for himself and for all of God's chosen people. He is confessing their faith in the suffering Servant of God. And therefore he declares, "The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah had just confessed in the previous verse, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; (and notice the efficacy of this accomplished work) and with his stripes we are healed." And then the prophet adds the confession: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." Upon which he confidently declares, "And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The "all" is limited by "us", those of Israel who experience the fruit of that accomplished work in their hearts. They "all" without exception know that the burden of their sins is borne away.

We hear that same triumphant confession from the lips of Paul in Rom. 8:32, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for *us all*, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" Do not fail to notice that Paul is perfectly confident that, since God delivered up His own Son for us, he will also surely give us all the benefits that Christ merited, even the full salvation of life eternal.

Obviously the same thing is taught in Romans 5:18. "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Here the comparison is made between the legal solidarity of the human race in Adam and the legal solidarity of God's people in Christ. By the offence of one man all who were included in him came under condemnation. And by the righteousness

of Christ all who are in Christ are justified, even without exception.

Therefore when we read in Hebrews 2:9 that Christ tasted death for "every man", nothing is said in the statement as such just who are included. But it does become evident from the next verse that this "every man" includes every single son of God. Because God's very purpose in the suffering of Christ was to bring "many sons unto glory."

Any student of Scripture must see that Christ is always the center of God's revelation to us. He is the Firstborn among many brethren, Who will unite all things in heaven and on earth in Himself in the new creation to the glory of the Father. He fully reconciles all things in heaven and on earth unto God, the wicked excluded. Col. 1:20. And there is no reason why that cannot be preached on the mission field.

THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP— *'O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.'*
Psalms 90:9a

Assurance of Covenant Membership

by Rev. G. Vanden Berg

We have been considering the purpose of the institution of the Lord's Supper from the viewpoint of its objective significance, as set forth in the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. This all-important aspect of the sacrament may not in any way be minimized. In all that takes place in this celebration we must be brought to see the Christ of Scripture as He executes the eternal counsel of redemption. The aim of this ordinance of God is to "remember Him by it".

There is, however, another viewpoint from which we must consider the institution of the Lord's Supper. A mere objective contemplation of the realities of the suffering of Christ, climaxing in His death for sin and crowned with His glorious resurrection, is not adequate. The benefits of His perfect work must be made ours, and we must, through this very sacrament, be assured of our membership in His covenant. It is imperative that we see how the benefits of Christ's redemptive work are applied in and through the Lord's Supper unto us. Only then can the celebration of this sacrament be to our spiritual profit.

With this in mind we would consider the following significant paragraph of the Communion Form:

"And that we might firmly believe that we belong to this covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His last Supper, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples and said, 'Take, eat, this is My body which is broken for

you, this do in remembrance of Me; in like manner also after supper He took the cup, gave thanks and said, Drink ye all of it; this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins; this do ye as often as ye drink it in remembrance of me': that is, as often as ye eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you shall thereby as by a sure remembrance and pledge, be admonished and assured of this My hearty love and faithfulness towards you; that, whereas you should otherwise have suffered eternal death, I have given My body to the death of the cross, and shed My blood for you; and as certainly feed and nourish your hungry and thirsty souls with my crucified body, and shed blood, to everlasting life, as this bread is broken before your eyes, and this cup is given to you, and you eat and drink the same with your mouth, in remembrance of Me."

Of significance here is the fact that the Communion Form speaks of an "admonition and assurance". These are not to be divorced, for reality is, that assurance that we are partakers of the benefits of Christ can be had only in the way of hearing and heeding the admonition. God works through the means of admonitions. This same approach is found in our Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 28, where the question is asked: "How art thou *admonished* and *assured* in the Lord's Supper, that thou art a partaker of the one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross, and of all His benefits?" Here also it is through the admonition that

the assurance of being partaker of His benefits is attained. And then it is also worth while to note the answer of the Catechism to this important question. It points us to the admonition when it states: "That Christ has commanded me and all believers, to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup, in remembrance of Him." Unless we can do this, that is, eat and drink Christ by faith, the observance of the outward sacrament cannot afford us any assurance of salvation. We must hear the Word of Christ, addressing Himself to us, calling us to come to Him, to believe on Him, to eat and drink Him. Only when we have heard and heeded this command of Christ are we receptive to the comforting and assuring promises contained in the sacrament and which the Catechism delineates as follows:

"First, that His body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and His blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes, the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and further, that He feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, with His crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of the minister, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ."

One of the purposes of the Lord's Supper is to assure believers of these wonderful realities. It first directs faith to the objective work of Christ, accomplished through all his sufferings and death, and then, by means of the admonition of the Word, it applies the benefits of this work subjectively to the hearts of the children of God.

This does not mean that the application of the benefits of the Lord's Supper is dependent upon our acceptance of the Word of Christ as though our heeding His Word were a condition or pre-requisite for the impartation of the benefits. On the contrary, our hearing the Word and heeding it, or, in other words, our believing Christ's instruction, is already the fruit of His grace and marks the beginning of the process in which all the blessings of salvation are ultimately received. The point is that without this beginning there can be no process. Further, the point is that the benefits of the Lord's Supper are not designed for everyone but are bestowed by the Spirit of Christ only upon those who are believers, and faith is brought to manifestation, not through mystical and emotional devices, but by the hearing of the Word of God. Always God works assurance in the hearts of His children, not apart from but through His Word.

This is also the teaching of our Canons. In Chapter V, Article 10 we confess:

"This assurance, however, is not produced by any peculiar revelation contrary to, or independent of the Word of God; but springs from faith in God's promises, which He has most abundantly revealed in His Word for our comfort."

The first question for us therefore is: "Can we hear the Word of Christ enjoining us in the sacrament to believe that He has instituted this Supper as a remembrance of His death which is the only ground and foundation of our salvation?" Further, do we

believe that in the institution of this sacrament Christ gave the command to us, as well as to His disciples, that we should take the bread and eat it as representing His body that was broken for us and the cup which is the new testament of His blood?

Believing this, the sacrament of Holy Communion affords us with a wonderful and rich assurance. Christ Himself pledges to us His hearty love and faithfulness. He assures us that whereas we should have suffered eternal death, we need not die, for He has given His body to the death of the cross and shed His blood for us. In that sacrifice He has accomplished complete and perfect salvation for us. And although, as our Belgic Confession expresses it, "though the manner surpasses our understanding, and cannot be comprehended by us, as the operations of the Holy Ghost are hidden and incomprehensible," nevertheless, we are confidently assured that Christ will certainly feed and nourish our hungry and thirsty souls with His crucified body, and shed blood, to everlasting life, as the bread is broken before our eyes, and the cup is given to us, and we eat and drink the same with our mouths, in remembrance of Him. This is our assurance that He has taken us into His everlasting covenant and makes us partakers of all its benefits. And when you can leave the table of the Lord with that confidence, you have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Then your cup runs over and your joy is full. In this confident assurance you can meet all the vicissitudes of the present life, glory in tribulation and wait with patience for the day of victory in which sin and death shall be swallowed up forever. Let us remember that it is to this *end*, for this purpose, that the Lord has instituted His Supper. Do not construe this purpose or end as a mere idealism, a vain wish, an impotent desire but remember that this is also reality, for Christ is the Sovereign Lord Who always accomplishes His purpose. It is not something which Christ attempts to do, but it is that which He sovereignly works. If then the celebration of His Supper does not bear this fruit in us, there is something wrong with us that necessitates an immediate and thorough self-examination. Even as the evidence of this fruit demonstrates the reality that we are "in the faith", its absence points indubitably to a very serious spiritual deficiency in our lives.

In conclusion then we would have you note that the Lord works this assurance in His people by directing their faith to Himself. Thus we quote further our beautiful Communion Form:

"From this institution of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see that He directs our faith and trust to His perfect sacrifice (once offered on the cross) as the only ground and foundation of our salvation, wherein He is become to our hungry and thirsty souls, the true meat and drink of life eternal. For by His death He hath taken away the cause of our eternal death and misery, namely, sin, and obtained for us the quickening Spirit, that we by the same (Who dwelleth in Christ as in the head, and in us as His members), might have true communion with Him and be made

partakers of all His blessings, of life eternal, righteousness and glory."

The picture is very beautiful. Christ has removed the cause of our eternal death, namely, sin. He has obtained for us the living Spirit Who unites us in one glorious body with Christ, the Head, and we the members. To that body in all its members the Spirit of Christ dispenses according as He wills, all the gifts and blessings of eternal life. By that same Spirit we are then united in true brotherly love in one body and this love we are to show, not only in word, but also in very deed toward one another. This communion of saints is the practical fruit of the true celebration of the Lord's Supper.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit."

This is the command of the Word of God. And the

Spirit is grieved when, in the communion of saints, the brother is shunned, or despised, or maltreated. Then there is no working of faith, but the works of the flesh come to manifestation, and these works, which are always corrupt, cause schisms in the body of Christ and destroy the communal life of the church. Because faith is not yet made perfect in us and the flesh is strongly with us, we are enjoined to seek the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to assist us in the exercise of brotherly love through His Holy Spirit. By His grace we hear the admonitions of His Word and walk as obedient children, enjoying the full assurance that we are members of His Covenant, that Christ died for us and rose again for our justification, and that we are heirs of eternal life.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mary Martha Circle of the South East Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to three of its members, Mrs. Samuel Reitsma, Miss Audrey Reitsma and Mrs. Gerald De Vries in the loss of the husband and father

MR. SAMUEL REITSMA

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

Mrs. F. Ondersma, Pres.

Mrs. D. Van Der Schaaf, Vice Pres.

BOOK REVIEWS—

The Kingdom of the Cults

THE KINGDOM OF THE CULTS, Walter R. Martin, M.A., Zondervan Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.; 443 pages; \$5.95.

The author is an ordained Baptist minister, teacher in the famous New York Bible Class in the downtown Baptist Church. He lectures extensively and has written volumes on the subject of Cultism. As to his orthodoxy, we let him speak for himself: "I stand on the ramparts of Biblical Christianity as taught by the Apostles, defended by the church fathers, rediscovered by the reformers, and embodied in what is sometimes called 'Reformed Theology' He reveals his extensive knowledge of the Holy Scriptures which he uses to refute the false religions of the Cults.

His approach to the subject is the theological evaluation of their teachings, and the contrast between them and Biblical theology, with the emphasis upon exegesis and doctrine. He stresses throughout his work the

authority of Scripture as a criterion for measuring either the truth or the falsity of the cultist's claims. It becomes evident, when reading his book, that uppermost in his mind is the search for the answer to the basic question once asked by our Lord Himself, "What think ye of the Christ, Whose Son is He?" His entire 17th chapter is devoted to ask this question from each of the major cults under his scrutiny. We would recommend the same approach to the serious reader who would "try the spirits whether they be of God". This book will add to your enjoyment of the rubric written by Rev. R. C. Harbach in our Standard Bearer.

The book is written in a very readable style, the average reader will find no difficulty with the language, will not find himself wading in murky depths of reasoning; the author's meaning is always quite clear. His analogies are to the point, for instance: he notes that bankers are taught to recognize counterfeit money by learn-

ing what the genuine looks and feels like; he then concludes that if the average Christian would again become familiar with the great foundations of his faith he would be able to detect those counterfeit elements so apparent in the Cult Systems which set them apart from Biblical Christianity. For the non-conformist, who likes to read magazines from back to front, this book is ideal, for having read the first three chapters he can read the other twelve in any order he pleases. We read, "Father Divine", followed by, "Black Muslims" and "Baha'ism", and so on, according to the attraction they had for us.

With some minor reservations we recommend this book to our readers. We feel that having put the book down you will agree with the author, "that a careful consideration of the Biblical evidence will allow no other conclusion than that Satan is the prime mover and architect of the major cult systems".

J. M. Faber

NEWS OF OUR CHURCHES—

February 15, 1966

Rev. J. Kortering, of Hull, Iowa, declined the call from Hudsonville.

Hudsonville has now called Rev. J.A. Heys from a trio which included the Revs. M. Schipper and H. Veldman.

Edgerton, Minn. has tendered a call to Rev. D. Englesma of Loveland, Colo.

Randolph, Wis. has announced their newest trio: Revs. D. Engelsma, G. Lanting and H. Veldman.

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Prof. H.C. Hoeksema will begin a series of Lenten sermons in March. The topics: March 6 — "Christ's Bruising and God's Good Pleasure"; March 13 — "Responsibility at the Cross".

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Jamaican News. According to Synod's decision, work has begun on the plan of conducting correspondence courses with the ministers (and their consistory members) of the Protestant Reformed Churches of Jamaica. Rev. J.A. Heys, of our South Holland Church, is busy preparing and developing this course, using printed lessons augmented by tapes containing special instructions to the students taking the course. The Introductory Lesson found its way to our desk and we share some of it with you. In it Rev. Heys explains the *purpose* and the *goal* of the course, and gives some definite instructions to his scholars as to their preparations for the course. With each lesson an assignment of written work is given. The tape that accompanied the first lesson began with a prayer for God's blessing upon this new venture, followed by an expression of Christian greeting from our P.R. Churches. Then a friendly talk explaining the system which will be followed. The *Purpose* is to be that of assistance to the P.R. ministers in Jamaica in their ministry; to share with them the truth of Reformed faith along the strict Scriptural lines as drawn up in The Three Forms of Unity. The *Goal* is the study of the development of the church of God in the Old Testament period; and the development of the five basic truths of Scripture as formulated in the Five Points of Calvinism — the embodiment of the Reformed faith. The tapes to be returned will carry questions from the students regarding their studies which are not clear to them. With words of encouragement to his far-off students Rev. Heys closed his first taped session with thanksgiving to God for this opportunity to share our precious heritage with His children in the Island of Jamaica. To date five lessons have been prepared, the first of which is already furrowing the foreheads of the solemn students starving for Scripture study. It would be interesting to hear directly from the Jamaicans as to their reaction to this study course.

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The Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed School Society met in Doon's church Feb. 4 to discuss proposals of the Board regarding property and building.

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Holland's Ladies Society met in the home of one of their shut-in members, Mrs. N. Jonker, of Muskegon, the week of Feb. 6, in observance of her 89th birthday anniversary Feb. 12.

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Loveland's congregation has agreed to the consistory's proposal to add to their weekly budget another envelope containing 50¢ per week per family for a Building Fund.

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South Holland is using a new bulletin cover incorporating a drawing of their new church by Mr. C. Nymeyer. They expect to occupy the new building in May. Installation of pews and yard work must be completed before the dedication date.

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Rev. B. Woudenberg, of Lynden, Wash. is firmly embarked on his new project of holding weekly evening study classes in his church. These sessions are devoted to a study of Biblical doctrines, and are open to the public. Recordings of the meetings are taped, and are available to those who are interested in this study but who are unable to attend the classes. This is a free service offered by Lynden's consistory. They announce that, "the program outlined in this first Introduction is designed...to guide those who wish to develop in the knowledge of the Word of God in an orderly study of Christian doctrine". Lynden, we wish you "God-speed"!

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We lift from Southeast's Feb. 13 bulletin the following paragraph: "The Reformation Day Rally speech will soon be off the press. It may interest you to know that we have received requests for copies from as far south as Bethany, Okla., and as far north as Manistee, Mich. If you wish a copy, send your name to Rev. Schipper. It will be reserved for you." We do not doubt that Rev. Schipper will also honor requests from our readers; ask him!

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A *Quote* from Oak Lawn's bulletin, which is in turn a *quote* from Doon's Church Directory: "One of the strongest indications of the spiritual vitality of the members of the church is how well the various societies are attended. Well attended societies that have lively discussions of the Word of God indicate that that church is full of living members."

...see you in church.

J.M.F.