

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Editor-in-Chief: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Department Editors: Mr. John M. Faber, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman Hanko, Rev. Robert C. Harbach, Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. Jay Kortering, Rev. George C. Lubbers, Rev. Marinus Schipper, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Herman Veldman, Rev. Bernard Woudenberg

Editorial Office: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema
1842 Plymouth Terrace, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Church News Editor: Mr. John M. Faber
1123 Cooper Ave., S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

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Business Office: The Standard Bearer,
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.
P.O. Box 6064
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Meditation

Found By A Strange People

Rev. M. Schipper

"I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name."

Isaiah 65:1.

Jehovah, the God of the everlasting covenant, speaks!

In answer to the prayer of the remnant whom the prophet envisioned as being in Babylonian captivity!

The spiritual remnant bemoaned the sad condition of God's people. There seems to be no hope for them. Listen to them pray: "Look down from heaven, and

behold from the habitation of thy holiness and thy glory: Where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained? Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting . . ." And again, "But we are

all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and has consumed us, because of our iniquities. But now, O Lord, thou art our father: we are the clay, and thou art our potter, and we all are the work of thy hand . . . Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord? Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?" (Isaiah 63:15ff; 64:6ff).

To be sure, God will never forget His covenant. Indeed, His mercy is eternal. He will never forget His Zion.

But this restoration, this remembrance of His people will assume a different form than the petitioners could ever expect. For, while they are concerned over a nation whom Jehovah has rejected; God will be found by those who asked not for Him, who sought Him not. Of this the apostle Paul also speaks (Romans 10), referring exactly to our text and to its prophetic fulfillment.

Found by a strange people!

Wonderful answer!

God is found!

That, in itself, is a great wonder! God, the Invisible One, Who dwelleth in an unapproachable light; Who is Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and truth; Who is eternal, infinite, and who cannot be comprehended in a definition — that He should be found, that indeed is a great wonder!

But the wonder is even greater than that! For it must be plain that the text cannot mean that God is found merely in a general sense, as for example, He is found as the God of creation. So that even the Gentiles knew that He is and in a general sense Who He is. The text is not trying to tell us that in the old dispensation the Gentiles did not know of God at all; but that now in the new dispensation they also know that and who He is. For in this sense, God had always manifested Himself. He manifested Himself even to the extent of His power and divinity. He did so in the works of His hands. He did so also in the dispensation of His wrath upon all the ungodly. Always He showed Himself as the God Who must be served and thanked. But this is something quite different from the finding of our text. In the old dispensation the Gentiles never found Him in the sense of our text. To find God is a boon. It is something greatly desirable. It is a blessing.

He is found as the God of salvation!

In this sense He is not revealed in creation, apart from Jesus Christ. The things He made indeed reveal His glory, and no one beholding the things He made can deny that He is. But the language that proceeds from that creation after the fall is one of wrath. It has in it no hope for the sinner. And there is in it nothing that could induce that sinner to seek God. But in our

text He speaks of Himself as the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ. This is evident from two sources. In the first place, the context makes this clear. It is Jehovah, the God of Israel, and therefore the covenant God speaking. His words are an answer to the prayer of the remnant of His people for the restoration of that covenant. He therefore speaks of Himself as the merciful and forgiving God, Who through the way of atonement will reconcile His people to Himself. But, in the second place, this is also evident from Romans 10. There the apostle had been writing throughout of the rejection of Israel as a nation and the salvation of the Gentiles. And the apostle, even quoting from our passage in Isaiah, reminds his kinsmen according to the flesh of Israel's rejection and the reception of the Gentiles into the covenant of God. But notice also the text itself, how it makes this clear. God is speaking, and He says: "Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." And in the verse that follows our text: "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, etc." It is true that these words are directed to carnal Israel. But this does not alter the fact that they show how and in what light God reveals Himself and how the Gentiles found Him. He manifested Himself as the God of salvation, who is gracious, merciful, and abundantly ready to pardon. And as such they that sought Him not, found Him.

The meaning is clear. Even as a father who teaches his child to walk, watches that child with outstretched arms, ready to catch it when it should fall; so God, in all His graciousness, pictures Himself as ready to receive and to forgive whosoever flees to Him for redemption. The outstretched arms symbolize the fulness of God's revelation to us in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus that revelation had been given to Israel of old, in His Word, through the prophets, and in signs, wonders, and the shadows of temple, sacrifices, etc. Thus that revelation had been perfected in Christ; Who is Jehovah-salvation, in His incarnation, in His death and resurrection, and proclaimed in the new dispensation through the gospel. The gospel is the revelation of God as the God of our salvation coming to us with outstretched arms, and ready to receive, and not cast out, whoever comes to Him.

That God of salvation is found!

This means much more than that we attain unto a mere intellectual knowledge of Him. Though this intellectual knowledge is necessary and one which may be increased through a constant and a faithful study of His revelation; yet one with mere intellectual knowledge may reject Him. This mere intellectual knowledge without more can only increase the judgment that must come upon one who rejects Him. They that have known the way and refused to walk therein shall be beaten with many stripes.

To find Him as the God of our salvation is a spiritual experience!

It is the experience of the soul that has come to a true spiritual knowledge of his sin and misery. It is the experience of the soul that longs for and has found peace and rest. It is the experience in which God is become manifest in all the beauty of His grace in the face of Christ. It is the experience of the soul that has heard and therefore responds to the efficacious call of God in Christ whereby he is become a new creation, which call God is also pleased to have uttered through the preaching of the gospel.

And by whom is He found?

Not by Israel as a nation, as some aver. It is exactly the observation of the apostle in his epistle to the Romans that with many of them God was highly displeased and had therefore rejected them. Is it not his lament that so many of his kinsmen according to the flesh have fallen out and are lost? A fact which gave the apostle no little concern. His people had received so much; for to them were given many things. "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, etc." And he asked the question: Did God's word fail somewhere? God forbid. Let God be true, and every man a liar. God's Word did not fail. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel. And he goes on to say "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called: that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." So that God made distinction that of all the children of Abraham according to the flesh only Isaac is called. And of the children of Isaac and Rebecca only Jacob is chosen. And the apostle calls attention to the prophecy of Hosea: "I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God." And in chapter ten, the apostle elaborately referring to our text, explains that that strange people who found God is the Gentiles. O, indeed, also in Israel there was a remnant, according to the election of grace, that fled

to Him and His outstretched arms, but carnal Israel was stiff-necked and rejected Him. Witness how this climaxed in the cross.

But never is the promise of none effect. Always God saves His people, and the remnant pleads for His mercy. Thus God saved His people even in the old dispensation. And this word of God is fulfilled according to the text also in the Gentiles. The contrast, therefore, in the text, is not between election and reprobation, though this is certainly involved; but the contrast is between Israel and the Gentiles.

The Gentiles, as "unto a nation that was not called by my name," unto them God said: "Behold me, behold me," and He was sought of them that asked not for Him, and found of them that sought Him not.

Through the gospel!

In that way they found Him!

Through the gospel which always declares: "Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

But how shall the dead sinner ask, and seek, and find?

The God of our salvation manifests Himself to him. That: "Behold me, behold me," is a life-giving word that makes the dead sinner alive, and at the same time reveals to that now living sinner the saving God as He is pleased to reveal Himself in Jesus Christ, the Saviour.

But there is more!

"Behold me, behold me," is also the efficacious calling. Mere gospel preaching is not enough. This is evident in the nation Israel which had the preaching of the gospel in all its fulness. Only when that powerful, saving, and calling Word: "Behold me" strikes into the heart of the sinner, does that sinner who cannot and does not seek Him, find Him.

When that God of our salvation stands before you in the Person of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and calls to you: "Behold me, behold me," you will come to Him and find in Him all of your salvation — whether you be Jew or Gentile.

And thus God's Word fails not! His house shall be filled! And all the glory will be His!

Amen, and Amen!

Editorial

Our Schools and Government Subsidy (7)

Pluralistic or Antithetical?

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Brief Re-introduction

For some time we have been studying this subject of

"parochiaid" and offering a critical analysis of the issues involved. Meanwhile this matter has been up be-

fore various state legislatures which were called upon either by some government official or by various pressure groups to enact legislation granting a measure of state subsidy to non-public schools. In the State of Michigan (and, if my memory serves me correctly, also in Illinois) parochiaid has been laid to rest for the time being. The issue is by no means dead, however. Not only are the advocates of government subsidy continuing to insist that in the near future the state(s) must provide such subsidy or face the prospect of many parochial schools closing and unloading their pupils on an already overloaded public school system; but the wheels of government itself seem to be turning slowly in the direction of state subsidy. In Michigan there is a commission to study and propose educational reform, for example; and one of the items to be studied is that of parochiaid. Generally speaking, the chief factor which prevented enactment of parochiaid legislation thus far has been a reluctance to raise state budgets and taxes in the face of already tight budgets and rising taxes. There does not seem to have been a great deal of principle involved in the failure to provide a measure of financial help to non-public schools from state coffers. The lack of favorable action has been pragmatically motivated.

What the outcome will be cannot be predicted with certainty. One thing is certain: the issue will be before the legislatures again. And while certain strong forces in the ranks of public schools have been given time, through this delay, to work against parochiaid and to rally their forces, nevertheless many are predicting that eventually some form of government subsidy is going to become law in more than one state.

A discussion of this subject, therefore, has not become outdated. On the contrary, this same legislative delay enables us to continue and complete our study and to become prepared in case parochiaid becomes a reality and in case we are faced by a choice of accepting or refusing such subsidy as might be proffered.

In the June issue we began a study of a popular argument in favor of parochiaid, an argument based on the claim that we live in a pluralistic society with a pluralistic educational system. We quoted at length from the writings of three proponents of this argument, and promised an analysis of this position, concluding with the suggestion that the reader ask the question: where are the lines of light versus darkness drawn in these statements? This phase of our discussion we now continue.

Not Pluralistic

First of all, it should be noted that even from a formal and legal point of view we do not have what may properly be called a pluralistic system of education in our country. The idea of pluralism is that there is a plurality of groups within our society, each having

its own religious principles, each maintaining its own ideas and views of how its children should be educated in harmony with said religious principles, each entitled to establish and maintain schools which embody its ideas of education, and each having an equal right to government funds for its schools. But this is not the system in our country. As far as the official status of education in this country is concerned, we have a monolithic system, that is, one kind of education, that of the public, or state-controlled educational system. And because of the prohibition against the establishment of religion by the government, this state-controlled educational system is supposed to be non-religious, or religiously neutral (something which is, of course, impossible, as we shall have occasion to note later). This one, state-controlled system of education is the going system in our country. It is set up by law and according to constitution in the various states. There is only one loophole with respect to this system, — a loophole which makes the system somewhat *dualistic*, but by no means *pluralistic*. That loophole is this, that citizens in our country *may* educate their children in *private* schools, whether they be church schools or society-controlled schools. Education is compulsory. And public education is compulsory for all who do not voluntarily choose to educate their children in private schools.

This is the extent of freedom of education in our country. Dr. Vanden Berg may complain that this is not liberty because it is liberty at a price. Mr. Oosterman may try to say that it is a question whether our society wishes to have a monolithic system of education, akin to the established church of bygone centuries. The fact of the matter is that this is the system that is established by law. It is constitutional. It is not a question whether we have a monolithic system; we have one, with the single exception that private education is also *permitted*. Nor does the government require anyone to "forfeit his rights to the educational tax dollar." Everyone has the right to send his children to the public school, as far as the government is concerned; if he nevertheless chooses not to do so, it is his obligation to provide private education. This was the situation when our forefathers came to this country and began to establish Christian schools; recognizing this situation, and for principle's sake being unwilling to let the state educate their children, they chose the alternative which was by law open to them, namely, private education in schools in harmony with their principles. And they did so at great financial sacrifice, too! For them it was a matter of principle, not of dollars and cents.

This, in fact, has been the system in our country especially since about 1835. In "Course of Study for Christian Schools," pp. 375, ff., Mark Fakkema describes the development of this system as follows:

There are two events that have profoundly influ-

enced our country. The first concerns a radical change in the government that overruled our several States; the second concerns a radical change within the government of each State. The first momentous event consists of the establishment of a new, centralized government over all states. This implied the rejection of England's rule over us. This event occurred in 1776 when our country declared its independence. The second momentous event was the establishment of centralized educational control as a "distinct branch of (State) government." This implied the rejection of the principle of local educational control. The movement toward State control in education had its beginnings in the convention that framed the Michigan State Constitution in 1835.

The first event (1776) is celebrated each year as a national holiday. The second event (1835) — which I believe has wrought the greater radical change in our country — is practically unknown and is never as much as mentioned in the ordinary school histories. Whereas before 1835 education in the main enjoyed the freedom which it had inherited from the common law of England, after this date American education increasingly conformed its educational policy to a State controlled educational system imported from Prussia.

Fakkema then describes the consequences of this change in the following language:

As soon as the State took over the educational reins, the State (public) schools, in transmitting the heritage of the past to the rising generation, gave free passage to that which was secular and regarded that which was religious contraband. The inevitable result was that the life for which these schools prepared increasingly became secular, that is Bible-less, God-less, Christ-less, Atheistic, immoral, lawless, corrupt. How significant the deflection of educational control from private to political hands!

We of course realize that many and varied immediate factors have contributed to bring about our present moral corruption, social chaos, and economic bewilderment; but whatever the immediate contributing causes may be, the ultimate cause is departure from God and His Word. When God and the teaching of His Word are intentionally and systematically ruled out of preparation for life, then such life's preparation may well assume the lion's share of the Godlessness and Bible ignorance of ensuing generations. To secularize instruction and to deny responsibility for the secular character of the instructed is education disowning itself.

Next the question concerning the reason for this "secularization" of schools under State control of education is faced; and Mr. Fakkema answers as follows:

What makes secularization inevitable in our State-controlled system is the fundamental law of the land which deprives religion from State-controlled institutions. It is important to note that in transplanting the Prussian educational system (which was religious)

from Germany to America, education lost its religious character. How was this brought about?

(1) Whereas in Prussia the federal or central government had charge of education, in the United States educational control — for constitutional reasons — passed by our Federal government and lodged itself in the governments of the several states.

(2) When our several State legislatures took over the task of educating the youth they — also for constitutional reasons — had to divest education of its religious ingredient.

While I may not agree with every formulation in the above quotations, nevertheless I think Fakkema furnishes a rather accurate description of the historical development and character of the American educational system. Officially we have a monolithic educational system; and that established governmental system of education is saddled with the constitutional prohibition against establishment of religion. The only loophole is that those who do not like the state schools are free to establish their own schools with their own funds.

Accepting the proponents of parochialism, for the moment, on their own basis, what is the conclusion? If we grant for the moment that we live in a pluralistic society, what follows as far as education is concerned?

In the first place, the proponents of pluralism should not try to get government funds *in spite of* the fact that this country has a monolithic school system. Nor should they try to take a back-handed slap at the monolithic system along financial avenues. No, even on their own basis *they should try to change the system itself*. This would, of course, be extremely difficult; and any success in such an attempt would be highly improbable. But even on the basis of the pluralistic view of society and of government's relation to it, this would at least be honest and straight-forward.

In the second place, it would appear to follow on the basis of a pluralistic view, and on the basis that the government has any business whatsoever in education, that the proponents of pluralism should not merely insist that all the different segments of society receive money on an equal basis with the public schools, but that the government itself should be charged with the responsibility of operating a totally pluralistic system. Not only should they insist on strict equality as far as money is concerned. Money, or subsidy, is after all only one factor in so-called equality of education. Granting that pluralism is right, and granting that it is the business of government to educate, the logical consequence is that the government should be called upon to *operate* a pluralistic system. If, for example, there are a thousand different religious segments in our society, each with its own ideas of education, then the government should set up a thousand different schools for each of these segments. This is absurd, you say? Impossible? I agree. But putting this aside, surely the very least that the proponents of pluralism can

advocate is 100% equality as far as the financing of education is concerned. They must not ask for *partial* support, for some *help*, or for so-called "greater equity." They should insist — again, taking them on their own basis, with which I do not at all agree — on total payment for private schools by the government, on an equal footing with the public schools. To my knowledge, no advocate of parochialism has to date publicly endorsed such an idea. It is too preposterous. Practically it would mean the certain defeat of parochialism. But it is a logical consequence of the pluralistic position. And some public school opponents of parochialism have already seemed to sense this, have feared it, and have (from their point of view) rightly sensed that here is a dire threat to the public school system.

In the third place, the alternative to the above (again, on the basis of pluralism) would be that the government pull out of education completely. Then all education would be private. Then no taxes would be collected for educational purposes, nor any money handed out by the government for education. Perhaps the only function of government would be to insist that all children receive an education. But it would then be up to each segment of society to establish and maintain its own kind of school. Obviously this is also an impossibility; the clock cannot be turned back, and to attempt to do so would lead to chaos. But again, this would be the logical consequence of pluralism.

All of this, however, does not get at the root of the problem.

Negatively speaking, that root of the problem is that our society is not basically pluralistic. When anyone characterizes our society as pluralistic, he is looking at what is only an accidental characteristic of society, not at an essential characteristic. The question is not whether our society is made up of Buddhist, Moslem, Jewish, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed, Baptist, Presbyterian, Atheist, and hundreds of other "segments." This might be a question as far as "Americanism" and democracy

are concerned. It might be a question for a government which is supposed to be devoted to the principle of the non-establishment of religion. This might be a question when we think in terms of and glorify so-called freedom of religion and freedom of worship (which, by the way, is not true freedom at all, but a certain toleration of all religions, both true and false). I do not write these things because I do not appreciate the fact that in this country we have the opportunity to worship God and to educate our children according to the true religion, that is, according to the Word of God (not according to our "conscience"). I certainly do appreciate this. But I write thus because I am afraid that gradually we become accustomed to a certain wrong way of thinking about these matters. We begin to equate Christianity and democracy. We begin to glorify so-called religious freedom or tolerance as something highly Christian. We begin to think of a country and a government which claims to be religiously neutral or only generally religious as somewhat of a Christian country and government. We begin to think of "equality in educational opportunity" for "all races, religions, and social classes" as some kind of Christian principle. We begin to think of every kind of education as being at least somewhat good. After a while even Christian school opponents of parochialism, who supposedly stand for the antithesis, can wish the public schools God's blessing. And before we realize it, we think of all different kinds of education (our own covenantal schools included) as somehow standing on an equal footing, all somehow fighting for the same goal of education, and all striving to get and entitled to a "fair share" out of the governmental "pork barrel."

What has happened when we begin to think this way?

We have somehow lost our bearings in a very fundamental sense. And we are in danger of losing, sooner or later, all that we have ever stood for as far as education is concerned.

Until next time, think it over. What is wrong with so-called pluralism?

Report on Synod

OUR SYNOD OF 1969

Rev. D. Engelsma

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches convened on June 4 in South Holland, Illinois. Rev. J. A. Heys, president of last year's Synod, led the pre-Synodical worship service on Tuesday evening. He preached on Colossians 3:16a: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Synod elected Rev. C. Hanko to

preside over its deliberations, which lasted until mid-afternoon on Tuesday, June 10.

The consistory of Oak Lawn overtured Synod to reject the Social Security program recently enacted by our government for ministers. Oak Lawn felt "that this program infringes upon a right and duty of the

church," and appealed to Article 1 of the Constitution of the Emeritus Committee: "The Protestant Reformed Churches wish to conform themselves to the stipulations of the original article 13 of the Church of Dordt which reads as follows: 'Ministers who by reason of age, sickness, or otherwise, are rendered incapable of performing the duties of their office, shall nevertheless retain the honor and title of a minister, and the church which they have served shall provide honorably for them in their need . . .'" Classis West decided not to approve the overture on the ground that the law on Social Security for ministers leaves no exemptions for our ministers. After consulting a lawyer through an ad hoc committee, Synod decided "that payment or non-payment of self-employment tax and acceptance or non-acceptance of social security benefits is an *individual*, not an ecclesiastical, matter." With regard to a question by Oak Lawn whether the churches still intend to provide for the needs of a minister who might reject Social Security and with regard to Classis West's overture that Synod review the denominational emeritation program, Synod decided "that the principle and the requirements of Article 13 of the Church Order (together with the regulations of the Constitution of the Emeritus Committee) are an *ecclesiastical* matter and are not as such affected by Social Security regulations. It remains the duty of the church(es) to determine the need of any retiring minister and to provide honorably for him in his need."

From both the Theological School Committee and the Rector of the Seminary, Synod received reports that spoke of God's blessing upon our Seminary. There are now seven young men in the Theological School, one seminarian and six pre-seminarians. Synod decided to eliminate tuition, because of the financial burden of the students. It also increased the amount of aid which a student may receive. Taking note of the workload of the professors, Synod authorized funds to provide assistance for them in their clerical duties of typing and stenciling.

Synod spent much time deliberating the various aspects of the mission calling of our churches. In accordance with Synod's mandate in 1967 and 1968, the Foreign Mission Committee presented a report that dealt mainly with the possibility of work with those "who in their generations have not belonged to the covenant." Because the delegates did not have time to study this report, Synod delayed treatment of this report until 1970. The radio broadcasting will continue the same as last year. We will broadcast the "Reformed Witness Hour" over stations in Oskaloosa, Iowa; Kalamazoo, Michigan; Yankton, South Dakota; Lansing, Illinois; and Loveland, Colorado at a cost of about \$9,000. The Mission Committee in conjunction with the Radio Committee of First Church plans to make a survey of all the stations by means of a "letter month" in order to "determine listening strength."

Synod heard a report on the work being done in Pella, Iowa, where various ministers have been working steadily from January of this year. The Mission Committee was granted approval to continue the work in Pella at its discretion, at the request of the Pella consistory. The men sent to Jamaica gave full reports to this Synod, Rev. J. A. Heys and Elder T. Feenstra, who worked in Jamaica in 1968, and Rev. G. C. Lubbers and Elder H. Meulenberg, who returned from Jamaica shortly before this Synod convened. We may expect these ministers to summarize their reports in the *Standard Bearer*. The ambassadors were unanimous in judging that God gives us work to do in Jamaica. Rev. Heys, at the time of this writing, has the call to be missionary in Jamaica. Concerning the call to Jamaica, Synod determined that "the tenure of the call to serve as missionary to Jamaica be a minimum of two years: after this time the missionary can request termination of his services and be declared eligible for call within our churches." Synod established a "Study Fund" which can eventually be used in preparing young Jamaican men for the ministry. If in the future there are Jamaican young men who desire to prepare for the ministry but who are financially unable to obtain the required education, this fund may serve to assist them. This "Study Fund" is recommended to the various Sunday Schools, societies and other organizations within our churches that want to contribute money to our work in Jamaica. Synod also requests that each church again take four collections during the coming year for the church building needs of the Jamaica churches. In addition, the diaconate of Hudsonville is responsible for collecting money to help the poor of Jamaica.

Throughout the year, the ministers in Michigan and many elders do a large amount of work on behalf of our churches, especially, in the Theological School Committee and the Mission Committee. All of this work they must perform in addition to the work within their own churches. We owe them a large debt of appreciation.

Synod was forced to raise the synodical assessments for 1970 from \$133.50 to \$150.50 per family per year. This was due mostly to the increase in requested subsidy from the "Needy Churches." In 1969, \$48.00 per family per year was needed to fill the subsidy requests of these churches; in 1970, the requests for subsidy require \$62.50 per family per year. In view of the steady increase in subsidy requests, Synod adopted some guidelines and advice for the churches asking subsidy. This advice includes: 1) A Church asking subsidy should itself raise a minimum of \$8.00 per family per week. 2) Subsidy from the churches through Synod is not to be asked or given in order to assist our members in their calling of educating their children in our own schools, even indirectly. 3) Any help a church may need to provide for the needs of the poor should not be obtained through subsidy, but

through benevolent collections. A copy of these guidelines, in full, will be sent to all subsidized churches.

Rev. Dale H. Kuiper was re-elected Stated Clerk of Synod, and Mr. Charles Pastoor was re-elected Synodical Treasurer. Synod thanked both of these men, on

behalf of our churches for their work in the past.

Those who are interested in more than these brief sketches of some of Synod's work should buy the "Acts" from the clerks of the consistories, when in a short while the "Acts" are printed.

All Around Us

Ecumenicity in Reverse Full Speed Ahead Unholy Demands Theological Ignorance

Prof. H. Hanko

ECUMENICITY IN REVERSE

At the last General Synod of the Reformed Church in America the deep-seated split between liberals and conservatives was recognized and dealt with in a way which deals a serious blow to ecumenicity in that denomination. The issues dividing the two elements in the Church are deep and of long standing. For many years there have been major disagreements on questions of doctrine and Church Polity. But the immediate cause of the trouble in the RCA was over the questions of church union. There was first of all the union proposals which the RCA had considered for merger with the Presbyterian Church U. S. (Southern). These proposals had failed by a very narrow margin. Especially the churches in the East were incensed over this defeat of their hopes. Then, at the Synod, proposals came before the body asking for complete participation in COCU — the super-church of over 25 million members. Currently the Reformed Church sends observers only. The Eastern Churches especially wanted full participation. When the vote came at the General Synod, full participation in the COCU talks failed by a narrow margin leaving the liberals completely exasperated. This was sufficient reason for the liberals to conclude that the conservatives still ruled in the Church and that the RCA was about to drop completely by the wayside in the ecumenical movement.

The result of all this was the adoption of a "plan of understanding." The essential features of this plan are, first, that a special committee of eighteen work for a year to attempt some form of reconciliation between the liberal and conservative wings in the Church. Secondly, if these efforts towards reconciliation fail, a

new committee of eighteen be appointed to draw up a plan for the orderly dissolution of the Church. The committee for reconciliation is given a year to do its work.

Thus the Church faces the imminent prospect of dissolution; and it is just possible that, within a few years, the RCA will exist no longer.

The votes on the various merger plans currently facing the Church show the extent of the split between liberals and conservatives. The merger proposal with the Southern Presbyterians was defeated by a vote of 23 classes in favor to 22 opposed. (Two-thirds approval was needed for passage.) The vote to join COCU (with full participation) was defeated on the General Assembly by a vote of 130 to 103.

It is difficult to tell at this time what will be the result of this new idea to attempt reconciliation and to face honestly the prospect of dissolution if reconciliation fails. It is possible that the whole idea behind the plan to dissolve the denomination was put forward in a fit of pique and that its purpose is to scare the conservatives with the spectre of the loss of a denomination in the hopes that the conservatives will lose their grip on the Church. It is obvious that the liberals (particularly in the East) do not care a great deal if the denomination ceases to exist. They are above all interested in joining other denominations. But, at least, there is an honest effort being made to recognize the differences which exist in the Church and to do something about them rather than paper them over or hope that by ignoring them they will go away. It is a plan worth consideration by other denominations which are torn by internal struggles between liberals and conservatives. It could con-

ceivably result in a realignment of denominations in which conservatives band together while liberals go their own strange ways in search of that which is no gospel.

FULL SPEED AHEAD

The Presbyterian Church U.S. (Southern), the bride left standing at the altar in the PCUS-RCA talks, resolved not to let the defeat of the merger talks with the Reformed Church stop her in her ecumenical search. In that denomination the liberals are firmly in control. At the General Assembly Meeting held earlier this summer in Mobile, Alabama this denomination took various decisions which moved the Church rapidly in the direction of a super church.

Most important was a decision to form a committee with the United Presbyterian Church to settle their historic differences and proceed with plans to merge. This is what many liberals have long wanted; and the defeat of the RCA merger paved the way. Already various presbyteries and particular synods have been moving swiftly towards union without the consent of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly also reaffirmed its decision to participate in the COCU talks over the strenuous objections of conservatives.

The chief protest of conservatives in the PCUS Church has always been against the social emphasis which the denomination is making. But no conservative agitation could stem the tide at this year's General Assembly. The assembly, among other things, adopted resolutions favoring selective conscientious objection to the draft, urging the country to restraint in the nuclear arms race, questioning the wisdom of the anti-ballistic missile system, and approving a memorial service for Martin Luther King Jr.

In the area of doctrine the Church faced once again the question of evolution. At four previous assemblies, since 1886, the Church had maintained that evolution was incompatible with the truth of Scripture. This year's assembly decided that the Genesis account of creation and the theory of evolution were not contradictory.

A committee was also appointed to study the causes of unrest in the Church; which, translated, means: how best can the conservatives be placated and silenced, if at all?

This is another denomination which could profitably face the question of whether dissolution would be more honest and better for the Church as a whole.

UNHOLY DEMANDS

The Churches of America have been put on the spot. James Forman, the head of a militant group of blacks, has recently drawn up a "manifesto" in which he demands of the Churches \$500,000,000 in "repara-

tions" for the suppression of and the injustice to the black race by the Churches throughout the years. Recently this figure has been raised considerably into the billions.

Forman and his followers have been disrupting church worship services to read their manifesto from pulpits and have presented their demands to various broader assemblies with the threat that they would use violence against the churches if their demands are not met.

The Churches have consistently involved themselves in the racial problems of the day in an attempt to find a social solution to a problem which can only be solved within the preaching of the gospel and the salvation of the Church. These Churches have forgotten their calling to preach the gospel and have entangled themselves in social matters. Now their chickens are coming home to roost and they are faced with preposterous demands to contribute money to aid the militant blacks in their efforts towards overthrowing the existing social and political order. The manifesto is a plea for revolution.

The liberal churches have little choice but to comply. And this is what they have been doing. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have already been promised to various black agencies. Churches contributing include the National Council of Churches, the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church, The United Methodist Conference of Western Pennsylvania, the American Baptist Convention, and others.

The Churches will now be forced into a position where they support and finance the efforts of militant blacks to plunge this country into revolution and anarchy.

THEOLOGICAL IGNORANCE

In a recent issue of *Christianity Today*, Joseph Martin Hopkins, associate professor in the Department of Bible and Philosophy at Westminster College, tells of a Bible test which he gave to a group of 100 freshmen to discover their knowledge of the Scriptures. The students given the test were all (with two exceptions) from homes with Church connections. In fact, the majority were Presbyterians. Taking into account that these were college freshmen and that the students were from Church homes, the results are incredible. A brief run-down appears at the end of the article which we reproduce. The figures indicate the number able to answer the questions.

1. Name the second book of the Bible.	75
2. Name the last book in the Bible.	60
3. Name the author of many of the Psalms.	39
4. Name the author of thirteen N. T. letters.	55
5. Name the book which tells the history of the early church (its spread from Jerusalem to Rome).	18

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|---|----|
| 6. Name one of the sons of Jacob. | 23 |
| 7. Name one of the kings of Israel or Judah. | 56 |
| 8. Name one of the Old Testament prophets. | 54 |
| 9. Quote one of the Ten Commandments. | 38 |
| 10. Name a missionary companion of the Apostle Paul. | 16 |
| 11. Quote one of the Beatitudes. | 24 |
| 12. Name the brother of Mary and Martha, whom Jesus raised from the dead. | 35 |
| 13. Name the Fourth Gospel. | 52 |
| 14. Quote the Golden Rule. | 78 |

We quote Dr. Martin on some of the answers received:

Two *New Testament* books and "*New Testament*" were given as the second book in the Bible. No fewer than six *Old Testament* books and "*Old Testament*" were guessed to be the last book in the Bible. The author of many of the Psalms was identified as John, Paul, Saul, Luke, Peter, Jesus, and "shepards." One student attributed thirteen New Testament letters to David. The thirteen wrong guesses for the book that relates the history of the early Church included Eli, "Genisus," "Isiah," and Moses! Added to the list of Jacob's twelve sons were Simon, Isaac, David, Abraham, Esau, "Jobe," "Able," "Cane," and "Izia."

Joseph, Jeremiah, Samuel, Herod, and "Seul" were crowned kings of Israel or Judah. And the ranks of the Old Testament prophets were swelled by the addition of John, Matthew, John the Baptist, Paul, and Mohammed!

Asked to state the first commandment, one student wrote, "Be faithful to your wife." Another offered, "Thou shalt not believe in false kings." Samuel, John, Bartholomew, and "Steven" were named as missionary companions of the Apostle Paul. Nominated for the brother of Mary and Martha were James, Mark, Zacharias, Levi, and "Magdeline." And credited with the authorship of the Fourth Gospel were Luke, St. Paul, and Peter.

The author quotes the prophet Hosea who warns: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." And this is indeed true. If these elementary questions, known by most second graders, are not known by many college freshmen, it is not strange that the Church of today goes in the foolish roads of apostasy. At the root of all the trouble lies ignorance of God's Word. May God grant that our covenant homes, schools and Churches remain faithful and untiring in their calling to teach our children the Word of God.

From Holy Writ

The Book of Hebrews

Rev. George Lubbers

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS: Hebrews 9:1-10

The chief subject in the Chapters 7:1 to 10:19 should not be lost from view. There is a danger that one becomes so involved in the details of the book that he fails to keep in mind the line of thought. For this reason it ought to be kept in mind that the main question here in this entire section is: the kind of High Priest that we have.

Let it then be remembered that our High Priest is Jesus, the Christ, the eternal Son of God in the flesh.

He is greater than Aaron, even as Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, as is evident from the Scriptures. He is not a priest according to a carnal commandment, but he is a priest according to the power of an endless life. With His coming there was a change in the priesthood and thus also there is of necessity a change in the law governing the priest. Wherefore Christ is out of Judah and not out of the tribe of Levi as was Aaron and his priesthood. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did. Thus the promise is made sure unto all the heirs.

This Christ is a minister in the true tabernacle which

is pitched by the Lord and not by man. He is at the right hand of God. God hath made Him both Lord and Christ — the LORD of glory. (Hebrews 7:1 f.f.)

But Christ is also the author of a better covenant. This better covenant is not like the covenant which God made at Sinai through Moses. That covenant was written upon tables of stone, and not upon the fleshy tables of the heart. It was a covenant which was impotent to make alive and to make the corrupt and unwilling sinner willing with a new obedience. And therefore this is a covenant with which God Himself finds fault in Jeremiah 31:31-34. And he will now make a better covenant. He will write His law upon the heart and will forgive our sins and will remember them no more. And we will know God even as we are known in heavenly perfection of the Canaan above forever.

Now the writer in Chapter 9 will make a careful comparison between the Old Testament tabernacle and the New Testament realization of the true tabernacle, and will show their respective place in our salvation; He will show how greatly superior the New Testament is over the Old Testament. For the Old Testament tabernacle is, with its priesthood and sacrifices, merely a *figure*, a *parable* of the real. It is in the New

Testament that eternal redemption is obtained for us by Christ.

THE OLD TESTAMENT TABERNACLE (Hebrews 9:1-5)

In these verses the writer is speaking of the "first covenant (which) had ordinances of divine services, and its sanctuary, a (sanctuary) of this world." Particularly he will speak here of the "tabernacle" of this first covenant. This tabernacle is really a "tent." It was made of curtains. It was not a building which was established upon strong foundations. It was not a fixed abode. As it was fashioned by Moses the Tabernacle was adapted for Israel's journey in the wilderness enroute to Canaan. Besides, the Old Testament tabernacle was constructed of materials which were the free-will offerings of the people. The people were not taxed or assessed for these matters. Thus we read in Exodus 25:1 f.f. "And the LORD spake unto Moses saying, speak unto the children of Israel that they may bring me an (heave) offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it."

It was to be a "sanctuary," a "place set apart." It is a place which the LORD set apart from all the rest of the "cosmos" for himself to reveal His glory and grace in the midst of His people. Such a place could not be bought and purchased with money. It must be the gift of love; it must itself be the fruit of grace in the hearts of God's people, as they are constituted by the LORD: Most Holy to the Lord!

The writer to the Hebrews calls this tabernacle a "worldly sanctuary." To the ears of some this might seem to indicate that this temple was something evil: it was *worldly*. However, it ought to be understood that the term *worldly* is here free from all anabaptistic flavor. The term in the Greek is "*kosmikon*," that is, it is *cosmic*. It belongs to this cosmos and does not have in its ingredients anything of the world to come. It is a little bit of sanctuary set apart in this great present heaven and earth, which shall once be renewed. It is the habitation of God in this present world, more particularly, in the Old Testament dispensation. In the New Testament dispensation there is no longer a tabernacle. The temple, which was built as the continuation of the tabernacle by David, was destroyed in the year 70 by the Romans. It has now long since been abrogated and removed from the earth. In this and in the future ages to come there shall be "no temple there." But here we have and need a tabernacle. We need a medium of revelation here where we see in part and know in part. The manner of revelation is here such that it is through the "cosmos." And this "cosmos" belongs to the things which are so many

words of God, the book of creation. Here all revelation is *indirect*. Presently, in the future glories it shall be face to face. (I Cor. 13:12) It is my belief that this is the implication, too, of what we read in Revelation 21:22, where we read "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it. . . ."

It is a tabernacle, then, which is of this world, and the present constitution of all things! It is a cosmical sanctuary! Yet, it is notwithstanding a sanctuary. That it is a sanctuary means that here the LORD reveals his "glory," the *Shikinah* of the presence of the God of Israel. Here the Lord of hosts will dwell with his people between the Cherubim of the mercy-seat. Thus we read in Exodus 25:22 "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the cherubims which are above the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." Yes, here Jehovah of glory, the LORD of hosts will dwell. Hence, this place is called the tabernacle of Jehovah. In Joshua 22:19 we read "Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession be unclean, then pass over into the land of the possession of the LORD, wherein the LORD'S tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us. . . ." It is the LORD'S tabernacle, His dwelling in the land, the land of Immanuel which makes all the difference. Here the glory of grace and mercy, and covenant fellowship is revealed. Here the LORD gives the testimony concerning His Son under the shadows and types. Wherefore it is called the tabernacle of witness, testimony. It is the infallible testimony of God to all his own that he will meet with them and will commune with them. And for this same reason this tabernacle is also called the "tent of meeting." It is the tent where the congregation, the flock of God enters into God's courts with thanksgiving and praise. Here they taste the sovereign love and mercy, and so experience that the LORD is good! (Exodus 27:21).

Now this Old Testament tabernacle has ordinances of ministry and worship. This temple was "thus prepared" says the text in Hebrews 9:6, and in such a prepared tabernacle the priests were called to minister. Now what were these "ordinances." These were the God-ordained ceremonies of the tabernacle. Nothing was left to human choice and caprice. And these ordinances were really ordinances of the throne of grace! They not only were pronounced from the throne, but they were also in accordance with the throne of grace and the very pattern of the temple. All things in this temple and its ordinances declared: God is a spirit and they who worship Him ought to worship

Him in Spirit and in truth. God is the invisible God. When God spoke to Israel on the mount and gave the temple ordinances, even Moses did not see a likeness of God! Hence, we are not to make any graven images of Him. (John 4:23, 24; Deut. 4:23, 24) The ordinances of the first covenant were maintained by the LORD. And these were thus the rules, as given by God Himself, for the true worship of God.

That the writer throughout this letter speaks of the "tabernacle" and not of the temple "*naos*," nor of temple, the grand architectural masterpiece of Solomon, has its reason. The intent of the writer is not to follow the historical manifestation of the temple in the Old Testament history, but rather to show the original tabernacle of Exodus to demonstrate the architectural lines as these run into the heavenly and better tabernacle. He would, furthermore, not merely call our attention to the inner part of the Solomonic temple in distinction from the outer court, but would rather show us the divine design of the entire tabernacle in its three parts: *outer court*, *holy place* and *Holy of holies*! Only thus will we be able to catch a glimpse of the implication of the truth that the Old Testament tabernacle was a "figure" for the time present. For the entire symbolism of the entire tabernacle is here of the essence in this passage of Hebrews. It forms the warp and woof of the writer's argument.

It ought to be understood that the Old Testament temple and its ministry were *parabolic* in nature. The term "parable" is used in the Greek text where the KJV writes "figure." (Hebrews 9:9) The German translates the Greek "*paraboleen*" by the term "Gleichnis," while the Holland translation is "afbeelding." We will need to take a hard look at the term parable in this connection and try to ascertain the meaning of the author in its usage. We believe that the term "parable" is very noteworthy. *Parable* and *figure* do have much in common, but they do not look at the same matter from the identical viewpoint. A figure may refer to a digit in the number system, a symbol. It may also refer to the "figure" of a person, the external form in which the qualities and attributes of a person come to stand before our senses. Then too it may mean: pattern or design. In the case in question as translated in the KJV it would refer to the visible pattern of the O.T. invisible presence of God, as He dwells in mercy with His people. On the other hand "parable" is a simile, an account taken from real life. The things of the kingdom come to pass in parables. (Mark 4:11) They are a part of this *cosmic* existence. The earthly is a picture of the heavenly. Were this not true then there could be no earthly temple and tabernacle which was a picture of the true tabernacle. But now, in the ministry of the tabernacle, we see *parabolic* symbolism, ministry!

A Cloud of Witnesses

The Battle Joined Against Absalom

Rev. B. Woudenberg

*And David numbered the people that were with him, and . . .
So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim.*

II Samuel 18:1, 6

Surely no one was more surprised than Hushai to find Absalom choosing to follow his advice. It was a foolish thing. After all, Absalom had all of the advantage for the moment; but as long as David lived, his position could never be secure. Now David was fleeing with his forces scattered and weak. Nothing would have been easier than to follow and pounce upon him in his weakness to administer the final, destroying blow. But Absalom was enjoying himself. For the first time he was really being honored and recognized as he had always wanted to be. All of the pomp of the court and the royal respects he received were to his greatest liking. It seemed a shame that he should have to leave them for the ardors of the

battlefield. And besides Absalom was at heart a coward. To be sure, his forces were large; but if they could be made even larger still, would it not lend even that much more personal safety? When he heard exactly that advice from a man as wise as Hushai was known to be, it gratified him. He would wait. Behind it, of course, was finally the power of God turning the wisdom of the mighty to folly.

Still Hushai was not sure. He was afraid that at any moment Absalom might see the folly of his decision and set out in pursuit of David. Thus, as soon as he could he made his way to the tabernacle to speak to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. They were the ones with whom David had made arrangements so that he

could be notified of anything which came up and by which he might be affected. To them belonged two sons, capable and loyal young men, who could be sent to carry a message to David. Thus Hushai explained to them exactly what had happened in their consultations with Absalom and he instructed them, "Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him."

As it was, both Zadok and Abiathar had realized that they would be more quickly suspected of trying to help David than anyone else. In fact, their sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz were already staying outside of the walls of Jerusalem lest they should be seen leaving the tabernacle and followed or even prevented from leaving the city. The message of Hushai was sent out to them by means of a servant so that they could leave secretly and without notice.

Even these precautions, however, were not enough. Although the message of Hushai came to them in good order, no sooner did they step forth to make their way to David but a young lad saw them, recognized them and suspected what they were about. Immediately he went to the palace and warned Absalom of what he had seen. The result was that before the two young men had gone a great distance they became conscious of the fact that there was a company of Absalom's soldiers following them in the distance.

Nevertheless, the ingenuity of these two young men was up to the problem. They were well known through the area, and they in turn knew what people could be relied upon to maintain loyalty to David. Quickly they found the home of such a man in the area of Bahurim and entered into his gate. There in the court of the house they found a well with a woman standing beside it. Explaining as briefly as they could the danger that pursued them, they let themselves down into the well and instructed the woman to cover it over completely with drying corn.

It was not long before the servants of Absalom came in also at the gate, looking for the young men. To their enquiries the woman simply answered, "They be gone over the brook of water." The men were suspicious and did take time to search the house completely; but they found no indication of Jonathan and Ahimaaz so that they quickly left again. From there on they searched the whole area but discovered nothing and soon returned to Jerusalem.

It was still before nightfall that same day that they were able to leave their hiding place and go on to the camp of David. The warning they brought him was this, "Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you." It was a hard thing for a man as old and wearied as David was; but he could see immediately the wisdom of what was said. The result was that they spent the whole night in

fording the river Jordan so that by the morning light they were all safely on the other side.

Absalom, however, had no intentions of re-examining his position once it was taken. He enjoyed the glory of the royal court and was determined to enjoy it as long as he could before going on to other danger and hardship. Moreover, he saw all kinds of desirable things in working toward building an even greater army before he went on to battle with his father. All through the land he sent out the call for men to come and join his forces. It was not a hard thing at this point to gather as many men as he could ever want. To all appearances Absalom's position was now quite secure, and there were any number of men who were willing to join the crowd and get in on the glory of the final victory. Soon vast crowds were coming to form a huge army in support of Absalom. They were not experienced and they were not courageous; but the impressiveness of numbers was surely supplied by them.

For David the time which he gained by Absalom's delay was exactly what he needed. It gave to him an opportunity to find a position of defence, and it gave to him the opportunity to gather his forces together. The position of defense which he found was a walled city on the east side of the Jordan by the name of Mahanaim. In it David took up his position, and soon it became apparent that his position was not as grave as for a time it had seemed to be. To be sure, a great many of the people had followed the fickle wiles and joined themselves to Absalom; but there were also a good many who were faithful of heart and not so ready to forsake such an excellent king and ruler as David had been. These, once they had heard of David's plight and position, hurried to give him their aid.

Strangely, it was some of the heathen that came first, such as Rabbah the Ammonite, along with others, to give assistance to David with provisions of all kinds, beds, basins, earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flour, parched corn, etc. The people that were with David were weary and hungry and thirsty, and this was exactly what they needed.

This was not all, however; soon there were many, many Israelites who loved their king and came to join themselves with him. Above all there were many of his soldiers who had fought with him and for him for so many years. They constituted a hardened fighting force far superior in quality to anything that Absalom could muster. Above all, there began to develop around David and his people an atmosphere of joyful dedication to the cause which they loved. It was an atmosphere built upon their faith in the power of God to help and to keep them in every need. It grew day upon day into a feeling of optimism and absolute confidence. Moreover, to them was given the opportunity now of choosing the field of battle and they chose wisely.

The place where the forces of David set up their defenses was in a place called the wood of Ephraim. It was not a solidly wooded area which would have made all fighting impossible. Rather, it was an area of forest groves interspersed with open fields. These open areas were large enough for David's forces of experienced men to be able to function effectively; but they were small enough that Absalom's large and unwieldy company could gain no advantage whatsoever. In fact, their very size became for them a liability, because they could not maneuver properly.

In addition to this, David remained as always the careful tactician. Realizing the nature of the territory, he took his already comparatively small force and broke it down into three companies still smaller. Each one of these companies he made into an independent fighting force able to manuever on its own without regard to the other. Over each one of these forces, he in turn placed a captain of proven capability and faithfulness, Joab, Abishai, and Ittai the Gittite. Finally, he determined to go once more himself to lead his men in battle. Calling all of his forces together he made the announcement, I will surely go forth with you myself also."

It was, however, at this latter point, that the people themselves intervened. As admirable as David's courage was even yet here in his old age, they simply could not allow him to follow this intention. This battle that was coming up centered too much about the life of David alone to allow him to be exposed to any unnecessary danger. After all, it was solely David's life that Absalom was concerned with. He realized, as did every one else, that as long as David his father was living his own claims to the throne of Israel were not genuinely established. When he finally came to battle his single aim would be to slay David, and it was therefore

foolish not to keep David's life protected as carefully as possible. Thus with united voice the people answered David, "Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now thou art worth ten thousand of us; therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city."

Not to be forgotten here is the very last part of the petition of the people. They realized that David did not have to go with them unto the field of battle to succour or assist them. He could do so from the safety of the city in the same way that Moses assisted the people from the top of the hill at Rephidim. By standing as their intercessor in prayer, he would be of as much assistance to them or even more than he ever could on the field of battle.

Perhaps the true excellency of David is brought out by his willingness to listen even to the desires of the common people when they reflected love and true wisdom. He deferred immediately to their request and promised to wait and pray for them in the city even though he would have preferred to join them in battle.

When at last the time came when Absalom could delay no longer but had to come out to meet David's forces in final confrontation, the battle was not long once it was joined. Absalom's huge force of inexperienced and self-seeking men simply could not manipulate among the woods of Ephraim. In fact, so many of them were forced aside into wooded areas that we are told that the wood devoured more of them than did the sword. Meanwhile, David's men, with the small maneuverable forces were everywhere inflicting harm wherever they went. In a very short space of time Absalom and his men were scattered and fleeing in every direction. In carnal ambition and folly they had driven themselves to destruction.

Contending for the Faith

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

THE THIRD PERIOD -- 730-1517 A.D

PROTESTANT DOCTRINE OF SIN

ACCORDING TO THE CONFESSIONS

Rev. H. Veldman

At the conclusion of our preceding article we were quoting from the article on free will as expressed in the Lutheran Confession of the Formula of Concord. We were quoting from the negative section of this article, and called attention to the strong language employed in this Lutheran creed. In this article we wish to quote two more articles from this negative section of this

second article on free will.

IV. Also the teaching that, although unregenerate man, in respect of free-will, is indeed, antecedently to his regeneration, too infirm to make a beginning of his own conversion, and by his own powers to convert himself to God, and obey the law of God with all his heart; yet if the Holy Spirit, by the

preaching of the word, shall have made a beginning, and offered his grace in the word to man, that then man, by his own proper and natural powers, can, as it were, give some assistance and co-operation, though it be but slight, infirm, and languid, towards his conversion, and can apply and prepare himself unto grace, apprehend it, embrace it, and believe the gospel.

Notice, please that the Lutherans, in this article, reject the proposition that man can give any assistance towards his conversion, be it ever so slight, infirm, or languid. And, finally, in VIII we read the following:

Also, when such statements as these are used without explanation, that the will of man, before conversion, in conversion itself, and after conversion, is set against the Holy Ghost, and that the Holy Ghost is given to those who of set purpose and obstinately resist him. For God in conversion of *unwilling men makes willing men, and dwells in the willing*, as Augustine is wont to speak.

But as concerns certain dicta, both of the Fathers and of certain modern doctors, such as the following: *God draws, but draws a willing man*, and *man's will in conversion is not idle, but effects somewhat* — we judge that these are not agreeable to the form of sound words. For these dicta are advanced for the confirming of the false opinion of the powers of the human will in the conversion of man, contrary to the doctrine which attributes that work to Divine grace alone. And therefore we judge that we ought to abstain from expressions of such sort in treating of the conversion of man to God.

But, on the other hand, it is rightly taught that the Lord in conversion, through the drawing (that is, the movement and operation) of the Holy Spirit, of resisting and unwilling makes willing men, and that after conversion, in the daily exercises of penitence the will of man is not idle, but co-operates also with all the works of the Holy Spirit which He effects through us.

It is true that this Lutheran Confession speaks at the conclusion of this last quotation of man as he co-operates with all the works of the Holy Spirit. But, in all fairness, we should note that this Confession here is speaking of the regenerated child of God after his conversion, that it is the Holy Spirit Who makes of unwilling men willing men, and that, although this converted men does co-operate with all the works of the Holy Spirit, it is the Holy Spirit Who works and effects through him. May we understand this expression in the same sense as when the apostle Paul writes to the Philippians that it is the Lord Who works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure? In this Formula of Concord the Lutherans surely condemn the natural man and maintain the doctrine of original sin.

THE CREEDS OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES THE SECOND HELVETIC CONFESSIO

This Swiss confession, the last and the best of the

Zwinglian family, is the work of Henry Bullinger (1504-1575), the pupil, friend, and successor of Zwingli, to whom he stands related as Beza does to Calvin. The first Helvetic Confession had been drawn up in 1536, and it owes its origin partly to the renewed efforts to bring about a union between the Lutherans and the Swiss, and partly to the papal promise of convening a General Council. Bullinger was chosen Zwingli's successor as chief pastor at Zurich, Dec. 9, 1531, shortly after the catastrophe at Cappel (the death of Zwingli in battle), in the darkest period of the Swiss Reformation. He was one of the principal authors of the First Helvetic Confession, and the sole author of the Second. In the intervening thirty years (between the First and Second Confession) Calvin had developed his amazing energy, while Romanism had formulated its dogmas in the Council of Trent. Of Bullinger it is stated that he raised the desponding spirits, preserved and completed the work of his predecessor, and exerted, by his example and writings, a commanding influence throughout the Reformed Church inferior only to that of Calvin. He was in friendly correspondence with Calvin, Bucer, Melancthon, Laski, Beza, Cranmer, Hooper, Lady Jane Grey, and the leading Protestant divines and dignitaries of England.

From this Second Helvetic Confession we wish to quote parts of Chapters VIII and IX, its chapters on sin and free will. We first quote from Chapter VIII, of Man's Fall; Sin, and the Cause of Sin.

Man was from the beginning created of God after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, good and upright; but by the instigation of the serpent and his own fault, falling from the goodness and uprightness, he became subject to sin, death, and divers calamities; and such a one as he became by his fall, such are all his offspring, even subject to sin, death, and sundry calamities.

And we take sin to be that natural corruption of man, derived or spread from our first parents unto us all, through which we, being drowned in evil concupiscence, and clean turned away from God, but prone to all evil, full of all wickedness, distrust, contempt, and hatred of God, can do no good of ourselves — no, not so much as think any (Matt. 12:34, 35).

And, what is more, even as we do grow in years, so by wicked thoughts, words, and deeds, committed against the law of God, we bring forth corrupt fruits, worthy of an evil tree; in which respect we, through our own desert, being subject to the wrath of God, are in danger of just punishment; so that we had all been cast away from God, had not Christ, the Deliverer, brought us back again. . . .

We therefore acknowledge that original sin is in all men; we acknowledge that all other sins which spring therefrom are both called and are indeed sins, by what name so-ever they may be termed, whether mortal or venial, or also that which is called sin

against the Holy Spirit, which is never forgiven.

We also confess that sins are not equal (John 5:16, 17), although they spring from the same fountain of corruption and unbelief, but that some are more grievous than others (Mark 3:28, 29); even as the Lord has said, "It shall be easier for Sodom" than for the city that despises the word of the Gospel (Matt. 10:15). We therefore condemn all those that have taught things contrary to these; but especially Pelagius, and all the Pelagians, together with the Jovinianists, who, with the Stoics, count all sins equal. We in this matter agree fully with St. Augustine, who produced and maintained his sayings out of the Holy Scriptures.

In the rest of this article Bullinger reveals his infralapsarian tendencies, and we do not consider it necessary to quote it. We have quoted sufficiently to indicate his belief in original sin and also in its complete power over the natural man.

Chapter IX of the Second Helvetic Confession discusses the doctrine of free will, and of man's power and ability. From this chapter we quote the following:

Secondly, we are to consider what man was after his fall. His understanding, indeed, was not taken away from him, neither was he deprived of his will, and altogether changed into a stone or stock. Nevertheless, these things are so altered in man that they are not able to do that now which they could do before his fall. For his understanding is darkened, and his will, which before was free, is now become a servile will; for it serveth sin, not nilling, but willing — for it is called a will, and not a nill. Therefore, as touching evil or sin, man does evil, not compelled either by God or the devil, but of his own accord; and in this respect he has a most free will. But whereas we see that oftentimes the most evil deeds and counsels of man are hindered by God, that they can not attain their end, this does not take from man liberty in evil, but God by His power does prevent that which man otherwise purposed freely: as Joseph's brethren did freely purpose to slay Joseph; but they were not able to do it, because it seemed

otherwise good to God in His secret counsel . . .

Now, it is evident that the mind or understanding is the guide of the will; and, seeing the guide is blind, it is easy to be seen how far the will can reach. Therefore man, not as yet regenerate, has no free-will to good, no strength to perform that which is good. The Lord says in the Gospel, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin (John 8:34)." And Paul the Apostle says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom. 8:7)."

That Bullinger believed that the Lord, in His mercy bestowed good gifts upon men in general (which, incidentally, also Calvin taught in his Institutes), is plain from what follows in this article in man's free will:

Furthermore, there is some understanding of earthly things remaining in man after his fall. For God has of mercy left him wit, though much differing from that which was in him before his fall. God commands us to garnish our wit, and therewithal he gives gifts and also the increase thereof. And it is a clear case that we can profit very little in all arts without the blessing of God. The Scripture, no doubt, refers all arts to God; yea, and the Gentiles also ascribe the beginning of arts to the gods, as the authors thereof.

In the rest of this article, Bullinger asks and answers the question whether the regenerate have free-will, and how far they have it. We may have opportunity in subsequent articles to call attention to Calvin's teaching of a common grace in connection with the good gifts which the Lord bestows upon men in general. But it is plain from this chapter of the Second Helvetic Confession that the Swiss Reformers certainly believed in the utter corruption of the natural man. According to his Confession, man has no free will to good, no strength to perform that which is good. And, incidentally, this is also the teaching of John Calvin.

The Lord Gave The Word

The History of Missions

1500-1600

Rev. C. Hanko

1492. This date is familiar to every one of us, even including our children. This was the year that Christopher Columbus touched on the island of San Salvador in the Bahamas, and gave these islands mistakenly the name they have held ever since, the West Indies. In 1494 he is said to have landed in Jamaica. In 1497 Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of

Good Hope and reached the west coast of India at Calicut. The age of exploration had come and new lands were being discovered on the far ends of the globe. New expeditions were undertaken by adventurous sailors who were lured by the attraction of the unknown.

Almost all the Portuguese expeditions carried with

them a number of priests. It is evident that the explorers and those who supported them had at least two things in mind. First, the rulers were interested in commerce, new trade routes, and foreign imports that might fill their coffers. Second, the Roman Catholic Church was eager to gain supremacy over the whole earth, especially over these newly discovered countries and islands, and at the same time to crush the Moslem influence. There seems to have been a legend at that time that somewhere a Christian people would be found, and contact was sought with these people. It has been suggested that this legend took rise in the fact that the queen of Sheba had visited Solomon and had taken her newly found faith back with her to her own country. Whether this is true or not cannot be ascertained.

Portugal and Spain both became very active in navigation, even in rivalry for supremacy on the seas and in foreign lands. In May of 1493 Pope Alexander VI recognized the exclusive rights of Spain to trade with lands that had been or might be discovered west of the Atlantic, giving them the injunction, "to bring to Christian faith the peoples who inhabit these islands and the mainland . . . and to send to said islands and to the mainland wise, upright, god-fearing, and virtuous men who will be capable of instructing the indigenous peoples in good morals and in the Catholic faith." (The History of Christian Missions, by Stephen Neill, page 141). The pope entrusted to Portugal everything east of the Atlantic, or more specifically, everything east of the Azores. And to Portugal was given the same injunction that Spain had received. The pope was out to rule the world. One thing the pope did not realize at the time was that ultimately the two would meet and their rights would be brought in question. Nor did the pope figure with the protestants from England, the Netherlands, France and Denmark, who also would try to establish trade with these newly discovered islands and countries.

I have no intention of entering into detail on the mission endeavors of the Roman Catholics, particularly because of their entirely wrong motive. And our chief concern, after all, is in the mission work that was accomplished after the Reformation by those who had broken with the Roman Catholic Church to maintain the truth and principles of the Scriptures, and more specifically with those of Calvinistic persuasion.

But it is almost impossible completely to ignore the efforts of the pope. These efforts were greatly stimulated by the founding of the Jesuit Order. In 1534 Ignatius Loyola had gathered in Paris a small group of six friends who were neither secular priests nor religious, but who bound themselves with vows to be obedient to the church, utterly subject to the pope, and devoted to the cause of bringing the heretics back within the fold of the church, and winning pagans for the Catholic religion. A companion of Ignatius, Francis

Xavier went to India in 1542, not as an ordinary missionary, but as a man who had been entrusted with great authority. The king of Portugal had made Xavier his representative in India to speak and act on his authority. And also the pope had furnished him with extensive authority in the name of the Catholic Church. He stopped in Goa, a thriving but wicked city. Europeans had come there before him; men who had left their wives at home, intermingled with the women and then left them with their children and with a smattering of nominal Christianity. Xavier spent months to bring about a reform, but he soon gave up to seek a broader field throughout South India. Many tribes in India had been invaded by the Moslems and now sought the protection of the Portuguese, so that there were wholesale baptisms, at one occasion 10,000 at a time. Xavier made an effort to translate the Lord's Prayer, the Apostolic Creed and the Ten Commandments, and taught the people to recite these. From India he went to Japan to try to gain a foothold for Catholicism there. To gain success he even adopted the customs of the country, so that the people may have thought that they were being taught another form of Buddhism. He also wanted to reach into China, but never succeeded.

In this connection it can be mentioned that at a later date the Roman Catholics came up from Mexico into southern California, establishing missions along the way. There are still a chain of missions extending from San Diego to north of San Francisco, a distance of 650 miles. These are mainly a tourist attraction, but give evidence of the fact that these missions were established, about a day's journey apart, measured either by foot or by horseback, and most of them but a few miles from the coast. These were founded from 1769 to 1823 with the purpose of converting the Indians and exerting their influence in the United States. In these missions may be found evidences of former cemeteries, wineries, paintings, and even candle and soap factories. The walls of these buildings were of adobe with roofs of brush sealed with mud. Later tiles replaced the impractical mud roofs. The fathers of these missions used the Indians often to their own advantage, but did teach them such occupations as agriculture and stock raising.

But we are actually much more interested in the mission endeavors of the Protestants, since they are the children of the Reformation. And then it must be granted at once that also these endeavors left much to be desired. Both the Dutch and the English were interested in foreign trade, particularly with these newly discovered countries and islands. And they also wanted to carry out mission work, but this was considered to be the calling of the Magistrate. Evidently they still had the wrong conception of the relationship between the church and the State. The calling of the church and the calling of the State were

not clearly defined. Besides, circumstances also played a role in this venture, which, however, does not condone the wrong. The Dutch East Indies Company was founded in 1602. It received authority from the homeland to exercise administrative powers over all foreign territory east of the Cape of Good Hope. It was authorized to "wage war, draw up contracts, support troops, appoint officers, etc." They had practically full authority over all the colonies in Indonesia and Ceylon. And the Danish and English Companies had a like authority over all of their colonies. But this authority also applied to religious matters and mission work.

The ministers who accompanied the sailors on these trips were servants of their own government whose first responsibility was the spiritual care of their own countrymen. But they were also expected to work among the natives, receiving a cash bonus for every baptism that was given. It is not surprising that in time many thousands were baptized, but their sincerity is more than questionable.

It was not as if the church entirely ignored all this. Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) wrote an outline of the Christian faith for the use of the Dutch sailors travelling to the Far East. A seminary was set up in Leyden for the purpose of training missionaries for the field. There were twelve men who were instructed especially in languages and the religions of the colonies. Yet this seminary had but a brief existence; in fact, it lasted only about ten years. The cost was one objection, but the Company also raised objection because the trained ministers refused to be bound by their wishes.

In the credentials given along with the ministers by the various classes and consistories the mandate was given to care for the spiritual needs of the Christians in foreign lands, and also to "instruct the peoples that are there sitting in darkness in the true Christian religion." Voetius especially pleaded for mission labors carried out by the church rather than by the government. In his mission views concerning "planting of churches" he wrote that the calling of the church is to do mission work, while the magistrate should only support these causes. Voetius tried, be it in vain, to free the church from the Company. Since these efforts failed, the mission labors in the true sense of the word languished. Often the natives considered the Company to be interested in their own profits, rather than in the welfare of the others. And that can well be understood. For if the Company considered the gains too small in a certain area, or if the profits dropped off, they would leave without any further consideration. And this made it impossible for the church to continue labors there. For example, one of the islands had produced a goodly supply of sandalwood, but when the supply fell off the Company left and both the natives and the missionaries were given over to their lot. What was even worse was the fact that if the

preaching of the gospel threatened in any way to interfere with their business, the missionaries were prohibited from preaching. The remark is well made: "The Company was more interested in spices than in the spread of the Gospel."

There are even evidences of corruptions perpetrated by the East Indies Company. It is said that in 1607 a contract was drawn up with the Sultan of Ternate in regard to the trade in nutmeg. This Moslem ruler insisted that if any of his people turned Christian they should be turned over to him. Since apostasy from the Moslem religion was penalized with the death sentence, this meant that the Hollanders agreed to surrender a man to death for adopting the Christian faith. Since the Portuguese Roman Catholics had insisted on the right to propagate their religion among the people, the Sultan was only too ready to draw up a contract with the East Indies Company and thus drive out the undesired Roman Catholics. The churches of the fatherland, hearing of these atrocities, decided in 1614: "The brethren, regarding this as a terrible contract, causing great shame and disadvantage to the Christian religion, decide that these contracts must be broken." (Geschiedenis Van De Zending, Ds. H. A. Wiersinga). Although the Company consented to follow this demand, two years later they did almost the same thing elsewhere by agreeing that it was just as wrong for a Moslem to turn to Christianity as it was for a Christian to become a Moslem.

In 1648 the "Edict Japan" was drawn up, in which the ship crew was advised not to give evidence among the Japanese of their religion. They were prohibited from using the Bible, or their Psalm Book, from keeping the Sabbath, and from praying at their meals. In spite of all this the Company did run into difficulty with the rulers of Japan. On their business house and many of their homes they had inscribed: Anno Christi 1640. This reference to Christ brought the wrath of the king upon them, and they were forced to break down their houses from the newest down to the oldest.

In the West Indies and in West Africa similar incidents are recorded.

Yet in spite of all this an effort was put forth to translate the Bible, the Heidelberg Catechism and the versification of the Psalms into various languages. The Company supplied Christian instruction where possible to the natives as well as to their own children. Large congregations were established in various places.

But when the Company dissolved, the mission labors came to a standstill. Many western customs were forced upon the people, so that many natives were referred to as "dutch-dressed Christian." Since the churches in the Netherlands were but poorly informed of the work that was carried out, very little interest was shown in trying to improve conditions or carry on the work. Much of this work never was firmly established and soon faded out.

From Our Mission Committee

Jamaica Visited

Rev. J. Kortering

An air of expectancy prevails when the members of the Mission Committee receive notice in the mail that a meeting is called for the purpose of receiving a report of emissaries who have returned from the field. Elements of eagerness blend with anticipation as the hour draws near.

We have now sent six brethren at different times to perform personal labors of teaching, preaching, and other forms of assistance. These are the Reverends C. Hanko, J. Heys, G. Lubbers, and the brethren H. Zwak, T. Feenstra, and H. Meulenberg. These labors have extended over the past 6 years and have become more regular and directed more precisely to the individual needs of the brethren and sisters on the island. We have concentrated on helping 3 ministers of the Protestant Reformed Churches of Jamaica come to a deeper understanding of the Word of God as expressed in the Five Points of Calvinism. Worship services and study groups have been conducted to edify the members of their churches. We have begun to provide Bibles and Psalters for use in their worship services, the fruits of which can be heard in their reciting of Scripture and the Reformed Confessions as well as their singing of the Psalms. Opportunity has presented itself in many ways to bestow upon them the mercies of Christ in the form of clothing, care of the sick, and financial assistance to their poor and needy. We have begun to face the complicated task of organization, whereby they will be able to be properly incorporated with the government and therefore in a position to be helped with their church buildings.

As churches, we desire to see this work advance. The impetus of this desire is not the increase there may be in the membership of our churches, for our mission work in Jamaica will not produce such an increase. The churches on the island are indigenous churches, they have their own local congregations, their own ministers, their own ecclesiastical relationship among themselves. Rather, our labor as churches is to assist them in maintaining their own identity as those who with us love the truths of the Word of God and desire to proclaim them unto their children and to all whom God in His good pleasure will bring under that Word.

The desire to advance is also connected with the material circumstances of the people with whom we work. Some of these poor people are suffering in their poverty; and our goal is not to make them rich, it is rather to alleviate their suffering. Our contact with Jamaica will never broaden our financial base, there is

no monetary return for dollars invested. This is not to say there is no return for dollars invested, there is, but it isn't money. The return is spiritual; it is an example of the kind of spiritual life we need as the Church of Christ here in America. We have much to learn from our Jamaican brethren and sisters. The communion of saints isn't a one-way street. We have much to give to the Jamaicans, but they also have much to give to us. They possess some of the most beautiful spiritual graces which shine forth in the midst of the simplicity of their life. By virtue of their poverty, they are polished in the grace of contentment. We have our affluency which tempts us to become proud and boastful. God has brought us into contact with our Jamaican brethren for the purpose of making us sit up and evaluate our life and to test us whether we really care about fellow Christians at all. The advancement of the work in Jamaica involves our true spiritual joy in sharing the gospel with others even to the point of confirming our confession of faith with our works of love and mercy.

The glory of this advancement is not man's, not the Prot. Ref. Churches of America, but it is God's alone; for He gathers His entire Church from all nations under heaven. It is this desire to advance that produces the pangs of expectancy as our brethren who labored there return to report to us.

As in the past, this expectation has given birth to renewed joy in that the Lord is blessing the labors in Jamaica.

At our meeting of May 28, we received the report of Rev. Lubbers and Mr. H. Meulenberg which contained details of the work they had just performed in Jamaica. Their visit extended from April 8 to May 27. During that time Rev. Lubbers preached to 14 different congregations, some of them for 3 services, some for one. When a person reads the report of the work completed, it becomes obvious that the only word that properly describes the time spent is *labor*. The climate is more conducive to lolling in the sun than for traveling more than 2000 grueling miles and preaching up to 4 times a week, besides leading discussion groups etc. Yet, under the blessing of God, much work was finished in a brief span of time. The report indicates that approximately 700 - 800 people heard the Word of God preached to them. One of these occasions was a funeral at Lucea. Intermingled with the songs of joy and hope, they meditated on the Word of promise found in I Cor. 15:36. At Lucea a concerted effort was

put forth to teach the congregation a bit more in depth the meaning of the Five Points of Calvinism. At the mid-week meeting a black-board was put to use along with the time-tried question-answer approach and the congregation responded well to the truth presented.

As in the past, the presence of these laborers on the island made it expedient to consider and distribute monies collected for the poor. Indications are that there are general needs of those who are not able to work, but also individual needs for medical attention and the like. Approximately \$100.00, 40 pounds, was distributed to each diaconate of the churches to be used for those who have need in their congregation. We may well bear this in mind when collections are taken for the poor in Jamaica. The money is distributed as fast as it is collected under the direction of the deacons of our Hudsonville congregation.

Since our churches, through the calling church, First Church of Grand Rapids, extended a call to Rev. J. Heys to become missionary to Jamaica, housing for a missionary received top priority. According to the report, houses that may be considered for use by a missionary are scarce. Yet, after two weeks, the Jamaica Real Estate and Furniture Company directed our emissaries to an ideal house, located in Montego Bay. This house would be available for a two-year period, since its owners plan on coming to the United States for that length of time. A down-payment was placed on this property and with Synod's final approval, effort is now being put forth to lease this house for 1 year, subject to renewal for another year. The rental price is about \$115.00 per month unfurnished. This yearly amount does not exceed by much the amount we now spend on housing our emissaries for approximately 2 month in motels and apartments. If the leasing of this house is completed, we will have a residence for a missionary who would accept the call, or we will have a place for a minister who will labor there on a temporary basis. Furnishings for the house can be bought on the island, since they are constructed for that climate and could be resold later to the Jamaica Furniture Company for approximately one half the purchase price.

Progress has also been made on the incorporation of the churches. Two things depend largely on incorporation. The first is the securing of property by the congregations, and the second is that once this is realized the ministers can get official recognition by the government and with this recognition our relationship to these churches will be enhanced. If the churches on the island are properly constituted, work permits can readily be gotten and the importation of clothing duty-free will be available to us.

Our emissaries conferred with Attorney Graham in regards to incorporation. Proposed Articles of Incorporation were drawn up and submitted to the attorney for comments. These were in turn presented to the

congregations for their consideration. Hopefully, this detail may soon be worked out and the local congregations be duly constituted and recognized by the government.

It was also learned that the entire island is plotted out into sections and lots. Individuals in the congregations who own property upon which the church building is erected are signing these off on a quit-claim basis or as an outright grant to the congregation. As soon as these details are worked out, we will be in a position to assist them financially in the improvement and erection of church buildings.

In view of the expenses connected with the legal procedures and the inevitable expenses connected with church buildings, Synod decided to request the churches to take 4 collections again this year for the purpose of church building needs. As of April 7, 1969 there was a balance of \$6,931.66 in this fund.

The recommendation to begin a "Study Fund" for Jamaican young men who aspire to the ministry and need financial assistance in order to attain this goal was approved by the Synod. The Mission Committee would like to make this special suggestion to our churches for consideration. Synod did not decide to request the taking of collections for this purpose, rather it decided to suggest this need to our people to be considered by societies, schools, Sunday schools, and interested individuals. Since the Jamaican churches are indigent, our goal is to provide as much training as we can for the ministers now serving and to provide training for future ministers who can become the leaders of the church of tomorrow. The training of future ministers is as fundamental to the Jamaican churches as it is to our own churches. High school education, as well as college, costs money. In order to make advances in this area, we must begin now to build up a fund for this purpose. The Synodical Treasurer, Mr. C. Pastoor, 2136 Osceola Drive S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506 will handle this fund. All money sent for this "Study Fund" should be so designated in order to avoid confusion.

We commend the needs of the Jamaican churches to the prayers of all God's people. In correspondence sent to the Mission Committee and addressed to Synod, they express the need for the prayers of each one of us. We must not fail in this. It is important that we discuss this work in our homes with our children, so that they and we with them can pray meaningfully for the work of the gospel being accomplished there. We must remember these brethren and sisters in our congregational prayers. The Mission Committee needs the sustaining hands of each one of us as we join together before the throne of grace to seek guidance and wisdom from God. Whoever it is that will labor on the island in the future needs the prayers and interests of each one of us.

We would like to quote the final paragraph of the

report: "In closing we may remark that it was our constant and joyful experience to find that in the preaching and teaching we are building on the foundation laid by others. This is true to a large degree. We found this to be true in our contact with the ministers who have been instructed by the Revs. Heys and Hanko. There was a certain confidence and love which we might experience, which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and which was wrought through the Spirit by the work of the former emissaries Hanko, Heys, Zwak,

Feenstra, and Meulenberg. We trust that they who will labor in Jamaica in the future will find that this confidence has not been harmed or hindered by our labors here. These have been arduous yet blessed weeks of labor, and we look to the Lord of the harvest for his blessing upon our labors, and pray with the servant of the Lord, Moses, "And let the beauty of the Lord be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it," Ps. 90:17.

Pages From The Past

Believers and their Seed

Chapter V The Meaning of the Covenant

(continued)

Rev. Herman Hoeksema

The essence of the covenant, therefore, is not to be sought in a promise, and that, too, a promise in the sense of a certain general offer to the children of believers, as Prof. Heyns would have it. Neither is it to be sought in the idea that the covenant is a certain way, or manner, of salvation by which God would make us partakers of everlasting glory, as many others describe the covenant, thereby actually denying that God's covenant is eternal. Nor does it consist in a certain agreement between two parties according to which mutual stipulations and conditions must be met, as it is also often presented; for the covenant is God's, and He bestows upon His friends all that is necessary for the life and the battle of the covenant. But the essence of the covenant is to be sought in this living relation of friendship whereby God the Lord is the sovereign friend of His people, and they are the Lord's friend-servants, partaking of His fellowship, by grace possessing and manifesting His life and fighting the battle of His cause in the midst of the world. The realization of that covenant as it shall presently be revealed in everlasting glory constitutes the history of salvation; the struggle in the cause of that covenant is the battle of the ages.

If we keep this fundamental idea of God's covenant in mind, we also understand the Scriptures. In "the beginning," the dawn of creation, lies also the beginning of the realization of God's covenant. For man is immediately placed in Paradise as the covenant friend-servant of the Lord. That is his position. That determines the relation in which he stands to the Lord his God, on the one hand, and to the entire earthly creation, on the other hand. Of an agreement, according to which God and Adam mutually posit

certain stipulations, we read literally nothing in the history of Paradise. God indeed establishes His covenant with Adam; and the Lord delineates the place which Adam assumes in relation to Himself and in relation to creation; but Adam stands in God's covenant without any condition laid down beforehand. Nor is it true that in the first chapters of Holy Writ we read of any promise constituting the essence of the covenant, — a promise dependent upon Adam's consent or acceptance. Indeed, God threatens death, should Adam violate His covenant; and indeed, this implies by way of contrast that Adam had life and that only in God's covenant of friendship could he enjoy life. But one certainly does not find a promise that Adam could *merit eternal life* in the way of obedience. We must and do call your attention to some of these things intentionally. Many of these ideas are so deeply rooted in the thinking of our people that they simply consider them as the Reformed and Scriptural presentation without giving them a thought, though they are to be found neither in Scripture nor in the confessions. The Covenant of Works is then commonly presented as a certain agreement between God and Adam (and in Adam with the human race), according to which Adam could *merit*, in the way of obedience, *eternal life*, and according to which he would die in case of disobedience.

But now Adam does not merit eternal life. He becomes disobedient and dies, and we die in him. And now what Adam did not merit, that Christ obtains for us through His perfect obedience. Such, in general, is the view which is always and again inculcated and which without a second thought is imbibed in the catechism class and in theological schools. If one puts

these things differently, then many are of the opinion that he is departing from the truth and ought to be branded a heretic. Nevertheless, it is not true that this presentation in this form is found in the Scriptures. Nor is there anything attractive about it; nor does it open one's eyes for the glorious work of God with respect to His covenant. It really always makes us stand nostalgically with our noses against the fence of Paradise, with the futile wish in our souls that Adam had not fallen! For after all, if it be true that Adam also was able to earn that which Christ now bestows on us, if only he had remained standing, then it remains eternally tragic that the first Paradise is no longer there and that we did not receive eternal life through the obedience of the first man. If only he had remained standing, then the entire present history of struggle and suffering could have been prevented, and then all men would have entered eternal life through him; but now there is not only the fearful history of struggle and sorrow and misery, with the cross of Christ at the center, but also the fact that at end of history's course thousands and millions sink away into an eternal night of misery and hellish suffering. Then it may be true that the Lord ultimately has the victory, but the fact remains that the devil succeeded through his temptation in striking a tremendous breach in the works of God. And thus we arrive at the point of actually criticizing the counsel of the Lord Jehovah, Who certainly conceived and willed all these things from before the foundation of the world.

(to be continued)

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory and Congregation of the First Protestant Reformed Church at Pella, Iowa extend their Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Loren De Zwarte and family in the loss of their daughter

LeAnn

May the God of all grace comfort them with His Word and Spirit.

Mr. C. Vander Molen, Pres.
Mr. C. C. Van Soelen, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church extends sympathy to its fellow officebearer, Deacon Henry Hoksbergen, in the death of his sister
MRS. DEWEY KOELE

May our Heavenly Father comfort him in the knowledge that He doeth all things well and for the welfare of His children.

George Hoekstra, Vice-Pres.
Bert Van Maanen, Clerk.

BOOK REVIEW

Prof. H. Hanko

AMOS AMONG THE PROPHETS, by J. K. Howard;
Baker Book House, 1968 (Reprint); 119 pp., \$2.95.

This book is a brief but excellent commentary on the prophecy of Amos. The book, first published in England in 1967, now appears in this country. It contains a valuable introduction in which the author discusses the whole idea of prophecy in the Old Dispensation as well as the particular historical setting of the prophecy of Amos. The commentary is too brief to be of detailed help in preparation for sermon making; but it is valuable to give a bird's-eye view of the book and will be of aid for general understanding of the prophecy and for society preparation. The author stresses the relevance of the prophecy for the times in which we live and ought to encourage those who read the book to make a study of this prophet. The book is part of Baker's "Ministers' Handbook Series".

Classis West of The Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Randolph, Wisconsin on September 3, 1969, at 9:00 A.M., the Lord willing. Delegates in need of lodging should notify the clerk of the Randolph consistory.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk
Classis West

The Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School at Grand Rapids will need teachers for Kindergarten and the First Grade for the 1969-70 school year.

If you can consider one of these positions kindly contact the school.

Clare Kuiper, Sec'y.

NOTICE!!

Because of continued publication cost and the expense involved in the binding of the books, the recipients of the Bound Volumes of THE STANDARD BEARER are hereby notified that the cost per volume will be \$7.00. This price represents only a portion of the actual cost per book, and is in line with the yearly subscription price. A limited number of past volumes can be obtained through the Business Office at \$7.00 per volume.

THE BOARD OF THE R.F.P.A.

News From Our Churches

Report of Classis East
July 2, 1969
Our Southwest Church

Rev. H. Veldman presided over the opening devotions.

Classis was fully represented by two delegates from each Consistory. Prof. H. Hanko was also present at this meeting and was given an advisory vote.

Normally this meeting of Classis in July is a brief session with very little to do. This was not the case this time, however. There were two matters which were given to two committees of advice which will report to the next Classis.

A decision of the last Synod relative to subsidized churches was directed to the Classis by the Stated Clerk of Synod, and filed for information. The Stated Clerk of Classis had prepared copies of this decision and they were handed to the delegates of each Consistory. A finance committee and one to thank the ladies for their catering was appointed by the chairman Rev. R. C. Harbach: Finance Committee: J. Flikkema and J. M. Faber. R. Lubbers was appointed to thank the ladies.

One Consistory answered an appeal brought against it and this matter was given into the hands of a committee for study and advice. Committee: Revs. M. Schipper, H. Veldman, and Elder R. Lubbers.

This same Consistory also asked advice on the increase of censure of one of its members. Another Consistory, whose discipline of one of its members was appealed, brought answer to this appeal, and this matter was put into the hands of a study committee. Committee: Revs. G. Lubbers, J. A. Heys, and Elder M. Haveman.

Both Study Committees will report to the next meeting of Classis.

Southwest Consistory had arranged for noon dinner at the Sweden House for all the delegates.

Classis decided to meet next time the first Wednesday in October in Hope Church.

Questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and answered satisfactorily.

Elder R. Lubbers closed this meeting of Classis with prayer.

M. Schipper, S.C.

* * *

Our church at Pella, Iowa, has extended a call to Loveland's pastor, Rev. Engelsma; and Redland's pastor, Rev. C. Hanko is considering a call to become South Holland's minister.

* * *

News from a high school the likes of which you will not have found in the public press: In a news letter put

out by our Covenant Christian High School the following is an excerpt from the Principal's Report. "The year was busy and fraught with problems — problems, for the most part, of a minor sort. Truly, when one considers the problems besetting the public high schools and, to a lesser degree, the other Christian High Schools, we have had a quiet year indeed. Our young people are far from perfect (as are their teachers) and partake, sometimes very obviously, of Adam's fall. Of this there can be no doubt. Yet, and here lies the difference, the miracle of Grace can also be seen in our young people if only we look for it. The beginnings of true righteousness are to be found, and these beginnings offer no small consolation to the Christian teacher!!!"

* * *

You must remember when Church Picnics always featured *at least* one speech by the pastor in times past! This excellent practice is still in vogue in Edgerton, Minn., as evidenced at their July 4 picnic where Rev. Lanting spoke on, "The New Morality, a Sign of the Times."

* * *

The manse at Doon, Iowa welcomed a new resident in June — a baby boy born to Rev. and Mrs. Decker, Timothy Robert, by name.

* * *

Our Mission Board, through a sub-committee, has decided to build a fund for the education of young men in Jamaica to become ministers in their churches. The initial contribution to this "Study Fund" was raised at a church picnic at Holland, Mich., to the amount of \$73.24.

* * *

Meetings of our young people prior to their Convention included an Outing to Grand Haven's North Shore Park July 11, and a Mass Meeting at Hudsonville July 19.

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Our Holland Church has installed a loud speaker in their society room for those who cannot meet with the congregation in the auditorium. The unique feature of this installation is that if one leaves the door ajar the listener can see the pulpit — a sort-of closed-circuit television!

... see you in church

J.M.F.