

The
Standard
Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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ATTENTION-COMMITTEES OF SYNOD

All Standing Committees of Synod are herewith reminded of the rule that their reports must be in to undersigned by April 15, 1966 for publication in the Synodical Agendum. Will the secretaries of these committees take note of this reminder and send your reports in at the earliest possible date.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Stated Clerk of Synod

G. Vanden Berg

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MEDITATION—

The Minority Report

Rev. M. Schipper

"And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: and they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel." Numbers 14:6-10

The minority report!

Of Joshua and Caleb, the faithful two of the twelve who were sent to spy out the promised land of Canaan! Two who dared to challenge the report of the majority, and the threats of a milling, revolting congregation! Who could not be silent when the Word of the Lord and His promises were cast aside in unbelief!

They rent their clothes, a sign of deepest humilia-

tion and sorrow because of Israel's sin of rebellion!

And they lifted up their voices!

The report of the minority!

A good report! Not only because it was factual! That, too, it was, to be sure!

They, too, had been in the land! They had seen all that the majority had observed! They had not gone a different way than the rest. They had not turned

their eyes in a different direction when the object of vision was not pleasing to the eye of flesh. They testify that surely it was a land that floweth with milk and honey! They did not hide the fact that the cities were walled and fortified! They make no attempt to deny or to cover up the fact that the inhabitants of the land were great and strong! The truth need not be covered up for fear that it will hurt the people. The truthful will not hesitate to speak the facts even though it hurts!

The difference between the minority and the majority was that the former had been with God in the land! They saw exactly what the majority did, but with the eye of faith! And what they saw by faith, they reported!

Surely it is an exceeding good land! The original text may be literally translated: "It is a good land, very, very!"

And not only so, but the minority report states assuredly: "The Lord will bring us into this land and give it to us." And they continued: "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land." This is not to be interpreted as if it were a matter of doubt that Israel would be the object of God's delight, or that He would bring them into the land. The very opposite is true! This is very plain from what Joshua and Caleb will yet say in their report. But even apart from that, the "if" clause: "If the Lord delight in us, etc.," is not intended to cast doubt in the minds of the children of Israel, as if it could ever be questioned that the Lord found delight in His people; or that His promise to bring His people into Canaan and rest could ever fail to be realized. Rather, this presentation is intended to impress upon its audience the truth that the Lord delights Himself in His faithful people, but He hates all who are rebellious and who turn against Him!

And as far as the people of the land are concerned, Joshua and Caleb meant to say: "You need not fear them, for they are bread for us." This expression is found in other places in the Old Testament. It meant that as with the mouth bread is eaten, so too the enemy will speedily be consumed. Also the minority declare: "their defence is departed from them." The correct rendering of this passage is found in the margin of some Bibles, which is, "their shadow is gone away from them." This can mean one of two things. Either they have lost their shadow, hence they are nothing. Or, the shadow is the sign of protection, similar to the pillar of cloud that constantly protected Israel in their journeys. We are inclined to this last idea, because it is in harmony with the context which refers directly to the pillar of cloud. (14:14). So that the reporters meant to say: They have no protector as we have! That, too, belongs to the facts that must make up the report of the faithful!

Indeed, this was a good report!

* * *

A good report!

With a two-fold purpose!

In the first place, it was meant to allay all fear! The minority were deeply conscious that the whole congregation was wrapped in the dark shades of unbelief and fear. And that, too, while they, Joshua and Caleb

were living in the light of the Divine Presence. That's what faith does, you see. O, they were blessed men, I tell you! And what a contrast they made to that fearful congregation! A contrast one often finds among the people of God! You have some of whom you can have no doubt at all as to their being children of God. They are fearless and joyful! They are full of confidence and courage! But you also have some who never rise to the heights of divine revelation! They are always full of doubts and fears! Always they are overcast with clouds, either looking at themselves or their circumstances. They never seem to be bright and happy! This is truly lamentable! It ought not so to be! There is something radically wrong with them! As we mentioned before, there were children of God in that rebellious congregation. They were not all reprobates! There were those who were weak in faith, carnal and fearful! And the report of the minority is intended to soften this fear! This Caleb tried to do already before the majority had finished their report. Already then he had tried to show that faith should overcome all obstacles. And now together they try to still the people! Faith, you see, is the parent of wise courage!

But in the second place, their positive purpose was to encourage obedience! Rebellion is disobedience and apostasy. Israel's sin is not mere faint-hearted shrinking! For who of the bravest and the most obedient does not shrink when the hour of battle strikes? The bravest of soldiers, while they wait for battle, will tell you how much they would have liked to escape. No, Israel is not to be severely rebuked because they feared. But their sin was wilful and deliberate rejection of Jehovah's rule! They deliberately charged God with tricking them to their death. They boldly threw Jehovah and Moses away. And their rebellion and apostasy was based on a certain distrust of the Lord's Word. Not only did they disbelieve that God would take them into the land, but they literally said: We will not go with God into that land. Hence Joshua and Caleb exhorted them to obedience!

* * *

And what was the effect of this minority report?

A two-fold effect!

On the one hand, it incurred the wrath of the people!

This is what a minority report usually does, you know! History is replete with examples of this. Think of the time of Noah, before the flood! Of Noah we read that he was a preacher of righteousness! But he was a lone figure! All alone he built the ark, while he testified to his generation that the Lord was angry with the children of men and He was of a mind to destroy them with a great flood! And what did the people do about it? They simply turned their faces from him in disgust, and no doubt counted him as one who was not complete in his senses. Think, too, of Daniel and his three friends as lone witnesses in the days of the Babylonian captivity! What was the effect of their report? You know, Daniel was cast into the den of lions, while the three friends were cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. Jeremiah was a lone figure in the court of the king, calling the king and his subjects to obedience to the will of the Lord. And he was cast

into a dungeon, where, unless God came to his rescue, he would have been left to rot! Paul stood alone before the council, giving testimony to the Word of God, for which he was imprisoned, and later, as tradition has it, he was beheaded for his faith! Jesus, Who brought the greatest of all minority reports, stood alone before the Jewish council, before Pontius Pilate and Herod, and they took Him and nailed Him to the accursed tree! Luther stood alone before the Diet of Worms with his testimony: Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, so help me God! And they banished this leader of the Reformation from the church!

Many, many, more are the examples that could show that the truth is never popular! There is no place for it in this world, or in the human heart! Lies will be received in every shape, but the truth almost never!

Joshua and Caleb encountered what all true witnesses must expect! Verily there were thousands of voices raised against two who simply trusted in God and spoke the truth!

It is most important to tell the truth, also today in this Babel of a majority of false witnesses!

But we must expect the stones!

"But all the congregation bade stone them with stones!" That is the effect of the minority report!

However, there is no need for fear!

Before the stones can fly, Jehovah will make His appearance!

That was the other effect of this report!

You see, it was a case of God's glory being at stake! He cannot allow His Name to be profaned! Nor will He permit another to steal His glory! Even if He must, as He did, reveal His glory in His holy wrath!

And so we read: "And the glory of the Lord appeared

in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel."

Woe be unto the rebels when our God, Who is a consuming fire over against all the workers of iniquity, makes His appearance in His wrath! Of the fierceness of this wrath you may read in the verses that follow our text! Let the wicked majority weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon them!

Blessed are the faithful minority!

The favor of Jehovah their God is upon them that trust in His Name and His unchangeable promises, though they be a minority!

It is evidently the Lord's intention here to prove exactly that, that He hears the voice of His faithful servants when they attest to His truth, and declare an implicit faith in His abiding Word!

The Lord will see to it that the faithful minority shall never be brought to shame!

Not only, therefore, is the appearance of the glory of the Lord a precursor of the day of His wrath, but it is also the sign of His favor upon His beloved, that is always ready to deliver them from the most violent adversaries!

Be faithful then, all ye that must give testimony to the truth! Though the faith of many shall wax cold, be thou strong in the faith! Though your numbers be few, forget not that He that is with you is more than they that be with them!

And when you shall come into His heavenly tabernacle, you will see Him in all the glory of His grace in the face of Christ Jesus!

World without end!

Amen and Amen!

EDITORIAL—

An Open Letter to the *Reformed Journal* and Dr. James Daane

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Dear *Reformed Journal*:

Rather ironically there appears in your department "As We See It" (*Reformed Journal*, January, 1966) an article entitled "Herman Hoeksema 1886-1965," which certainly betrays lack of twenty-twenty vision, and in fact, which in more than one respect cannot be the product of *sight* whatsoever.

Worse than that, however, the article is at least in two respects contrary to factual honesty and Christian journalistic ethics. For this reason I am addressing you in this "open letter" and admonishing you to make apology and correction.

My reference is, in the first place, to the following passage from Dr. Daane's article:

He (Herman Hoeksema) twice told this writer, who has often publicly disagreed with his theology, that had he seen in 1924 all the factors that were at work, "I probably would not have done what I did." He seemed to recognize, what this writer thinks is true, that he could have retained his theology and remained in the Christian Reformed Church had he played his role differently.

Personally, I am not very interested in Dr. Daane's evaluation, either favorable or unfavorable, of Herman Hoeksema; and I have more than one reason for this lack of interest. For one thing, I believe that we all stand far too close to the scene to make a true and a ripe evaluation. For another, Dr. Daane has always

revealed himself as lacking completely in any sympathy toward, if not lacking completely in understanding of, Herman Hoeksema's theology. I mean this. I sometimes very seriously doubt whether Daane understands Hoeksema's theology; for he has seldom, if ever, presented it correctly. But he has never revealed any sympathy toward it. And therefore one could hardly expect any kind of accurate and unbiased evaluation from Daane. For still another, personally I am simply not interested in all these human evaluations. And I will not take the trouble to acknowledge them or reply to them. I knew Herman Hoeksema, I dare to say, more intimately than any living man. I knew him as a father and as a man, as a teacher and as a preacher, as a theologian and as a spiritual father, as a friend and as a colleague. I knew him and I loved him. And I knew him in all the above respects as being characterized by this: by the grace of God he loved and was valiant for the truth of God according to Scripture and our Reformed confessions. That is my evaluation. But I do not doubt but that you would say that I am biased because I am his son. So of what value are these evaluations by men? Mine, I am sure, is of little consequence to you; and yours is of still less weight with me.

But I am concerned about your unethical conduct as revealed in the above quotation, and that for the following reasons:

1. I consider it totally unethical to cite a dead man in an unfavorable light when he can no longer reply. This purported statement was made at the latest, mind you, in mid-1964. And now, after a man is dead, it is brought up.

2. I consider it highly unethical to make a *partial* purported quotation of this kind. Dr. Daane supplies the context and the condition of this purportedly quoted conclusion. Even if the quotation itself is true, it reminds me somewhat of a news conference in which a quoted answer is paired with an altogether different question from the original one.

3. I consider it highly unethical to quote from a private, personal (to the best of my recollection, *unwitnessed*) conversation, especially when the purported quotation is contrary to every public utterance and every written word which a person has ever made. I could quote from many a personal conversation with the deceased. I could also quote from the deceased's report to me of his conversation with Dr. Daane. I could also quote the deceased's opinion of Daane from private conversation. But I will not do so. It cannot be verified.

4. Finally, I make bold to say that the statement which Daane purportedly quotes was never made, not in the context in which Daane claims to cite it. If Daane is referring by Hoeksema's "playing of his role" to ecclesiastical politicking and strategy, then I reply: he was utterly naive when it came to "politics" in the church. If he is referring to Hoeksema's theological stand, then I reply: that is surely one thing on which he would never change. Hoeksema did not "play a role," nor did he leave the church, nor did he have the choice of remaining in the church. He was cast out!

And those who were instrumental in casting him out themselves testified, "*Met de belijdenis kan het niet.*" Personally, I could conceive of only one context in which he ever would have made this purported statement; and that is this, that if he had foreseen all the struggle and all the grief and the long hours of interminable labor and the thanklessness of many who received their instruction from him, he probably would not have had the courage to go on. But as far as his stand and his actions circa 1924 and thereafter were concerned, Herman Hoeksema never had any regrets. And all that he ever said and wrote bears witness to this.

Hence, I would characterize the above quotation from Daane's article as a "low blow." He should apologize and make correction. Such journalistic ethics reflect poorly upon the *Reformed Journal*.

* * *

There is another statement in the same article of James Daane which is factually dishonest. It should also be corrected. The statement is this: "...and he lived long enough to know the painful years when his churches crumbled and the cause to which he gave his life lost its force."

Now Daane certainly must not write untrue things like this, and especially not under the heading "As We See It." For Daane has never seen this, for the simple reason that it never took place. And if Daane nevertheless claims that he has seen this, he is suffering from editorial hallucinations. I will be charitable and grant that Dr. Daane is not being deliberately dishonest. But he is certainly playing fast and loose with the truth when he so facetiously writes this.

Daane is referring, of course, to "the painful years" of 1953. And they were indeed painful to all of us. But when you read this statement, you certainly get the impression that the Protestant Reformed Churches fell into ruins and that they are no longer in existence and that the Protestant Reformed "cause" completely lost its vitality and its power to live and to act as a denomination of churches.

But certainly Dr. Daane knows better than this.

He knows, of course, that we lost considerably in numbers; his denomination has swallowed up those numbers since 1953. He could figure out that we lost considerably in financial power, with the result that our people are contributing, both locally and denominationally, more than formerly. And let me tell him in parentheses: they are doing so cheerfully, so that we have more than we need! Dr. Daane knows, too, that we lost an element among our ministers and members who were not Protestant Reformed. I am sure that I need not remind Daane that he himself gave them the testimony that their "conditional theology" was not consistent with the historic Protestant Reformed position. I am also fairly certain that Dr. Daane knows that these "De Wolf churches" after 1953 completely crumbled as separate churches and capitulated to the Christian Reformed Churches, who welcomed them without changing the binding character of the Three Points.

But, lest Daane is not aware of it, — though I cannot imagine that this is possible, — let me remind him:

1. That though we are small in membership and number of churches, we are a complete denomination with a complete ecclesiastical structure. We have even added three congregations to our number since the split.

2. Though we suffered great financial loss through litigation and by reason of the fact that we were unrighteously deprived of our synodical funds, yet the Lord has provided abundantly also in this respect. Since the time of the split, at least six of our congregations have obtained new church properties; of these six, there are two who have completely new buildings. In addition, a seventh is in the process of building a spacious and beautiful new structure to accommodate a growing flock. You see, neither our buildings nor our congregations have crumbled.

3. Although we have no magnificent campus, our churches have continued to operate a seminary, where our future ministers receive a complete theological training for the ministry and a thoroughly Reformed course of instruction. Moreover, in recent years our churches have demonstrated their vitality and devotion tangibly by calling two of our men to full-time duties in the seminary in spite of a severe minister shortage.

4. Our churches have continued to be obedient to their mission calling, both at home and beyond the borders of our country. For a time we had a full-time missionary in the field; at present we perform our mission labors without one. Besides, we have maintained a strong radio witness over several stations.

5. In several localities our Protestant Reformed people operate and support, sometimes at great sacri-

fice, our own Christian elementary and junior high schools, so that our children may be trained consistently with "the doctrine taught in this Christian church." In the Grand Rapids area, moreover, where we have the greatest numerical strength, we are also in the planning stages for our own high school.

6. We have continued to publish the *Standard Bearer*. In fact, in terms of subscriptions it is on the upgrade. Moreover, our magazine is self-sustaining financially, being supported solely by subscriptions and gifts. In addition, our young people publish their own magazine, *Beacon Lights*.

7. Above all, the Lord has preserved us in the same Reformed truth that we have always maintained and proclaimed. Our people grow in grace. They reveal their zeal in many ways. There is a vital interest in the cause of the truth.

All this I write, not in order to boast; for we have nothing to boast in ourselves. But I write it in order to remind you, Dr. Daane, that our Protestant Reformed Churches did not crumble in 1953, have not crumbled since, and are not by any means on the point of crumbling.

In fact, I would strongly urge you to look to your own ecclesiastical household. When, among other things, it takes a Reformed denomination years to declare itself on a flagrant denial of the Reformed truth of limited atonement, I would say that there are at least some indications of crumbling and loss of force.

Once more, therefore, I admonish you to make correction in the pages of the *Reformed Journal*.

Yours for the truth,
H. C. Hoeksema

EDITORIAL—

Indeed, Remember Galileo!

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In the *Reformed Journal* of December, 1965 there appears an article by Dr. Lewis B. Smedes entitled "Can the Church Be Trusted?" This article I would characterize as a poorly concealed and also poorly reasoned argument in favor of the church's making room in its thinking and its dogma for the views of those who hold to "theistic evolution" or "progressive creationism," which, according to Smedes, are the same.

The thrust of this article is expressed by Smedes himself as being, "Remember Galileo!" Writes he, in the conclusion of his essay: "The best word for this situation is: Remember Galileo!"

Before examining this advice of Dr. Smedes, let me attempt in a few points to summarize his article as it leads up to this advice.

1. The question which Smedes asks and to which his advice is an answer is: Can the church be trusted? He explains this by means of several more detailed questions: "Are people able to trust the church?Can people trust the church to be honest, frank, and humble in the face of today's tough issues? Can people who genuinely want the church to help them as they wrestle with the modern world trust the church to be of real help? Do people know they can trust the church to be at their side as they walk through the jungle of

modern problems? Or do they suspect the church of keeping a stock of ready-made, effortless answers, issued painlessly from the arsenal of a closed mind?" And again he writes: "The question is whether people can trust the church to understand the *problems*. Can the church be trusted to make an effort to understand modern Christians as they are thrust into a world exploding with questions and answers that cannot be avoided. Can *modern* Christians trust the church to be wise and honest in response to their needs and their problems?" I will not comment on this question and its rather questionable formulation. I will simply assert at this point that the church must always in its decisions and expressions conduct itself and express itself in a manner that is *worthy of trust*, whether or not one group of people or another can and do trust it.

2. Smedes has in mind in this article particularly his own denomination, the Christian Reformed Church. For later in his article he makes specific reference to "our church."

3. By the people the writer refers to the members of the church, those who sit in the pew. But he finds among those people two different parties. Writes he: "But we cannot lump them together any longer. Members of the same denomination, who listen to the same sermon and are subject to the same discipline, may live their lives in totally different worlds. One man has become a part of the thought and life of this modern world. Another may be, in his own thinking and living, part of a world that really belongs to another day. This is not a matter of geography. It is a matter of the mind and the spirit." Again, I will not make extensive comment on this characterization of the two groups. It is evident, however, that Smedes means to characterize the second group as "behind the times." We should also note, moreover, that later in his article Smedes identifies these two groups more specifically: "For some people it is as clear that the earth is more than several million years old as it is that the earth is not flat. Some people are sure that during those years some kind of evolution produced the earth and its fullness. They are not going to change their minds, be sure of that. They have solved this problem for themselves. Others among us are sure that any kind of evolution—whether it is called theistic evolution or progressive creationism (there is no difference)—is a flat denial of the Bible." And it is evidently Smedes' contention that somehow the church must keep both of these diametrically opposed groups, both of which are so sure of their positions, satisfied. "The church must have the confidence of both people." But it is also evident that Smedes is especially concerned about the former group, "which has once and for all taken citizenship papers in the modern world."

4. Dr. Smedes calls attention to a somewhat similar problem which faces the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands, the problem of whether to maintain or to repudiate the decisions in the Geelkerken Case of 1926. (Incidentally, the final decision on this matter has now been postponed by the Synod of Lunteren, according to the last report which I read in the "R.E.S. News Exchange.") In this connection, he refers to a

challenge put by a delegate to the Synod, a challenge not to lose the confidence of those people who believe that the Gereformeerde Kerken blundered in 1926 when, as it is put in the article, it demanded "that people believe the snake really talked" in Genesis 3. This delegate claimed that the church would not be trusted if the Gereformeerde Kerken did not confess that they blundered. And so the article goes on to state that the question is not simply whether the decision of 1926 is right or wrong, but whether the church is credible, can be believed, can be trusted. The article also recognizes that there are people who will not trust the church if it abandons the position of 1926, "people who have not solved the question for themselves in the way the modern generation has." But again, the article is without doubt on the side of the "moderns" when it characterizes the 1926 decisions as "an untenable position." And thus, Smedes contends that the real question facing the Gereformeerde Kerken is: "In whose eyes ought it to be trustworthy?" In the Protestant church (and he apparently has in mind his own churches and those of the Netherlands) and in the Roman Catholic Church,—everywhere one finds the tension between "progressives" and "conservatives." Thus, the church is faced by what Smedes calls an "inescapable dilemma." Smedes states this dilemma as follows: "Always, the question settles down to the church's attitude toward the burning issues and the accepted answers of the modern world. Will the church have the honesty and courage to face the real issues of a new day with an open mind? (Note this "open mind," H.C.H.) Or will the church, seeking to be true to the past (What does this mean? H.C.H.), speak against the threats posed by the new ideas of the new day? Or must it do both (But this is impossible, H.C.H.), each in its time, each in its place? But when is the right time? And what is the right word?"

* * *

Dr. Smedes's answer is: Remember Galileo!

Galileo (of the sixteenth century) is credited with the teaching that the earth goes around the sun, rather than the sun orbiting a square earth. His views were condemned at one time by the Roman Catholic Church. Galileo bowed to this decision for a time and recanted, as Smedes notes: "They bowed for a while to the church's authority, but their lowered heads concealed a grin of disdain for the church's stupidity. The church lost the trust of these people." Later it became generally acknowledged that Galileo's astronomical theory was correct. This, then, is supposed to be an example of the church's blundering in condemning the views of a scientist, an example, too, of how the church can lose its trustworthiness. And this example Smedes applies to the contemporary problem of "creationism versus evolutionism" which vexes the (Christian Reformed) church. "Remember Galileo!" is in effect a warning, then, that the church must not today quickly and confidently condemn these evolutionistic ideas. For "It may also make a future generation marvel at our stupidity."

What shall we say?

There are many things that could be said about many statements in this article, as well as about its main thrust.

But several pertinent comments may be summed up in this reply: "Indeed, remember Galileo!"

Remember Galileo! For (though his entire history took place in the Roman Catholic Church, after the Reformation, and therefore outside of the mainstream of church history) Galileo is representative of those who are not honest with their church! Not honest, you say? No! For though he recanted officially, he nevertheless clung to his views and maintained them while remaining in his church. This is not honest. It is not open. It should be remembered as an example of ecclesiastical rebellion and dishonesty that is not to be followed today, — especially not by an officebearer who signs the Formula of Subscription.

Indeed, remember Galileo! For he is an example of an entirely wrong approach to church questions and matters of doctrine. He came with the findings of a telescope. Now I do not condemn the use of a telescope and of telescopic discoveries. Nor am I at all questioning here whether scientific discoveries are correct or not. I am simply pointing to the sound rule that when you would convince the church of any position, you must not come with scientific evidence, but with the *Word of the Scriptures*. This is the only evidence to which the church may listen, and all other "evidences" must be considered in its light. And let me

remind you: such Scriptural evidence could have been produced. For the Word of God spoke of "the circle of the earth" long before any Galileo appeared on the scene of history. Remember Galileo! Let the church and the scientists among its members not follow his example, but let them subject all "evidence" to the Word of God.

Yes, remember Galileo! Indeed! But let the memory of Galileo also be a reminder that it was the same "science" of which he was a representative which had also taught for long years previously that the universe was earth-centered and that the sun orbited about the earth. Let the memory of Galileo remind us that the "findings" of science are changeable, that its theories have changed often, that science is a very untrustworthy guide for the church.

Remember Galileo, and be reminded that there is but one trustworthy guide for the church in all its decisions: the Word of God that abideth forever! Be reminded that the controlling question is not whether the church can keep the confidence of two divergent groups, creationists and evolutionists, but this: what is the truth, according to the word of God?

Remember Galileo, and let no member of the church emulate his smug and concealed "grin of disdain."

Indeed, remember Galileo!

But above all, remember and be guided by the Word of God!

EDITORIAL—

THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT: Limited or General?

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

SCRIPTURE AND SATISFACTION

We may now turn directly to Scripture for proof of this satisfaction-idea which is so strongly emphasized in our confessions.

Turning to the Old Testament, first of all, we may note that the typical sacrifices of the old dispensation, such as the sin offering and the trespass offering, were expiatory. In other words, satisfaction for sin and for sin's guilt characterized these sacrifices. Such sacrifices are said to bear the sins of the offender, to make expiation for sin, to be a propitiation, to cover the sins of the people in the sight of God. Moreover, all such sacrifices involved the shedding of blood, in order that they might typically represent the shedding of Christ's blood. The result, or fruit, of these sacrifices was the forgiveness of sins. The Hebrew term that occurs so often in connection with these sacrifices is trans-

lated frequently in our English Bible by the word "atone" or "atonement." The term itself (kaphar) actually means as a noun "a covering" and as a verb "to cover." And the idea of this "covering" is not that it covers up and hides sin and guilt from the sight of God, — something which would be, of course, impossible. The idea is rather that of "coverage," much in the sense in which we speak of coverage for damages and costs in a potential accident in connection with automobile insurance. The idea of satisfaction, therefore, and of penal satisfaction, satisfaction of justice is on the foreground in these sacrifices. This was also graphically symbolized not only by the fact that the sinner himself was supposed to bring the sacrificial victim to the altar as an acknowledgement of the fact that he had offended and was therefore justly exposed to the wrath of God, but also by the fact that the offender

laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial victim to express the idea of transfer of guilt and responsibility to the animal to be sacrificed. It is also in this connection that we can understand the fact that this blood was sprinkled upon the altar in the holy place by the priest, as well as the fact that on the great day of atonement this expiatory blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat in the holy of holies. Because this blood was the blood of atonement, because it implied that satisfaction of God's justice had been accomplished, the offerer was acceptable in the sight of God.

Approximately the same idea of a propitiation, or covering, is expressed in the New Testament by such Greek terms as *hilaskomai*, and *hilasmos*, and *hilasteerion*. The term occurs in Hebrews 2:17, where it is translated by "to make reconciliation." There we read: "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." And in I John 2:2 the term is translated by "propitiation." There we read the well-known words, so often given the misinterpretation of a general atonement: "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." We may note, in parentheses, that if "the whole world" means "all men, head for head," this simply means that as an objective fact the sins of all men have been covered by the atoning blood of Christ; and then these sins can never be held against them again. For propitiation means that the damages of sin, the debt, are completely covered by the blood of Christ. The satisfaction-idea is obviously on the foreground.

Next, I call your attention to the term that is rendered by "ransom." This term (*lutron* in the Greek) is found, for example, in Matthew 20:28: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." It is also found in I Timothy 2:5, 6 (where the Greek is *antilutron*): "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." This term denotes the notion of a ransom, the payment of a price, in conformity with a certain demand, in order to purchase one free. We are all

familiar in every day life with the ransom demanded by a kidnapper or by one who holds a hostage. In that case, of course, there is not justice but injustice. Nevertheless, the illustration serves to clarify this idea of a ransom. It implies a demand. Unless that demand is met and the price demanded is paid, the hostage or kidnap-victim will not be set free. If the price is paid, the victim is supposed to be freed. Thus also, when the price demanded by a slave-holder is met, a slave may be ransomed out of his bondage. Basic to the idea of Christ's death as a ransom, therefore, is this idea of the satisfaction of the demand of God's justice. Only thus is the slave of sin and death purchased free out of the power of the devil. Again we may note in passing what devastating results are obtained when, for example, in the passage from I Timothy 2 the "all" is interpreted as every human being. That can only mean rank universalism. For if satisfaction has been made for every human being, then the justice of God requires that every human being shall be accounted righteous and innocent in the day of judgment, and shall, therefore, be saved.

A related term (Greek: *apolutrooseos*) occurs in Romans 3:24, where it is rendered by "redemption." Thus we read: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." And it is striking that the term here occurs in connection with the idea of judgment and justification. Evidently the same idea of satisfaction is basic. This "redemption" denotes deliverance through the death of Christ from the retributive wrath of God and from the merited penalty of sin. In the same sense it is used in Hebrews 9:15: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." And the verb "to redeem" (*lutrooseetai*) occurs in Titus 2:14, where we read: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

In all these passages and terms, therefore, the confessional dogma of satisfaction is clearly on the foreground.

(to be continued)

ANNOUNCEMENT

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches convenes, for its regular, spring session, on Wednesday, March 16, 1966, at 9:00 A.M. This Classis will be held in South Holland, Illinois, instead of Edgerton, Minnesota, since the continued Classis will meet in South Holland the day before the regular Classis convenes.

Delegates who need lodging are to notify the clerk of the South Holland consistory.

Rev. D. J. Engelsma, Stated Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies' Society of the Doon Prot. Ref. Church expresses its sympathy to Mrs. John Van Den Top, in the death of her mother,

MRS. ALBERT VAN BEMMEL

who passed away January 11, 1966 at the age of 63 years. May the bereaved family rest in the Word of God found in Isaiah 25:8: "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it".

Rev. Robert Decker, President
Mrs. Clarence Klein, Secretary

THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP—

Remembrance of the Lord's Suffering

Rev. G. Vanden Berg

The last time we considered various aspects of the suffering of Christ as set forth in our Communion Form. The concluding part of the paragraph of this Form, to which we want to direct your attention this time, reads as follows:

"and hath humbled Himself unto the deepest reproach and pains of hell, both in body and soul, on the tree of the cross, when He cried out with a loud voice, 'My God, my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?' that we might be accepted of God and never be forsaken of Him; and finally confirmed with His death and shedding of His blood, the new and eternal testament, that covenant of grace and reconciliation when He said: 'It is finished.'"

There are three things mentioned here that demand our attention. First, there is the fact of Jesus' descension into hell. Secondly, there is the cross-word that gives expression to the awful agony endured by the Savior on the accursed tree. Finally, there is that word spoken by Christ just before He commended His spirit to the Father, and in which He proclaims His complete and glorious victory. Remembering the death of Christ involves a deep spiritual consciousness of the implications of these three things.

It is to be observed that our Communion Form here does not speak of "an actual self-manifestation of Christ after the crucifixion to all the departed spirits." (1) This view is maintained by some, and it is further claimed that this was the meaning of the early church of the expression found in the Apostle's Creed: "He descended into hell". Whether or not this is actually so we are unable to say. More significant is the fact that our Communion Form speaks of Christ "Humbling Himself unto the deepest reproach and pains of hell", giving to this expression the same meaning that is found in our Heidelberg Catechism. In Lord's Day 16 the descension of Christ into hell is explained to mean that "My Lord Jesus Christ, by His inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies, in which He was plunged during all His sufferings, but especially on the cross, hath delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell." It is, therefore, not a singular phase of Jesus' suffering that we must keep in mind but rather we should remember "that He, all the time that He lived on earth, but especially at the end of his life, sustained in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind." (2) He descended into hell in His incarnation, and all His life long He suffered its agonies. Words are inadequate to express this awful

reality, but the purpose here is not to attempt to describe this suffering of Christ but only to leave in our consciousness a deep sense of awareness that He endured hell's miseries for us. With that remembrance we must come to His Table.

Concerning the view that Christ's descension into hell refers to a personal self-manifestation of the Lord after His crucifixion in the place of desolation and torment, we quote the following from the pen of Rev. H. Hoeksema in refutation:

"Besides, the notion that the Saviour suffered the torments of hell after His crucifixion is contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture. Evident it is that the Lord, after He gave up the ghost, cannot have suffered the torments of hell *in body and soul*, for His body rested in the grave of Joseph of Arimathea. Besides, such a view would be in conflict with the word our Lord addressed to the malefactor from the cross: 'Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.' And had He not announced in His next to the last cross-utterance: 'It is finished'? Surely, this triumphant outcry was uttered in the consciousness that the work of redemption, the sacrifice of reconciliation, had been completed and perfected, and that no more suffering remained to be endured." (3)

Still other interpretations of the descension of Christ into hell have been offered, but with these we will not concern ourselves at present. Holding the interpretation that this refers to Christ's endurance of "Inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies" we quote the following comments by Rev. Hoeksema:

"He endured them in all his sufferings, but especially on the cross. And even on the cross there is a gradual increase in His suffering of these hellish agonies. This is evident from all that occurs on and about the cross. During the first half of the six-hour period of the crucifixion, the sun still shed its light upon the awful spectacle on Calvary, the enemies have the audacity to mock and jeer at the crucified One, and the Lord Himself finds it possible to taken interest in the things about Him, praying for His enemies, committing His mother to care of the disciple whom He loved, and assuring the penitent malefactor of final salvation. But during the last three hours, the cross is completely taken out of men's hands. Darkness, that dreadful symbol of God's wrathful presence, descends on the scene; the enemies, amazed at the fearful omen, cease from mockery, and grow silent;

and for the space of three hours the crucified One is completely wrapped up in His own suffering: not a word is heard from His lips. Then, almost at the end of these last three hours of His passion, He makes it known that He has been descending into the depths, that He has, indeed, reached the very bottom of hell, in the question of amazement: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (4)

Thus we see too that this descension of Christ into hell is most intimately connected with this agonizing cry of the Saviour which He uttered at the zenith of His suffering. This cry, too, is variously interpreted. It is not the cry of rebellion, as a child might ask the "why" of certain parental action in an attempt to shirk an assigned responsibility. Neither may the reference to His forsakenness be interpreted in the physical or local sense of the word. It is not as though GOD'S PRESENCE is absent at the cross. He is very much there, and the horrible darkness that gripped the land only betokens His presence in judgment and wrath. God is satisfying His justice toward the sinner. He is laying upon His own Son our burden of sin, and imposing upon the sin-bearer the just penalty. The cry is one of utter amazement as the Beloved of God tastes the bitterness of eternal wrath. Astonished, amazed, perplexed, troubled in soul, the righteous sin-bearer cries out from the depths of unfathomed misery. Yet the cry is not one of despair. Do not overlook the "Eloi, Eloi — My God, My God." There is an unwavering confidence expressed in those words. It is the confidence of Christ that GOD IS and will forever remain His God. In unwavering love He clings to Him as "My God" even as the billows of His wrath pour over Him. Jesus is the sin-bearer fulfilling the law of love, and in that love He will maintain an unbroken confidence in GOD, Whose will He is even now performing in the hour of deepest darkness.

Meditate on this!

Consider it over and over again, for it is to the end (purpose) that you may thus remember His suffering and death that the supper of the Lord has been instituted in His Church. Do not eat the bread and drink the wine merely by force of habit, or as blindly following

an ecclesiastical tradition, for it will not be of benefit to you that way. We are to "remember Him by it," and only in the measure that we are in a spiritual way engaged in this remembrance will we arrive at a true and lasting appreciation for all the benefits that are signified and sealed unto us in the Supper.

All of this must be remembered in the light of the final word of Christ in which the new and eternal testament, that covenant of grace and reconciliation is confirmed.

"It is finished!"

We must be careful that we understand these words. They do not mean the same as if Jesus was simply announcing his death. "It" is not the same as the Lord's earthly life. Neither must we construe this cross-utterance to refer to all things in general, to the Old Testament prophecies or Scriptures or even to the Savior's mediatorial work. After these words were spoken there are many things yet that must come to pass and are now being fulfilled, but the end is not yet. And the Scriptures likewise have not been "finished," for we have only to think of those prophecies that speak of Christ's resurrection and exaltation to glory. These were not yet finished when He "gave up the ghost". Later, when the Lord arose from the dead, He continues in His glorified human nature to function as our Mediator, preparing a place for us, making continual intercession for us and bestowing upon us the benefits of His redemptive work.

"It is finished," denotes that the act of redemption is fully accomplished. Sin is completely atoned. The counsel of God concerning His plan of salvation is realized in the death of His Son. Rev. Hoeksema expresses it beautifully when he writes:

"The measure of suffering, and obedience, is filled. All that was to be borne of the wrath of God against the sin of all the elect, had been endured even to the end. Nothing, emphatically nothing, remains to procure for us eternal righteousness and life." (5)

And consider carefully this statement:

"The Son of God had tasted all there is to be tasted in the agony of death as the expression of God's just wrath."

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

You see now how utterly untenable is the position of Arminianism and Modernism, that leaves the work of Christ uncertain, unfinished, indefinite and dependent upon man's contribution to make it an effective salvation. You see too what a beautiful comfort there is in the knowledge that Christ performed a complete and finished work. There is no guess work in salvation, for it is outlined in minutest detail in God's plan and realized to perfection in Christ's death. The new and eternal covenant of grace is established and made perfect. It is finished indeed.

A *finished* work. That is what we are to remember in the Lord's Supper!

How contrary that may seem to us from a natural point of view. When a young man of thirty-three years of age is suddenly taken away, we are inclined to say that there was so much yet for him to do. He was just beginning in life. In reality of course this is not so, and we know that, too; but certainly this could not be said of Christ. He finished all that the Father gave Him to do, and there was nothing more to be done.

The term "finished" is not one that denotes a temporal end but it is the word that points to the ultimate

purpose or goal of a thing. It is used in Scripture with reference to "the end of all things". When the last moment of history arrives and all things have been accomplished according to the predetermined purpose of God, we will say that the "end" has been reached. So it is with the work of God in Christ. The purpose of Christ's coming in our flesh is fully accomplished. The plan of salvation is realized in Him. It is finished! The end is attained!

In this confidence we may celebrate the Supper which He instituted, remembering Him thereby and rejoicing with unspeakable joy. Then we do not merely celebrate the historic fact of His suffering and death, but we commemorate the glorious accomplishments of that suffering and death. We joy in the realization of the eternal covenant of grace, and we experience the blessedness of His communion in that covenant.

- (1) Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. II, p. 46
- (2) *Heidelberg Catechism*, Lord's Day 15
- (3) Rev. H. Hoeksema, *Death of the Son of God*, p. 270
- (4) *Ibid*, p. 274, 275
- (5) *Ibid*, p. 275

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES—

Saul's Victory at Jabesh-Gilead

Rev. B. Woudenberg

Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people...

And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard these things, and his anger was kindled greatly.

And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

I Samuel 11:4, 6, 7

There was something strange about the meeting of Israel at Mizpeh where Saul was selected and appointed to be king. It somehow didn't end right. The people had come to the meeting with eager anticipation; the casting of the lot until Saul was chosen went smoothly enough; the shout that went up, "God save the king," was with enthusiasm; Samuel carefully and thoroughly admonished and instructed both Saul and the people as to what would be expected of them now. But that was all. The people returned to their homes, and Saul returned to his. Nothing was really changed, and one could hardly know that now Israel had a king.

In a large part, the fault for this was with Saul. Although for a long time he had been preoccupied with the dream of becoming king, once this dream was realized, he was at a loss as to what he should do.

He had felt this coming now for some time. That was why he had sat hidden among the baggage while the casting of lots was going on. For all of his thinking, he had not even one idea as to how he should begin to take over the rule of this great nation. When at last he was found and summoned to stand before the admiring gaze of all the people, he had indeed enjoyed the acclaim, but he had only stood there shyly, not knowing what to say. Perhaps, after Samuel had finished admonishing them, the people had waited anxiously for him to say something about future plans for himself and for the nation; but Saul had had nothing to say. It was then that the people turned, somewhat discomfited, almost embarrassed, to go to their homes. And Saul, inwardly relieved, hurried to return to his, and to the work of the field. That was what he understood best

in spite of all his dreams. Saul was not a leader at heart.

But neither was the difficulty completely with him. There were other elements too. After all, Saul was not the only one who had been cherishing dreams of kingship in his heart. There were others too, many belonging to much larger and more important tribes, men of much wider and greater reputation than Saul had ever known. Many of them had come to Mizpeh determined to do all in their power to take over the control of the nation there. And, had not Samuel kept a firm hand over all of the proceedings, undoubtedly they would have tried. But the opportunity had not availed itself, and Saul was selected the king. But we may be sure that the others were not happy at this. There was opportunity enough to complain in the mere fact that Saul was a relatively unknown man in the smallest of the tribes; and when he failed so completely to show any signs of leadership, they felt a free field before them. From the very start, they openly refused to give any recognition to Saul as king; and it wasn't long before the plots began to take shape as to how they might displace him from the throne. These were ambitious and ruthless men, children of Belial, we are told.

The political situation in Israel might well have reached a crisis had not the matter of Jabesh-gilead arose.

Jabesh, beyond the river in the land of Gilead, was a city used to dealing with the enemies of Israel. Separated as they were from the rest of the nation by the Jordan, the land of Gilead was often considered an easy mark by the heathen nations; and this only too often was so, for during the period of the judges the various sections of Israel drifted apart and no longer felt responsible for each other's defense. Besides this, the people of Gilead and of Jabesh, as so many others in Israel, had long left behind their first and foremost line of defense—faith and trust in Jehovah their God. It was this more than anything else that left them quite defenseless before the inroads of their enemies. Moreover, God turned them over into the hands of their enemies frequently in punishment for their faithlessness and sin.

This time it was the Ammonites. The Ammonites were the descendants of Lot, and thus related through Abraham to Israel. Because of this, Israel had always been commanded to show to them special consideration. But the Ammonites were a godless people, and they hated the children of Israel with a passion. The kindnesses of Israel they answered with bitter cruelty whenever they could. And so it was now, Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had come and set siege about the city of Jabesh. It was a one-sided battle, the nation of Ammon against the lone city of Jabesh. They held on for a time. The men of Jabesh were able to keep the Ammonites from invading the walls of their city; but it was impossible to break the siege as such. Ordinarily it was to be expected that their fellow countrymen would come to the aid of such a besieged city; but everyone knew in that day that this was not true in Israel. Everyone was concerned only with his

own affairs. Their fellow Israelites may have sympathized with the people of Jabesh; but no one was about to get himself involved in a messy battle of any kind.

The men of Jabesh knew this, and felt dependent upon their own wiles to save themselves. They could submit unconditionally, they could resist until they died of starvation, or they could try to negotiate a covenant, an agreement of friendship with the Ammonites. (What they forgot, of course, was that they could and should call upon Jehovah who was sure to save them.) To them it seemed the way of wisdom to try the way of a covenant even though such covenants were strictly forbidden by the law of God. (Ex. 23:32) They were in no mood to quibble over legalities. The situation was desperate; and into the camp of Nahash their emissaries were sent. Their suggestion was the usual one in such a situation, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee." They would pay to Nahash a yearly tribute until such a time that they felt themselves strong enough to withstand them. Then they would scrap their covenant and declare themselves free. It happened all the time.

To their surprise, perhaps, the emissaries of Jabesh found Nahash to be quite agreeable. He was willing to make a covenant with them and accept their tribute. Only then he added one more thing, "On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel."

Here was the hatred of Ammon. Nahash didn't want tribute. He didn't primarily want territories and cities. He wanted to disgrace the nation of Israel. Let the men of Jabesh go about from that time, each with a limp eyelid hanging over an empty socket; it would be a demonstration to all of how the children of Israel had forsaken their own brethren, of how Ammon had been left free to humiliate them. It gave to Nahash an inner glee just to contemplate the thought of it.

Utterly aghast, the emissaries of Jabesh stood conferring together. What should they do? Where should they turn? How were they to answer? At last they turned to Nahash and said, "Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel, and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee." Nahash had no objections; in fact, this played right into his plans. He was fully confident that no Israelite was going to endanger his life just to help these men of Jabesh. It would only add to Israel's reproach.

So it was that the messengers went out all through Israel pleading for help. They were met with many willing listeners, with sympathy, with anguished cries wherever they went; but that was all. So they came finally all the way to Gibeah where Saul lived. They either knew nothing of Saul or else just never thought of going directly to him. The messengers only stood in the streets of the city trying to convince someone to come and help them. There was shock and much weeping, for the people understood well what Nahash was trying to do; but that was about the extent of it. It looked to all like an inevitable humiliation. In com-

plete despair the cries grew louder and louder until at last they were heard by Saul, busy as usual in the fields, and he came to inquire. Once again the messengers of Jabesh recounted their tale.

It was then that a strange and new thing happened in Saul. It was something which he had felt only once before—during that brief journey home from Ramah when he had met with Samuel. Suddenly all of his ambitions and fears and worries seemed to disappear from his mind. He felt like the sting of a whip the disgrace that Ammon was seeking to bring upon Israel and it filled him with righteous indignation. In a moment he knew what was the only thing that could save them—the power of the God of Samuel who had anointed him to be king. For the moment his old character of doubt and pride and indecision seemed to disappear, and in its place was a new person, a man of authority and determination. Quickly he stepped up to the oxen which he had been using in the field and cut them into pieces. Then, drafting men for messengers, he sent them throughout the nation with the warning, “Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. This was the leadership which Israel so badly needed. Soon some 330,000 men were gathered behind Saul for battle.

It was a wonderful campaign by every measure. With unwavering assurance, Saul sent the message to

Jabesh, “To morrow, by that time the sun be hot, ye shall have help.” Then, gathering his army behind him, he marched. All through the night they labored, dividing their forces into three different fronts so that by morning’s dawn they were ready to attack the unsuspecting forces of Ammon. It was no battle, only a rout as the army of Ammon was scattered far and wide so that by the heat of the day no two of them were left together. It was a victory such as Israel had not seen for many and many a year. Now they knew that in Israel there was a king and shouting with joy they gathered behind him.

And for a time it looked as though Saul was going to be a good and capable king. With discretion he refused to punish those who had refused their support to him at the beginning. There were too many of them, and to have slain them would have left an unhealing scar across the heart of the nation. Even more, at the suggestion of Samuel, he led the people from Jabesh to Gilgal. Here was the place where Israel had first camped and sacrificed and commended themselves to God after coming through the Jordan into the land of Canaan. Thus to this same place Samuel returned the people, that the original dedication of the kingdom might be renewed. There once again Saul was acknowledged to be king, this time by all the people. And there they offered sacrifice to God, acknowledging Him to be the source of their strength and every victory.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH—

The Doctrine of Creation Days or Periods

Rev. H. Veldman

It can hardly be said of the concordistic theory, i.e., that the days of Genesis 1 are not really days of twenty four hours, but periods of thousands or millions of years in duration, that it represents an honest attempt to explain the days of Genesis 1 in the light of Scripture. The conclusion that these “days” were periods was surely not reached because a sincere effort was made to let the Word of God speak and throw light upon this question. We have already noted that during the early centuries of the church of God in the New Dispensation, it was universally believed that the days of Genesis 1 are ordinary days of twenty-four hours, and therefore the same as our days. What happened, then, that the concordistic theory should make its appearance and be so widely acclaimed as it is in our present day? One can hardly deny that the

Period Theory is widely acclaimed and adopted today. I am not speaking now of the theory of Evolution which is taught today throughout the world’s schools of learning. Also from this point of view, the world has witnessed a tremendous change during the last decades. The undersigned has already mentioned the trial that occurred in our country some decades ago, when a high school teacher was placed on trial because he taught evolution in a public high school and was prosecuted by William Jennings Bryan, who ran unsuccessfully for the presidency of our country three times. But I refer to the fact that this theory, the Period Theory, is widely heralded and accepted today in the Church, and taught almost universally in our Christian High Schools. And we may certainly say that it does not represent an

honest attempt to explain, exegete the Holy Scriptures. It is not true that the Word of God led people to believe that the days of Genesis 1 are periods. That which led the Church today to embrace this theory was our modern so-called science. Science, it is said, speaks facts. And one can hardly deny facts. Facts must be accepted. And these scientific facts simply prove beyond the shadow of any doubt that the "days" of Genesis 1 must have been periods. These facts simply prove that our world cannot have been only six to eight thousand years old. And with these facts in mind men turned to the Holy Scriptures. The facts of science must be accepted; so, Scripture must be interpreted in agreement with these facts. This means that Science rules over the Word of God, and must serve as a guiding rule in our explanation of the Word of God. This, of course is a very dangerous method of interpreting the Bible. We have always claimed that even Dogmatics may not rule over the Scriptures. And it is certainly true that Science may not rule over these Scriptures. The Word of God must stand alone. It carries in and with it its own authority. Any attempt to ascertain whether the "days" of Genesis 1 are ordinary days of twenty four hours or long periods of time, constituted of thousands or millions of years must be made only upon the basis of the written Word of God. That Word is a lamp before our feet and a light upon our path also in regard to this question of days or periods. And we do not hesitate to say that the concordistic theory cannot possibly be maintained in the light of the written Word of God.

Before we proceed with our analysis of the concordistic theory in the light of Holy Writ (incidentally, Rev. H. Hoeksema in his Dogmatics advances several arguments against the idea that the "days" of Genesis 1 are to be regarded as long periods of time, and we will refer to these arguments and elaborate somewhat upon them), we wish to make two observations. On the one hand, we certainly do not need the theory that the days of the first chapter of the Bible must be viewed as long periods of time in order to embrace the truth of the Divine creation of all things. We mean the following. It certainly was not necessary for God to extend His creative work or almighty speaking over thousands upon thousands of years to make what He made. Dr. Bavinck may write, as he does, that so many creatures were created upon the fifth day that it is hardly possible to believe that all this occurred within a period of twenty hours. But, what child of God would dare to say that the Lord could not have created the universe and all therein contained at the very beginning of time? That the Lord created all things in a period of six days certainly does not mean that He needed these six days to make what He made. Who would dare to limit the almighty God and declare what He would be able to do and what He would not be able to do? God, for example, did not need all of the first day, did He, to create the light. The Lord did not only create the heavens and the earth, but He also made time. And this implies that He also created the day and the year, the former consisting of the fact that the earth turns upon its axis once in twenty hours and

the latter consisting of the fact that the earth moves around the sun once a year. So, we need not adopt the concordistic theory of periods instead of days because the Lord needed them, needed thousands and millions of years to create the heavens and the earth and all the things therein contained. And, on the other hand, the concordistic theory is, frankly, repulsive to the undersigned. Why is it that our modern church world seems to crave this conception of the Divine creation of all things? We believe that this theory is principally evolutionistic. Is it more to the glory of God to accept a theory which would have us believe that thousands and millions of years were necessary to explain the creation of the heavens and the earth, or is it more to His glory to believe that everything was called into being by the Lord's almighty word, so that "by the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth?" Frankly, the former is repulsive to me; the latter is certainly in harmony with what the Scriptures teach us concerning the living God. Fact is, all the mighty works of God are works of a moment. The Period Theory hardly glorifies God.

We now call attention to the arguments which we may deduce from the Scriptures in support of the truth that the Lord created the heavens and the earth and all things that are therein in six ordinary days. First of all, we call attention to the use of the word "day," or YOM, as it occurs in the creation account in Genesis 1. Incidentally, this is, I believe, the only "Scriptural proof" which the advocates of the concordistic theory quote in support of their contention that the "days" of Genesis 1 were long periods of time. A day, however, is a day, not a week or a month or a year. To be sure, attention has been directed to the fact that we read in the Word of God that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day, according to II Peter 3:8. It seems to me that the advocates of the Period-Theory are very eager to quote the first part of this text and not too eager to quote the latter part of it. They are eager to call attention to the fact that one day is as a thousand years, but not too eager to remind us of the fact that a thousand years are as one day. It is said that whereas one day with the Lord is as a thousand years this can also be applied to the expression, day, in Genesis 1. But we must remember that we also read that a thousand years are as one day. If we, therefore, may assume that the "day" of Genesis 1 is a thousand years, may we not also conclude that these thousand years of Genesis 1 are as one day? When we read that "a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day," this reminds us of the truth that with God there is no time; He is eternal. We are also aware of the fact that the Scriptures also speak of "hour" as denoting a long period of time, as when we read of the New Dispensation that it is the last hour. Nevertheless, we maintain and surely must maintain that words in Scripture have their ordinary meaning unless the context indicates that a longer period of time is meant. When we read that the New Dispensation is the last hour, it is obvious that the word "hour" refers to such a longer period

of time. How will we ever be able to read the Word of God if words have not their ordinary meaning, if any particular part of the Scriptures does not mean what it says? Then the wildest interpretations of the Scriptures will become possible. Then anyone can read the Scriptures and interpret them as he sees fit. And now one may well ask the question: Does the creation account in Genesis 1 give us any right to interpret the days of creation as lengthy periods of time, extending over thousands and millions of years? And the answer must be an emphatic NO. Fact is, the days of Genesis 1 are limited by evening and morning. That the evening is mentioned first is because the evening concluded the first part of the day of twenty hours, and the morning concluded the second part of this day. Repeatedly we read: "And the evening and the morning were the first, or second, or third day." So, the day of Genesis 1 was limited by one evening and one morning. If the days of Genesis 1 be long periods of time, extending over millions of years, then it must be granted that also the night aspect of these days, from the evening until the morning, must have lasted thousands upon thousands of years. Considering that a day consists of a period of daylight and the night, the night must have been thousands of years long. And, bearing in mind that the world of plants was created upon the third day, how, then, must we account for the continued existence of these plants during a night that extended over thousands and millions of years? Would plant life be able to survive under such circumstances? Reading in Genesis that "it was evening and it was morning," wouldn't we be inclined to say that the Scriptures wish to make it perfectly plain to us that these days of creation were ordinary days of twenty hours?

Secondly, the concordistic theory compels us to distinguish between the first three days and the latter three days of Genesis 1. The Lord created the sun, moon and stars upon the fourth day. From the fourth day on the light which God created upon the first day was concentrated in the sun, and light and darkness

were determined and regulated by the earth as it turns upon its axis, and therefore in its relation to the sun. It is for this reason that distinction was made between the first three days and the latter three days of the week of creation. Inasmuch as the sun, moon and stars were called into being upon the fourth day, we may believe that the latter three days were ordinary days; we may surely believe that these latter three days were determined and regulated by their relation to the sun. Hence, these latter three days must have been ordinary days, like unto our days. This, however, would violate a fundamental principle of healthy and sound exegesis. This fundamental principle is that the same word in the same connection must have the same meaning. But there is nothing in the holy record of Genesis 1 to indicate any difference between the first three days and the latter three days of the week of creation. Besides, there is nothing in the Scriptures to indicate any change whatever after the sixth or seventh day. Presuppose once that the latter three days were long periods of time, millions of years long. Beginning on the fourth day, did the earth turn much more slowly upon its axis, so, that once in a million years it made this turn? But what a change must then be presupposed in the relation of the plants and animals and men? Would, as we mentioned before, the plants survive after spending thousands of years in darkness, as the period, then, from evening until morning would cover thousands of years? Then, after these periods of creation had finally passed on and become history, what happened that the days should now become ordinary days, days of twenty hours? Is there anything in the Word of God to indicate such a change? Does not an unbiased, unprejudiced reading of Genesis 1 impress upon us the truth that, whereas the same is stated of each day (it was evening and it was morning), all the days in the week of creation must have been of equal length? Surely, the Word of God does not indicate anything else, does it? If these "days" of Genesis 1 were long periods, then the Word of God must certainly be in error here. The Lord willing, we will continue with this discussion in our following article.

FROM HOLY WRIT—

Our Brothers Burden and Our Own

Rev. G. Lubbers

Galatians 6:1-5

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS

It was none less than Cain, who hated his brother, who spoke the terrible words "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9b) These words were a horrible

and rebellious retort to God Himself. They were spoken after he had killed his brother Abel, and who was at that very moment lying in his own blood as this drenched the earth! And he continued in this way. It

is epitomized as the "way of Cain". (Jude 11) It is the broad way which leads to destruction. And many there be which walk upon this way of hatred for the brother!

We do well for our very life's sake, as much as we love our soul's salvation, to take heed to the warning of Christ, our Lord. He teaches us, in a very small sentence, the entire law and the prophets as it relates to our relationship to our brother. Fact is, that it is a dictum for every man whose breath is in his nostrils! Says Jesus "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matthew 7:12)

This is not simply a legalistic "code"; it is the law of the life of Christ Jesus. It is the law of the Spirit of life. It is the narrow way which leads to life. It is the way which few are finding! It does not seldom happen that with the very "Church Order" in one's hands and while walking strictly according to the "law", one either has not yet wholly escaped from the "way of Cain", or is, (and that is worse) walking squarely in the middle of the road that leads to destruction!

John cries in his epistle "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20) And, again, "and this is the commandment we have from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." (I John 4:21) Earlier in this same Chapter the apostle writes "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." (I John 4:11)

The foregoing sets forth in bold relief the sad reality that the most holy of all God's children has only a small beginning of the new obedience. It emphasizes for great and small, for office-bearers and congregation that none of us has yet attained, and that none of us can with a good conscience before God look down from his imaginary heights upon his brother with a better-than-thou attitude.

Hear Paul therefore in Galatians 6:1-5 speak to the church of the Galatians,

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden."

THE ILLUMINATING CONTEXT - Galatians 5:25, 26

Writes Paul in the context "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." vs. 25

It will be necessary to offer a bit of exegesis of this injunction of Paul to the church. The first question which arises is what does Paul mean by "Spirit"? Does this refer to the human "spirit" or does this refer to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity,

as He is the Spirit of Christ the head of the church, dwelling in the church as the members? We believe that upon good grounds it can be stated that Paul is speaking here of the Holy Spirit of God, as the Spirit of Christ in the church; the Spirit of Pentecost! This is evident from the entire epistle of Paul to the Galatians. Fifteen times the apostle speaks of the "Spirit" in this letter, and always he refers to the Divine Spirit, (Galatians 3:2, 3, 5, 14; 4:6, 29; 5:5, 16, 17, 18, 22, 25; 6:1, 8, 18.) It would lead us too far afield to show this explicitly in each case as used by Paul. We, therefore, merely call attention to the instances of the usages in Chapter 5. It is through the Spirit that we wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. vs. 5. In verse 16 he writes "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh". In the verse 17, 18 Paul speaks of the warfare between the Holy Spirit in us and the flesh. And these two are contrasted in the verses 19 and 22 in the "works of the flesh" and in the "fruit of the Spirit". It is obvious, therefore, that Paul is speaking of the Spirit of Christ here.

He is indeed speaking of the life-giving Spirit. Jesus Himself says in John 6:63 "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." And as Christ is the Son of God and has received the Spirit, He is the last Adam, is the life-giving Spirit. (I Corinthians 15:45).

That we "live in the Spirit" refers therefore to the new life of Christ, the life of regeneration. It refers to the inward life in our hearts of faith which works by love. What is more this is stated in a conditional sentence of fact. Paul harks back here to all he has taught concerning our living by the Spirit as sons and heirs. This is an established fact. At least thus it is according to the confession of the believers. They have begun in the Spirit. They have subjectively received the Spirit's benefits by faith. (Galatians 3:2, 3)

If such is the case according to our own confession then it also follows that we ought to *walk* in the Spirit. The term to walk here is not the same as that used by Paul in verse 16. That term referred to the entire circumference of a man's existence according to the law of God. The verb here is "peripateo" in Greek. Here Paul uses the verb "stoicheo" which means really: to stand or line up in a row. The notion seems to be that the inward life and the outward manifestation must be such that things line up! They must line up and conform to the law of the Spirit of life toward God and toward our brother. Here is the plumbline of heaven in our human relationships in the church. This is not a rule which one brother fabricates for the other in a very arbitrary way, but it is the rule of the King in his heavenly kingdom. It is the measuring of the temple and of each stone in the temple in their confession and life toward each other. It is the commandment which we have: that he who loveth God love his brother also! Such is the *status quo* which God has instituted in the church by his Spirit. This is indicated by the present tenses of the verbs "live" and "walk"!

But there is more.

Paul also indicates that such was not the case here in the church of the Galatians. The root-sin of every man is pride. It is to be like God. It is *the* sin of Satan, the father of the lie. Man is puffed up. He blows his own horn pretty loudly if exalted among men, and if in a lesser degree he is gifted he is filled with envy; he envies the brother so easily who has merely a greater position in a relative sense. The difference is merely one of degree and not of essence.

Such was also the sad state in the church at Galatia!

Wherefore Paul writes in verse 26 "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Such was the actual sad state of affairs in the church. And this must stop! The term "not" in the Greek indicates that Paul is not saying: let it *not begin*, but rather: *let it stop*. Let it no longer be with you such that you are desirous of empty glory. And vain glory is empty glory. It is a glory which does not satisfy. When once you have it it does not taste good in your own mouth. It is something which is not from the Lord, but it is empty of all real content and it never fits in with a "walk in the Spirit." Those who attain to it find it to be ashes in the mouth! Cries the apostle: let it stop! Stop in your tracks! It is a grieving of the Spirit in which ye were sanctified to the day of Christ. This glory is then one's reward, but then the sole reward which does not satisfy. It has nothing to do with: well done, thou good and faithful servant!

There were some in the congregation who were "provocating". He initiated the evil each time. The reaction was on the part of others who were "envious." When these two meet there is a horrible collision each time. Nothing is lined up! There is confusion and strife! Meekness of wisdom goes out of the window! "The same disposition which manifests itself

in arrogance on the one side, on the other takes the form of discontent and envy. The heart-burnings and the social tension which this state of things creates, make every chance collision a danger; and the slightest wound is inflamed into a rankling sore." And to quote once more "The stumbling brother is pushed on into a fall; and the fallen man who might be helped to his feet, is left to lie there, the object of un pitying reproach. Indeed, the lapse of his neighbor is to the vainglorious man a cause of satisfaction rather than sorrow. The other's weakness serves for a foil to his strength... God, he seems to say, I thank thee, that I am not like this wretched back-slider!" (Epistle To The Galatians, by Prof. George G. Findlay, D.D. in Expositor's Bible)

Hear John say: "If a man says, I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar! For the whole law is filled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!" And this Golden Rule must not be corrupted into a mere utilitarian maxim, as did the Rabbi Hillet who taught "What is hateful to thyself do not to thy neighbor; for this is the whole law and all else is its exposition." On this Lenski remarks in his exposition of Matthew 7:12 "This is egoism which withholds its injury lest it suffer injury in return."

What a golden rule to remember how we would desire to be treated if we were a "man overtaken in a fault." It is the pity of Christ in our breast. Such a claim the erring brother has upon our sympathy! It were better that a mill-stone be hanged about our neck, and we be cast into the sea, than that we should offend one of Christ's little ones!

Hence, says Paul: stop provoking one another, envying one another.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD (Psalm 68:11)

Particular Atonement and Missions

Rev. C. Hanko

In my previous article I spoke of the fact that Christ laid down His life for His sheep. In answer to Daane's question, What does a repentant sinner believe? the answer is: he believes in Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd Who laid down His life for His sheep. He embraces Christ as His personal Savior, and experiences His power to forgive sins, to feed his

hungry soul with the Bread of life and to give him life eternal. In faith he surrenders himself to that Lord with his whole being for time and for eternity. And what does the unbeliever reject, if there is not a "God loves you, Christ died for you," to reject? That is, what does he reject when he hears the gospel of a particular atonement? He rejects the Christ of the

Scriptures. He wants nothing of Him, because he does not want to leave his sins, which he still cherishes in his heart. He hates God and he rejects God's Christ. He joins the wicked throng to cry out, "Away with this One, crucify Him!" Isn't that exactly what even modern theology is doing today?

That immediately raises the question, but what about those passages of Scripture that apparently speak of a universal atonement?

There are particularly three such passages that we should consider, since they all have this in common, that they speak of the atoning death of Christ for the whole world.

There is, first of all, that ever familiar and often quoted passage of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

And there is the testimony of John the Baptist concerning Jesus in John 1:29, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

And there is also the message of the apostle John concerning Him in I John 2:2, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Ever since the Arminian controversy of the early seventeenth century, these verses have been used to prove a "Christus pro omnibus," a Christ for all. John 3:16 is taken to mean that God loves all men without exception. God's love is so great that it excludes no one. Christ died for all. And now it is God's desire that no one should perish, but that every individual upon the earth should accept Christ, believe the gospel and receive eternal life.

This interpretation is so commonly accepted, that it is considered inconceivable that there could be any other interpretation of this passage. It has been repeated so often, that no one even stops to consider that it might be wrong, in fact, that it might be very superficial and a gross corruption of the text. For that it is. John 3:16 is indeed a "Gospel in miniature", but then it must also be a true miniature of the gospel of the Scriptures.

1. Notice, "*God so loved.*" God's love can never be compared to human love, since, at best, our love is but a creaturely reflection of the divine. God loves as God. Therefore God's love is holy, for God is holy. God's love is righteous, for God is righteous. God's love is sovereign and unchangeable, even efficacious, as God is sovereign and unchangeable.

2. "*God so loved.*" We so readily overlook the fact that Scripture itself teaches us that love is the bond of perfectness. Love unites two perfect objects. Sin always interferes and disrupts that bond of perfectness. How evident that becomes in the intimate relationship of husband and wife. How readily distrust, suspicion, bitterness, strife enter in to threaten that bond of love in marriage. How much more that must be true of the love of God. How can God love a sinful, foul, corrupt world? He must turn away from it in holy revulsion. He seeks, yearns after, and draws

to Himself that which is in harmony with His own glorious perfection and shows forth His praises.

3. "*God so loved.*" This 'so' can and evidently does refer both to the extent as well as to the manner of God's love. But then let us beware that we do not limit the extent of that love to mere man, who is but a speck of dust. Even if we were to include all humanity to stress the extent of God's love, we would still be limiting it. It took an infinite love to bear the burden of God's wrath in perfect obedience and merit for us eternal life. The debt of our sin against the Most High Majesty of God had to be paid! God's justice had to be satisfied. Only an infinite love could atone. Nothing else could save us.

Such was therefore also the manner of God's love, that He spared not, but gave His only begotten Son as a ransom for our sins. God's blood was shed on Golgotha. (Acts 20:28). Nothing less would do.

4. In that light we can also understand the term 'world' in the assurance, "For God so loved the world." The word 'kosmos' is used which always refers to a beautiful, harmonious whole, a complete unity. Sometimes Scripture speaks of the entire creation as the 'worlds' which were formed by God. Sometimes Scripture speaks of the 'world' of wickedness, which we as people of God must not love. How can we love that which God hates? In that case, Scripture refers to the organic unity of a sinful human race (the people of God excluded) which finds its beauty, its harmony and unity in "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." That world is in the process of passing away under the righteous judgment of God. You certainly would not want to speak of that world as including every individual, nor is that possible.

But Scripture also speaks of the harmonious unity of God's elect in Christ, including the entire creation as it is redeemed and will be glorified with Him. Eternally God sees His Son as the Firstborn among many brethren, Who is given the ends of the earth as His possession, and Who is Lord of lords forever. In that great Day of days we shall see that beautiful, harmonious unity of the new creation as centered in Christ and His Church, which is His Body. From that world the reprobate are excluded. The Vine is purged, the dead branches are broken off and burned. John 15:1, 2. That is the 'world' of John 3:16.

5. That love for the world motivated God in giving His only Begotten Son, for the very purpose that "whosoever believeth (all those who believe — as in the Greek) in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That purpose is also realized. God's love is never spurned. For faith is the gift of God. And God unites His beloved elect to Christ by the bond of living faith. He draws them from "this present, evil world" into living fellowship with Christ. They *have* everlasting life. No one can take that from them. No one can separate them from that unchanging love that He has spread abroad in their hearts.

The same truth is witnessed by John the Baptist in John 1:29, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

1. John had been preaching in the wilderness for

about a year. He had told his listeners that the time was at hand that all prophecy would reach its fulfillment. The promised Christ was about to appear. Therefore John called the people to repentance, and as many as repented waited in eager anticipation for the promised Messiah.

2. And then the day arrived that Jesus stood among them. No one recognized Him in His lowly state of humiliation, but John knew Him, because God had declared it unto him. And so John spoke of the One Who stood among them, whom they did not know, but Who was so much greater than John, that John was not worthy to be His lowliest servant. The next day Jesus was approaching John, evidently walking alone, and then John pointed Him out to his audience declaring: "Behold, there He is."

3. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit John described Him as "the Lamb of God," the fulfillment of all the types and shadows of the old dispensation. He is God's Lamb, slain from before the foundation of the world, and now sent to bring the great sacrifice for the sins of His people.

4. John even sees Him as the One Who fully accomplishes that work entrusted to Him by the Father. He does not *attempt* to take away sin. He does not *hope* to take away the sin of the world. He does not open the way that the sin of the world may be taken away. He very actually *takes away* the sin of the world. He takes that entire load of sin on His mighty shoulders, the entire burden of our guilt and wrath, and bears it in torments of hell, until the entire burden of sin has been borne away.

5. But again, no one has the right to interpret the term 'world' here as if it includes all mankind without exception. This again is the world of God's elect, as it is eternally given to Christ, of which He is the representative Head, and for which He dies. It is that entire organism of the elect; only the reprobate are excluded.

6. Nor does anyone have the right to make a distinction here, as if Christ died redemptively for all, but that this is effectual only for some. Since Christ died redemptively for the sin of the world, the entire burden of guilt is borne away, the entire debt is paid, the right to eternal life is merited, and the world is saved. Let every one who seeks his salvation in that perfect Lamb of God rest assured that though his sins are as scarlet they have been made as white as snow through the atoning blood of Golgotha.

That leaves no problem as far as I John 2:2 is concerned. There the apostle writes, "My little

children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

1. John speaks of a *propitiation*. Christ gave his life as a sacrifice for sin, in order to satisfy God's justice and reconcile His people with God. He bore away the wrath of God to restore us into covenant fellowship with God. That is the idea of propitiation.

2. That same Christ is now in heaven as the Advocate and High Priest of those same persons for whom He died. He intercedes for them on the basis of His meritorious death of the cross. And God also hears Him, so that God regards that people as holy and righteous in Christ, worthy of all the blessings of salvation, even of eternal life. They are righteous forever in Jesus Christ, the Righteous. Therefore God bestows on them all the blessings that Christ has merited for them. Even as they are reconciled to God, they are also regenerated, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

3. That applies to "us", John says. He is writing to the early church shortly after Pentecost. Many members of that church were of Jewish origin, and therefore he may very well have been referring to the church as it emerged out of the old dispensation. In that case, the 'world' to which he refers is the church of the new dispensation as it is now being gathered out of all the nations of the earth in distinction from the Jews.

But "us" also has a personal application. John had written to them as "My little children", urging them not to sin. But he had also added that very personal assurance, so necessary for all of us, that when we sin, we need not despair, nor continue in sin. We have forgiveness, which has been accomplished for us more than nineteen hundred years ago. We also have our Advocate in heaven, Who intercedes for us in the basis of His death on the cross. He has reconciled us to God, and not only us, but the whole church universal, the whole world that was given to Christ by the Father.

4. In that confidence we confess "an holy, catholic church," gathered, defended and preserved by the Son of God Himself by His Word and Spirit. What is more, we believe, "that I am and forever shall remain a living member of that church."

Let no man take that glorious and blessed assurance from you. For this is the gospel which through the Scriptures is preached to you.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The date of the continued session of Classis West, September 1965, is now set for Tuesday, March 15, 1966. This continued session will begin at 9:00 A.M. at the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, Illinois.

Rev. D. J. Engelsma, Stated Clerk

EXAMINING ECUMENICALISM—

Vatican Council - Third Session

-5-

“The Decree on Ecumenism”

Rev. G. Van Baren

To my mind, the most interesting of the decisions made at the Vatican Council is this one. It treats precisely of that matter which is such great concern of other churches of our day. It sets forth, too, a change in attitude, though not in doctrine, in the Romish Church. There was a time, and not too long ago, when Romish leaders would not deign to meet with those outside their own church domain. The Romish Church, after all, was by far the largest single denomination within the realm of Christendom — and it was incumbent upon the others to return to “mother.” But that attitude appears to be changing. More and more a dialogue is being carried on between Rome and other churches. The basis of that dialogue is set forth in this “decree.”

This all is being done under that banner: “That they all may be one.” And, of course, to seek the healing of the many and deep breaches made in the past history of the church does seem most desirable indeed. But the question the Christian increasingly faces in these days is: what is the testimony of Scripture? We do read of the healing of one breach at the end of time in Rev. 13:3. It is the healing of the wound of the beast. But Christ declares as one of the signs of the end of time: “Many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.... And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” (Matt. 24:5, 11, 12). And the present decree of the Romish Church reminds strongly of both signs. Let the Church then beware.

THE PRINCIPLE OF ECUMENISM

The document we consider in this article sets forth first several principles the Romish Church considers important. The following quotations are all from the book: *Council Daybook, Session 3*, pages 343 - 351. First, and expectedly, Rome continues to maintain that the fulness of salvation can only be seen in it:

Nevertheless, our separated brethren, whether considered as individuals or as communities and Churches, are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those who through Him were born again into one body, and with Him quickened to newness of life — that unity which the Holy Scriptures and the ancient Tradition of the Church proclaim. For

it is only through Christ's Catholic Church, which is “the all-embracing means of salvation,” that they can benefit fully from the means of salvation. We believe that Our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, in order to establish the one Body of Christ on earth to which all should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the people of God.

Secondly, the Romish Church recognizes the fact of divisions in the past, and even concedes a certain measure of guilt for the separations which took place:

But in subsequent centuries much more serious dissensions appeared and quite large communities separated from full communion with the Catholic Church — for which, often enough, men of both sides were to blame.

Thirdly, the document admits that essential elements of proper communion can be seen outside of the Romish Church:

Moreover, some, even very many of the significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: the written word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, and visible elements too. All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to Christ, belong by right to the one Church of Christ.

...It follows that the separated Churches and communities as such, though we believe them to be deficient in some respects, have been by no means deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of Salvation.

Finally, to encourage the ecumenical movement, the document suggests four things: 1. The church avoid judgments, expressions, and actions which do not fairly represent the “separated brethren.” 2. The church encourage “dialogue” between the different communions. 3. The church seek co-operation in the “duties for the common good of humanity....” 4. Finally, that the members in the Romish Church “examine their own faithfulness to Christ's will...and, wherever necessary, undertake with vigor the task of renewal and reform.”

THE PRACTICE OF ECUMENISM

To carry out ecumenical endeavors on a practical

level, this second chapter suggests first that there must be a continual reformation within the Church herself. It recognizes that "in various times and circumstances, there have been deficiencies in moral conduct or in church discipline, or even in the way that church teaching has been formulated -- to be carefully distinguished from the deposit of faith itself" and that these "deficiencies" also "can and should be set right at the opportune moment and in the proper way."

The "decree" declares that no "ecumenism worthy of the name" can take place without a change of heart. It goes on to concede that the Romish Church has also sinned against the "separated brethren" and begs forgiveness. Of course, this is stated in a very general way, and the "sins" for which it begs forgiveness are not itemized.

The words of St. John hold good about sins against unity: "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:10). So we humbly beg pardon of God and of our separated brethren, just as we forgive them that trespass against us.

Several steps are recommended to the Romish faithful to promote true ecumenism. Among these are included:

(1) In certain special circumstances, such as in prayer services "for unity," and during ecumenical gatherings, it is allowable, indeed desirable that Catholics should join in prayer with their separated brethren....

(2) Witness to the unity of the Church very generally forbids common worship to Christians, but the grace to be had from it sometimes commends this practice. The course to be adopted...is left to the prudent decision of the local episcopal authority....

(3) Most valuable...are meetings of the two sides -- especially for discussion of theological problems -- where each can treat with the other on an equal footing -- provided that those who take part in them are truly competent and have the approval of the bishops.

(4) Sacred theology and other branches of knowledge, especially of an historical nature, must be taught with due regard for the ecumenical point of view, so that they may correspond as exactly as possible with the facts.

(5) In these days when cooperation in social matters is so widespread, all men without exception are called to work together, with much greater reason all those who believe in God, but most of all, all Christians in that they bear the name of Christ. Cooperation among Christians vividly expresses that bond which already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant.

CHURCHES SEPARATED FROM THE ROMAN APOSTOLIC SEE

This third chapter distinguishes between two groups which have separated from the Romish Church. There are first the Eastern Churches concerning which the document states:

These Churches, although separated from us, yet possess true sacraments and above all, by apostolic succession, the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby

they are linked with us in closest intimacy. Therefore some worship in common, given suitable circumstances and the approval of Church authority, is not merely possible but to be encouraged.

...The rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches should be known, venerated, preserved and cherished by all. They must recognize that this is of supreme importance for the faithful preservation of the fulness of Christian tradition, and for bringing about the reconciliation between the Eastern and Western Christians.

In the second place, the chapter recognizes the churches of the reformation, and sets forth considerations as basis for dialogue with them. I'll summarize these "considerations." (1) Rome recognizes and speaks well of the fact that other churches confess Jesus to be God, Lord, and Mediator. (2) It recognizes a "love and reverence of Sacred Scripture" in churches outside of the Romish Church. (3) It recognizes that these churches "while invoking the Holy Spirit, ... seek in these very Scriptures God as it were speaking to them in Christ, Whom the prophets foretold, Who is the Word of God made flesh for us." It was this third point that the pope personally modified at the close of the third session when he introduced 19 modifications of this particular decree. He changed the original word "find" to "seek", suggesting that after all there is no "finding" of Christ in those groups outside of the communion of Rome. The Protestant ecumenists rather universally deplored the change made. (4) Rome recognizes that the sacrament of baptism is performed in other communions in addition to its own. (5) Finally, it states that "the daily Christian life of these brethren is nourished by their faith in Christ and strengthened by the grace of baptism and by hearing the word of God."

On the basis of these "considerations," the Vatican Council encouraged efforts towards closer contact with the "separated brethren." It did issue a word of warning toward the overly zealous:

This sacred council exhorts the faithful to refrain from superficiality or imprudent zeal, for these can hinder real progress toward unity. Their ecumenical action must be fully and sincerely Catholic, that is to say, faithful to the truth which we have received from the apostles and Fathers of the Church, in harmony with the faith which the Catholic Church has always professed....

How much this decree will affect the cause of ecumenism, I do not know. It is evident, however, that within the past few years there is a far more friendly attitude between the Roman Catholic Church and the protestants. Many "dialogues" have already taken place. And this is only the beginning. Within the last years, a burning desire has arisen in the heart of man to unite all churches into one. Though many things yet deter, it seems nothing will stop that movement. Nothing, that is, til Christ returns on the clouds of glory to gather His faithful Church to Himself in Heaven.

BOOK REVIEWS—

Papal Infallibility, It's Complete Collapse Before A Factual Investigation Adventures of a Deserter The Church In The Age Of Revolution

PAPAL INFALLIBILITY, It's Complete Collapse Before A Factual Investigation. J. B. Rowell; Kregel Publications; 171 pages; \$3.50.

The claim to papal infallibility was made church doctrine at the First Vatican Council held in 1870. In this book, the author investigates this contention and examines whether it is proper for the pope to claim such infallibility when he speaks *ex cathedra*. He proves that this doctrine is an arrogant assumption on the part of the pope in the light of the gross wickedness of past popes, the opposition to the doctrine within the Roman Catholic Church before 1870, the fierce opposition at the First Vatican Council where the doctrine was established, the contradictions in papal decrees and conciliar decisions, and in the light of Scripture itself. Added to this is a brief discussion of the Second Vatican Council which was about to get under way when the book was written.

It is an effective refutation of the claims that the pope has made to be the infallible spokesman for Christ upon earth and it completely annihilates these haughty presumptions of the bishop of Rome. Especially in the light of the fact that Rome still insists on this doctrine, and in the light of the fact that many within Protestantism are eager to establish more cordial relationships with Rome, if not to return to her communion, the book is an exceedingly timely one.

Prof. H. Hanko

"Adventures of a Deserter," by Jan Overduin. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 153 pages. \$3.50.

The author of this little book of 153 pages is a minister of a Reformed Church in the Netherlands. We are informed on the fly-leaf that he had his theological training in the Free University of Amsterdam, that he is "a well-known pulpit orator, radio speaker, and publicist." He is the author of several books. During the second World War and the German occupation of the Netherlands, Rev. Overduin was imprisoned for more

than a year and a half for his "courageous and tireless activity in battling the occupational forces for the cause of Christian education."

This book, which is translated into the English by Harry Van Dyke, is a story of Jonah who is called "a deserter" because he fled from his calling to preach to Nineveh. The author attempts, and we believe quite aptly, to emphasize the universality of Jonah's experience, applying it not only to ministers who have the special calling to witness for the truth, but to all who tend to shirk their calling.

The author is adept in the language of the day, a fellow traveler in the space age, and speaks of travel to the moon and astronauts as easily as he does of surgical operations and selling of cars. In one word, the author is thoroughly acquainted with what is going on in the world of our day, and the problems that confront us, and approaches the story of Jonah with application to our day.

The book is quite true to the Scriptural narrative. It explains the thinking of Jonah, his sins, his conversion, his preaching in the light of our time. Very refreshing reading, I'd say!

This does not mean that we subscribe to all that is said in the book. For example, the book repeatedly speaks of the patience of God. This may be due to the fact that it is a translation. We have not the original Holland. But the expression "patience of God" is not a Scriptural concept. Never do you read in the Bible that God is patient. He is said to be longsuffering and forbearing. He is also said to be the God of all patience. But that is quite different than to say He is patient. Patience is a grace He gives to His people, but He Himself is never said to be patient. Nor do we agree that all the children of God have the same experience and calling that Jonah had, as the author seems to imply.

But if you wish to study about Jonah, and at the same time read a refreshingly written book related to him, we recommend that you get this book, which was published as late as November 5, 1965.

Rev. M. Schipper

"The Church In The Age Of Revolution" (Vol. V of "The Pelican History of The Church). by Alec R. Vidler. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; 287 pp. \$5.00.

Reviews on two other volumes in this series of books on Church History have appeared earlier in *The Standard Bearer*. This volume covers the history of the Church from 1789 to the present day.

The date 1789 is chosen because this is the date of the French Revolution which, according to the author, had profound impact upon subsequent times up to the present. Hence the age which is covered by this book can appropriately be called "An Age Of Revolution". Taking his starting point therefore in the political revolution in France, he goes on to discuss the revolution in philosophy led by Schleiermacher, Kant and Hegel; the revolution in the form of the Church—especially in England, Ireland and Scotland as the Church lost its character of The Establishment; the revolution in Biblical studies under the influences of higher criticism; the revolution in theology under the impact of Darwinian evolution, scientific technological advance and liberal theological thought from such men as Barth, Niebuhr, Tillich and Bultmann; and the revolutionary character of the Church as it developed in America so differently from the Church in Europe.

Included are discussions somewhat brief on Eastern Orthodoxy, particularly in the Russian Orthodox Church, mission work, and the ecumenical movement.

While the book treats particularly of the major trends in the Church and the world (and is in this respect extremely valuable), we have the same criticism to make of this volume as we have made of the others. It offers no evaluation of philosophical and theological trends, speaks without criticism of the rise of higher critical studies, the liberal trends in the Church and modern ecumenism; it speaks only disparagingly of Calvinism and mentions very briefly the history of the Church which through these revolutions kept the faith.

For those who want a compact survey of the period treated, this book is a valuable asset. Prof. H. Hanko

NEWS OF OUR CHURCHES—

February 1, 1966

Isabel, South Dakota has called Rev. J. Kortering from a trio which included the Revs. Engelsma and Schipper.

Rev. Kortering has declined the call that came to him from Hudsonville.

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The first of a series of lectures sponsored by our Mission Board was given the evening of Jan. 27. "What an evening!" That exclamation was heard from many lips, and it had a double meaning. First, the evening was the coldest of the winter. Radio weather news sounded warnings concerning bad driving conditions, for blizzard weather was the order of the day. Below-zero temperatures and poor visibility were factors worth considering by those who had the best of intentions of attending the lecture. The committee responsible for the evening's arrangements weighed the suggestion to cancel the meeting, as many other meetings were. But the "What an evening!" developed into its second meaning before it was time to go home. The lecturer was Prof. H. C. Hoeksema and his topic was, "The Divine Foundation: The Infallible Scriptures". Music was furnished by a ladies' trio from Southeast church and by the Hope Heralds, a men's group from Hope Church. Miss Mary Kregel, of First Church, was at the pipe organ for the prelude, offertory and postlude. Rev. M. Schipper was chairman and led in opening devotions and introduced the speaker. The quoted expression extolling the evening arose because of the content of the lecture which, in unequivocal terms, acclaimed the Bible to be the inerrant, "Spirit-Breathed" Word of God. The hardy souls who braved the wintry blasts sat in spell-bound silence, feeling affinity with the speaker as he reminded them that this confession is not to be proved by logic to the worldling, but can only be said by faith. This affinity-in-the-faith was in one instance revealed when a listener, way back in the church, said in loud, clear tones, "Amen", when the speaker held up his Bible, saying, "This is the Word of God." When we, the audience, had left the cars in the parking lot, we felt a glow of self-satisfaction for having come out in such bad weather; but when we went back to our cars, the glow had changed to the satisfaction of one who had enjoyed a good meal—and indeed we had. What an evening!

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The second in the lecture series sponsored by the Mission Board will be held, D.V. March 3 at First Church. At that time Prof. H. C. Hoeksema expects to undertake a study of the truth embodied in the first three chapters of Genesis. The Mission Board would appreciate it if you would tell your friends and neighbors

about this event. Can they count on you?

* * *

A "grocery shower" was held in First Church for the benefit of our Seminary students. Approximately 600 packages and cans of food were collected, plus a nice sum of money. Both students, via the bulletin, thanked the congregation for its thoughtfulness and the bond of fellowship shown through this gesture.

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Rev. Van Baren has completed his portion (about 100 visits) of the annual family visitation, and has expressed his "appreciation to the congregation for very considerably observing the schedules which were prepared". This will give him some extra time which he will also devote to his work of ministering to his new charge. He has already learned that his work is in the category of a village volunteer fireman—on 24 hour call.

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South Holland's new clerk is Mr. J. Flikkema, 2339 184th St. Lansing, Illinois; and the address of the treasurer is Mr. Gil. F. Van Baren, 15921 Parkside Ave., South Holland, Ill.

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From the Adams St. School "Announcer" we learn that the Mothers' Club presented the school with a new console piano for the assembly room.

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Oak Lawn's Ladies' Circle, with the co-operation of the Young People's Society who relinquished their building, sponsored a Singspiration Sunday Evening, Jan. 30 at 7 o'clock. The ladies invited the congregation to join them in an hour of song and praise designed to glorify our Creator and Redeemer. The bulletin notice referred to the text, "Sing to the Lord, sing His praise all ye people".

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Oak Lawn's Young People's Society gave an advance notice in the Jan. 30th bulletin regarding a special meeting to which they were inviting all the adult members of the congregation February 27. The only explanation of the meeting was that it would be "a Sunday evening of fellowship in the Word of God".

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South Holland's Men's Society, in an after recess program, recently heard a paper on, "What is the relation between employer and employee according to Scripture?"

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Bulletin Quote—Oak Lawn's: "We are a procrastinating lot. It is always what we are going to do tomorrow that entices us, but it is only what we do today that counts".

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.