

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Mahanaim — The Two Camps

Editorial:

Topsy-Turvy Joy from “Down Under”

Feature Review:

“The Challenge of our Age”

Situation Ethics

(see: The Strength of Youth)

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

Department Editors: Mr. John M. Faber, Rev. Cornelius Hanks, Prof. Herman Hanks, 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***Mahanaim - The Two Camps**

Rev. M. Schipper

"And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim."

Genesis 32:1, 2

At the most crucial moment!

Just when this friend of God had been delivered out of one crucible, and was on his way to be cast into another —

That is when the angels of God met him!

For Jacob was returning from his uncle Laban, where he had fled some twenty years before to escape

the wrath of a raging brother according to the flesh; where he had labored hard for his wives and substance; where he had been tried by the cruel machinations of a father-in-law, whose every move toward Jacob was motivated by selfish and materialistic ends; where nevertheless the God of Abraham, Isaac, and now Jacob had blessed him exceedingly —

the God Who had now commanded him to leave the country of Laban and to return to his own promised land. Indeed, a great relief it was to escape the miserly fingers of Laban, which for some twenty years had threatened Jacob's throat.

But alas he was at the moment on the way to even a much greater trial!

He must face his brother Esau!

Would Esau deal kindly with him? Or, was Esau the same ruthless, cruel, vindictive monster Jacob had escaped from long ago? Jacob had no way of knowing that when he would actually see his brother again his face would appear to him as "the face of God." Gen. 33:10). All he could remember was the wrath of a brother that threatened to kill him; and during the twenty years of absence he no doubt heard of the marauding exploits of his brother, who was bent on living by the power of his sword.

What now was to become of him? Of his wives and little ones?

Crucial indeed was the moment in which this child of God finds himself!

When suddenly there appeared to him an army of brightly harnessed angels!

"And when he saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim."

Mahanaim!

The two camps!

On the one hand, the poor, defenseless Jacob leading as well a defenseless host. On the other, there was the impregnable body guard which God had caused to light upon him and which now stood between him and his foe.

So there is one camp down here which included his helpless wives and children as well as his own frightful self. And the other camp up there, seen no doubt only by Jacob, servants of the Most High, sent forth for the service of God's elect. At the sight of it there must have come over the soul of this child of God the glow of confident joy, which causes him to exclaim:

Mahanaim!

Observe, first of all, these two camps!

The one camp represents the meek of the earth. Jacob was no soldier, nor were his servants prepared to take up arms for defense. Jacob did not live by the sword as did his brother according to the flesh. Indeed, he belonged to those whom the Scriptures designate as the meek of the earth. Jacob had learned, and he would live to learn again and again, that he cannot stand in his own strength. How often he had tried it, and would try it again. But how miserably he had failed. As to being able to withstand physical combat, and to bring an offensive against brute strength, he was harmless and defenseless. There was no man, nor an arm of strength that is human to whom Jacob could appeal for defense, were he to be brought into physical confrontation by Esau. In the rugged terrain of his

now approaching homeland Jacob and company appeared not as the vanquishing but the vanquished.

But this is not all!

What we have said so far only describes the camp of Jacob as one might see it there, encamped as they were on the rugged terrain of northern Palestine. What one could not see, but which was just as really there, was the forlorn and fearful spirit of the leader of this host. There is where one is helpless most. Meekness is not brought on first of all by the taking inventory of one's physical resources which are of little account, but by the spiritual knowledge of one's smallness, his little self-worth. Jacob expresses this sense of meekness only a little while later when he prays: "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant. . . ." When one stands in the presence of God, this is the only true estimate one can make of himself. And when one takes a proper inventory of all of Jehovah's mercies, the littleness of self-worth becomes most apparent and humbling. And when Jehovah providentially drives Jacob into this confrontation with his adversary, He also brings out of Jacob this true assessment of himself as the fruit of His everlasting mercy.

But notice, too, that other camp!

They are described as the angels of God!

As Jacob saw them, they constituted the camp of God, symbolizing the protective power of the Almighty, sent forth to guard His humbled servant and his camp.

Angels — those ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them who shall be heirs of salvation! So the writer to the Hebrews describes them in Hebrews 1:14. Such is also the significance of the angels as expressed by the psalmist (91:11) "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Daniel also exclaims from the bottom of the lion's den, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me." And were not the apostles, Peter and John, let out of the prison where they had been held because of their preaching? And was not Peter again let out of prison when his very life was about to be taken from him by Herod the king, who, after he had killed James, sought to please the Jews by also taking Peter's life? (Acts 5:19; 12:7).

O, indeed, God has many angels. Not all have the same tasks, nor do all fulfil the same purpose of God. He has His Michaels and His Gabriels. He has His cherubim and His seraphim. He has His angels which with flaming swords guard the gate to Paradise and the tree of life so that the banished may not return. He has His angel that stands in the way on which rode

disobedient Balaam to threaten him for his disobedience. But He also has His angels which must bring good tidings of salvation, and bring comfort and relief to His distressed people. Witness the heavenly host which appears over the shepherds at Bethlehem, and the ministry of these heavenly servants as they appear with their comforting strength to the Man of Sorrows as He crawled on the ground in Gethsemane, where He appeared as a worm and no man.

In this time of Jacob's distress they appear as a well harnessed and shining host of armoured beings, as a protective wall above and around him, no doubt reminding this saint of God of that experience he had with them when he left his father's house, taking flight from the wrath of his brother Esau. Then at Bethel they appeared unto him in a dream as ascending and descending from heaven on a ladder, which experience Jacob then interpreted as dwelling in the very presence, in the house of God. Therefore he called the place Bethel, meaning: House of God. Reminding him too of what the Lord told him on that occasion: "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 28:13, 14). Here, however, it is Mahanaim, the two camps. But there is evidently a connection between these two visions of angels, between Bethel and Mahanaim. For when the Lord gave commandment to Jacob to return He said, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out of this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." (Gen. 31:13). At Mahanaim, therefore, the Lord was showing Jacob that He will see to it that nothing, not even a raging and threatening Esau, shall intervene and spoil His purpose to realize His covenant with Jacob, or to stop Jacob from keeping his vow.

As always, so now, these two camps meet at the most opportune time and place!

As to the place, we read that Jacob was on his way when the angels of God met him. The way was that which His God had bidden him to walk. O, it is also true that the way was Jacob's. It formed a part of his life. And it is also certainly true that the angels of God meet God's saints on the dusty road of common life. If we do not recognize their presence in the common place, we need not look for them in some special place. And it is in the path of duty that those occasions arise

where the appearance of the Lord's host is necessary. If, however, we walk that way by our own devising, we had better look for that angel with a sword, as he appeared unto Balaam. Jacob, on the other hand, was walking the way God had ordained, and commanded him to walk in it. It is in this area, when we walk according to the counsel and commandment of God, that becomes also the occasion for the appearance of His angels.

At the most critical moment, that is when the two camps meet! Many years later David, a man after God's own heart, experienced this also, and, by the way, in this same place, when he was fleeing from his son Absalom. (II Samuel 17). When he despaired of his life, when he who ate bread with him had lifted up his heel against him, then God turned the evil counsel of Ahithophel, that Judas of the Old Testament, to nought, and delivered His servant back to his throne. Do you not think that this saint of God as he lay there on the ground of Mahanaim reminisced, calling to memory the story as it had been handed down, how that his father Jacob had seen a vision of angels in this very place? O, indeed, he did! Listen to him as he penned his Psalms recalling this occasion. "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me." And again, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety." (Ps. 3, 4). And again, "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." (Ps. 91). O, indeed, the Lord knows just the right moment to send His host. And these angels know exactly in what form they shall appear to fit exactly the need of Jehovah's saints.

What cause is there to fear then, O Jacob, so long as you know you are walking in God's way? The heavenly protectors hover round thee, and therefore no harm can come to thee!

Why then fear, O child of God, often cast into despair as you walk the dusty road of obedience, and are confronted with many foes, often much more imposing than Esau? Not only do you have the comforting assurance of Jehovah's guardian angels, who, when you are cast down, will not allow your feet to touch the stones, but Who Himself has said: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? And who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Be persuaded that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Amen!

Editorials

EDITOR'S NOTES

Your special attention is called to the Feature Review in this issue. It deals with a subject of widespread current interest, that of the philosophy behind such movements as the A.C.S.S., C.A.F., the C.L.A.C., and others. Personally, I am more and more inclined to characterize these movements as neo-Reformed, with a strong admixture of neo-Kuyperian leaven. However that may be, they bear careful watching and analysis. And Prof. Hanko's careful and thorough review of "The Challenge of our Age" should be read by all who wish to keep abreast of developments.

If you are one of the several people who have ordered and paid for a copy of "Behold He Cometh," and have not yet received your copy, please get in touch with

the committee. It seems that especially in the Jenison-Hudsonville area something went amiss with the postal service; several people in that area have informed me that their copies never arrived. The committee regrets this, and will, of course, make amends if it is called to their attention. Hence, if you have not yet received your book, do one of two things: 1) Telephone Mr. T. Newhof Sr., 458-5643. 2) Write to: The R.F.P.A., Post Office Box 2006, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501.

Our Theological School will open its doors for the 1969-'70 term, the Lord willing, on Wednesday, September 3, at 9:00 A.M. We commend the faculty and seven students and their labors to the prayers of our people and our churches.

Topsy-Turvy Joy From "Down Under"

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

The June 20 issue of "The Banner" carried a few thoughts on "The Joy of Systematic Theology" which came from "down under," that is, from Australia, from the pen of Dr. Klaas Runia of the Reformed Theological College in Geelong.

Now Systematic Theology, although I much prefer to call it Dogmatics, is dear to my heart; I find great joy in it. And the subject of Dr. Runia's article, therefore, immediately caught my eye. Ah, I thought to myself, this will be an article which exalts the value of Systematic Theology and which even presents it as a delight to him who engages in the study of it. Besides, I thought, Systematic Theology (I prefer to speak of "Dogmatics") has largely fallen upon evil times, fallen into disrepute; and it can therefore very well stand a "boost." And when Dr. Runia wrote, "And yet we maintain that systematic theology is a joyful affair," I breathed a hearty "Amen," therefore. And even when he added, "But, of course, it all depends on *how* you are doing it," I unsuspectingly went along with him; for, I thought, it is certainly possible for some systematic theologies to be "dry as dust" and for classes in this branch of theology to be "dull and lifeless and uninspiring." I was naive enough to dream that Dr. Runia had in mind Systematic Theology which is thoroughly Reformed in its method and in its content when he spoke of it as being a joyful affair.

Imagine my disappointment, therefore, when this "down under" theologian, of whom I had expected

better things, began to philosophize about a static-ontological way of theologizing and a dynamic-relational way, to deprecate the former, and to extol the latter.

Imagine, further, my dismay when I discovered that Dr. Runia devoted about one-fourth of his four-column article to what he thought was an illustration of the to-be-rejected "static-ontological" method from the "Reformed Dogmatics" of Herman Hoeksema.

And imagine how my disappointment and dismay gave way to downright consternation when I discovered that to Runia the allegedly sound "dynamic-relational" way of theologizing in fact meant that one turns theology upside down (substituting a changeable for an unchangeable God), and that therefore the "joy" of which Runia was writing was after all a topsy-turvy joy, rooted in a topsy-turvy theology.

Let me explain.

As To Dr. Runia's Illustration

As I already mentioned, Dr. Runia attempts to illustrate what he means by the "static-ontological" way of theologizing by referring to a section of H. Hoeksema's "Reformed Dogmatics." In this connection Runia writes as follows:

Let us illustrate what we mean by an example. Let us take the attribute of God which is usually called *God's immutability*. In the first way of thinking the emphasis is on the ontological aspect. Immutability means that God cannot change and this is applied to

his Being, that is, to God as He is in himself. Recently we read the Reformed Dogmatics of Prof. H. Hoeksema. One could call this work a typical example of the static-ontological way of thinking. The immutability is circumscribed as follows. "God is that He is in all the infinite and constant fulness of His Being. He does not grow older, does not increase or decrease in Being or power, is from eternity to eternity the same in all His virtues, in His mind and will, His love and life, the absolute fulness and Self-sufficient God." It is not surprising that Hoeksema does not really know what to do with such biblical expressions as "God repents." Actually in his explanation, the expression is entirely robbed of its meaning: "We must remember that the eternal and immutable God reveals Himself in time, and that what is thus revealed to us in a succession of moments is eternally and unchangeably in the mind of God." Whatever these words may mean (it is rather hard to understand them), it is clear that they virtually change the expression into its opposite!

Now I will pass by the question why Dr. Runia, especially when writing for readers of "The Banner," did not choose his illustration from *the* dogmatician of the Christian Reformed Church, Prof. Louis Berkhof, who speaks similar language about God's immutability.

But there are certain items which should not be ignored in this connection.

One of them is the fact that Dr. Runia finds this language dark and difficult to understand, so that he is in doubt about its meaning. I profess that I fail to see what is difficult about this explanation. It is written in plain English: "We must remember that the eternal and immutable God reveals Himself in time, and that what is thus revealed to us in a succession of moments is eternally and unchangeably in the mind of God." What is so obscure about this statement? Apply it to one of the instances of God's repentance cited in this connection, that of Genesis 6:6. It means that the "moment" of God's making man in the earth, the moment of the fall, the moment of the rapid development of the first world in sin, the moment of the filling of the measure of iniquity by that first world, and the moment of God's wrath with respect to the wicked pre-diluvian world, — all these moments were eternally and unchangeably in God's mind, and that too, in relation to one another.

But what is not clear to me, in the second place, is that fact that while Runia finds this statement "rather hard to understand" and is not clear as to its meaning, nevertheless suddenly the statement is so clear to him that he can write: "...it is clear that they virtually change the expression into its opposite!" Now the latter is exactly not clear; nor can Runia by any stretch of the imagination demonstrate this. It is plain to anyone that the opposite of the statement, "It repented the Lord that he had made man in the earth," is: "It repented not the Lord that he had made man in

the earth." And this "opposite" Dr. Runia cannot find in Hoeksema's explanation, nor in any of his writings.

What, then, is the point which Hoeksema makes in this connection? It is this, that whatever the explanation of God's repentance may be, that explanation may not be such that it contradicts the truth of God's immutability, but must be such that it is in harmony with the Scriptural truth of the divine unchangeableness. I know not what Dr. Runia thinks of this. But to me this is both sound exegetical practice and sound dogmatics: Scripture does not contradict Scripture! It is not Hoeksema's intention to explain God's repentance in this connection, but only to show along what lines that explanation must be made, namely, that "these instances may never be explained as presupposing a change in God." And if Runia had quoted the entire paragraph from which he takes a couple sentences, this would have been clear to the readers of "The Banner."

But this also renders the vaunted and allegedly joyful systematic theology of Dr. Runia suspect. For if he accuses Hoeksema of virtually changing the expression ("God repents") into its opposite, when Hoeksema only insists that God's repentance must be explained in harmony with His immutability, the suspicion immediately arises that Runia indeed wants to explain God's repentance as presupposing a change in God.

And this is literally what Runia wants, as is plain from the following quotation:

In the dynamic-relational way of thinking, the approach is quite different. The term immutability is not primarily seen as a qualification of God's Being-in-the-abstract, but rather it is interpreted as God's remaining faithful to himself and *therefore* to his word to us, both his word of promise and his word of judgment. It is obvious that the ontological aspect is not denied. On the contrary, it is seen as basic, but at the same time it is stated in relational terms: God being *faithful* to himself, to his innermost Being. And this is immediately related to his faithfulness to us.

This is also the way the Bible itself speaks about God's unchangeableness. Hoeksema quotes three passages of Scripture (Malachi 3:6; Psalm 102:25-27; and James 1: 17), but in all three cases he completely ignores the context. These passages are not statements about God's Being-in-Himself, but they all speak of God's faithfulness to his people. This faithfulness is not based on anything that is in these people, but on God himself for He is a God who is far from all arbitrariness and capriciousness. He is a God upon whom his people can rely in all circumstances. Within this context, expressions like "God repents" do not create a real problem either. They are indicative of the fact that our faithful God is a living God. Although He is in no way imprisoned in history (He is the Creator, who in an act of Sovereign freedom created the universe and

thus started its history), yet He is right in history with us, and He acts and reacts in history. He never changes his word, but He does change His attitude toward people in full accord with the word He has spoken to them. If they sin, his wrath is kindled. If they repent, his forgiving grace comes to them.

There is no change in God, in the sense that one does not know what He will do the next moment. On the contrary, one knows this all the time, for He has spoken and his word is firmer than the strongest rock.

Now I will not criticize this confused passage in detail. I will pass by the many unsupported, irrelevant, and contradictory statements.

Let me point out, however, the one glaring fact. Dr. Runia contradicts the truth of God's unchangeableness and bluntly teaches that God *changes*! This is not merely my interpretation of Runia; it's his own literal statement. There it stands: "HE DOES CHANGE HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD PEOPLE. . . ." Runia may try to qualify this and limit it and speak of a sense in which God does not change. The fact remains that in his vaunted "dynamic-relational" theology he embraces a proposition which no Reformed man should ever be able to get out of his pen: God changes!

Now this is dreadfully serious! Let no one think this is a matter of academic debate or theological hair-

splitting. I submit that the statement of Runia is a direct contradiction of Malachi 3: 6, a passage of which he states that Hoeksema ignores the context. Let us grant, for the sake of argument, that Hoeksema ignores the context. But then Runia ignores and contradicts the text. The text says: "I Jehovah change not." Runia says: "He does change. . . ." And here is the seriousness of the matter from a practical, spiritual point of view: by contradicting the text Dr. Runia contradicts the very basis for the comfort expressed in the last part of the same verse: "therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

This is indeed topsy-turvy theology, the perversion of true theology.

And whatever joy may be derived from it is a topsy-turvy joy!

This kind of theology does not make me glad, but sad.

Moreover, if this is a fair sample of the way they do theology down under, then I can only feel sorry for the Reformed Churches of Australia. And as far as this country is concerned, "The Banner" does its readers no service by giving this kind of theology a forum in its pages. I strongly advise Editor Vander Ploeg to make correction, — in the interest of the Reformed faith.

(to be continued)

Feature Review

"The Challenge of our Age"

Prof. H. Hanko

THE CHALLENGE OF OUR AGE, by Hendrik Hart; published by The Association for the Advancement of Christian Studies, Toronto, Ontario, Canada; 148 pp., \$2.00 (paper).

This book, written by the assistant professor of philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, Canada, is part of the Christian Perspective Series and includes lectures given at the 1966 and 1967 Study Conferences of A.R.S.S. and F.C.U.C.

This is not an easy book to review. The difficulty in reviewing it lies not so much in any problems of determining the main thrust of the author in this series of lectures. This main thrust is rather clearly stated in the book. But the difficulty lies rather in the fact that the arguments marshalled in support of the chief thesis of the book are not at all clearly stated. From a theological point of view there are highly questionable positions taken. In support of the main theme there are arguments made which are difficult to follow and of highly questionable validity.

A closer look at various aspects of the book will make this clear.

The main thrust of the book is defined in the preface:

The book presents an attempt to come to grips with the broad cultural context in which we live and to indicate the general direction in which we must move. In other words, through all the confusion that characterizes the twentieth century, the book attempts to reach a christian perspective.

What the author means by "christian perspective" is more precisely defined in the last chapter. In fact, the last chapter is *the* important chapter in the book. It states in a positive way the author's position. The rest of the book points to it and builds up to the climax found in it. For this reason, one becomes increasingly impatient to arrive at this last chapter. The question that continues to nag is: What does the author mean by "christian perspective?" What is "The Challenge of Our Age?" Yet the last chapter is a disappointment. The big things promised never completely materialize.

One feels cheated. Having traversed a long and difficult road, one comes at last to an almost empty cave. The author mentions in an Appendix to the lectures that the chief criticism offered by those who discussed the lectures was that the book was filled with too many generalities and not enough specifics. While admitting a certain validity to these criticisms, the author contends that generalities are necessary on the one hand because a foundation has to be laid and on the other hand because the answers to all the specific problems are not yet in. He attempts to fill this lack in a brief way in the Appendix. But the disappointment I felt had not so much to do with the generalities of the book as with the fact that the author seemed to me to fail to make his case. The jump from the argumentation of the first chapters to the last chapter seemed to be too big a jump to be sustained by the logical argument.

It is better to turn to specifics.

The author is intent on demonstrating that the true christian perspective is a perspective in which the christian lives in every area of life from a biblical standpoint. This biblical standpoint is communal christian social action in every sphere of life. This perspective calls upon the christian to subdue every area of life to the rule of Christ and on behalf of Christ's kingdom. To use the author's words:

A full life in the Kingdom of God can mean nothing less than to be antithetically contending with every spirit which is not of Christ, to be rendering every aspect, every force of creation captive to the Word of God, the Will of the Creator, the Law of the Kingdom, the Ordinance of the King. In other words, sons of the Kingdom must make the entire world their concern with the powers and resources of their whole lives. This is biblical secularization. p. 123.

... learning to live biblically in *our* age is first of all learning to live in terms of organized christian action. Those who have been confronted with this and still keep stressing in principle the primary need for individualistic witness within the secular structures, without assuming reformational responsibility toward the latter, grieve the Holy Spirit and deny the power of the Kingdom to *this* world. p. 127.

Thus the author's plea is a plea being increasingly heard in our day not only by those organizations before which these lectures were given but by other groups throughout the country.

It is not my intention to quarrel in this review with the thesis that there is room for united Christian action in various spheres of life such as politics, economics, etc. This is entirely possible. But whether this is the real thrust of Scripture is quite another question. Whether this calling is really the essence of biblical living is something else. To do anything else but join in such united christian action is, in the author's words, to grieve the Holy Spirit and deny the power of the Kingdom. To this I cannot subscribe. In essence this means that the Church has grieved the Spirit for almost

2000 years. It is true that Hart speaks of this as our calling "in *our* age"; but the question remains: If this is our calling in our age, why has it not been the calling of the Church in every age? Does the calling of the people of God change with various circumstances in society? It is evidently Hart's position that it does. We disagree. And here lies a major weakness in the book. If the true nature of biblical living is communal christian social action, one would expect Scripture to show this clearly. And one would expect Hart to point this out in Scripture and bolster his argument with sound Scriptural proof. This he does not do. Various texts are from time to time referred to (mostly in the footnotes), but there is no exegesis of these texts and no attempt made to show how they support his thesis.

However all this may be, it is more important to get at the argument behind Hart's position. The key to this seems to lie in the expression at the very end of the quotation made above: "This is biblical secularization." Hart calls for biblical secularization. What does he mean by that strange term? The answer lies imbedded in a footnote. (By the way, this is one formal criticism of the book which ought to be made. The footnotes are lengthy, copious and important. In fact they are so important that material found in them ought really to be included in the main body of the text. But they are always found at the end of the chapter. And this makes for difficult reading. One can scarcely follow the argument of the text without consulting the footnotes. But to page to the end of the chapter, sometimes four or five times in a short paragraph, makes reading exceedingly difficult.) This footnote (note 21 on page 112) defines this "secularization" as being a deliverance of "human life out of the bondage of institutionalized ecclesiastic dominion." This is a very key point in the author's argument.

I have long suspected that the proponents of separate christian action take a very jaundiced view of the church institute. When I broached this possibility to various proponents of such views, I was always vehemently assured that this was not the case. The book speaks of this matter. The position of Hart is that the institute of the Church has, in our day, become wrongly identified with the body of Christ. This erroneous identification (whatever that may mean) has led to a life in which christianity no longer speaks to all areas of christian concern. In other words, the failure of the believer to permeate all of society with the leaven of christianity is due to this erroneous identification. (precisely how this all comes about is not made clear.) The institute is therefore in need of deliverance. What the institute ought to be in distinction from what it now is is made clear in the following quote:

Learning to live biblically in a secular world means learning to give full and active support to christian education, christian political action, christian labor

activity, christian everything; and learning to understand the church-institute as the organization which is called upon to promote such support concretely and *authoritatively* in the name of Christ. p. 127.

In other words, the institute assumes its proper role only when it is a means to instruct the believer in his calling in society. All of this does not seem to give to the institute of the Church the place which Scripture gives it. This suspicion is strengthened by a statement such as:

The exercise of faith in the home is of extreme importance and perhaps the only means of recovering a life close to the Scriptures. p. 141.

The objection to the above statement is not that it stresses the importance of the exercise of faith in the home; it is the author's use of the word "only" which causes trouble. This "only" seems to be a sigh of despair that the institute will ever take on its proper task. The author's disillusionment with the institute (particularly of the Christian Reformed Church) is evident in various criticisms which he has of some classical and synodical decisions.

But this matter of the institute is directly related to the Holy Scriptures and the author's view of them. The author speaks repeatedly of a "biblically related life". His view of Scripture is of some importance therefore. But here again we are left in doubt as to precisely what the author has in mind. In the Appendix to this book (cf. p. 137) the author maintains "the unconditional authority of the infallibly inspired Scriptures". But he discusses at length the relation between the Word of God and the Bible. In warning against the extremes of "Biblicism" and liberal views which deny the inspiration of Scripture, the author says:

But if the Scriptures provide us with an *authoritatively inspired* instance, a *sufficient instance*, of God's Word-revelation, of *his* dealing with *his* people and of *their* obedient response, for *our* instruction: in that case the power of the Word cannot be limited to that *instance*, but comes to us in its universal authority. p. 120.

I confess that I do not understand what the author is saying in this quote. But the troubling word in it is the word "instance." The Scriptures are an authoritative instance of God's Word-revelation; and for that reason, the power of the Word cannot be limited to that one authoritatively inspired instance of Word-revelation. When therefore, I read the author's criticism of "propositional revelation" and when in a footnote to the above quote the author says: "If one *ties* the Word *down* to the verbiage of the written Scriptures, as the Scribes and Pharisees had done (biblicism and verbalism) the Word no longer comes to us in its full authority", then I wonder if there is not some Barthianism in the author's conception. It is difficult to say how much stress the author intends to place upon the underscored words "tie...down" and what effect this is intended to have on the quote, but

the very strong impression is left that the author, in some form, maintains a certain continuous authoritative revelation apart from the Scriptures or at least in addition to the Scriptures. There is need for further clarification by the author at this key point.

It is precisely in this connection that the author leaves the strong impression that he does not want objective truth as part of the revelation of God. The statement is probably too strong. He deliberately disassociates himself from those who relativize and subjectivize all truth. But again, the author is not clear. He leaves the impression that objective truth is not important, at the very least. A few quotes will help to clarify the point.

(Many Christians) say that truth is objective and absolute and that it is independent of us. But this is a very dangerous thought. . . . pp. 55 & 56.

The author would probably object to the use of this quote in the short form in which I use it. He would insist that the quote is taken out of context. He would point out that in the context he asserts emphatically that he means that no single isolated "fact" can be truth taken by itself. Truth is only truth as it stands historically related to all the other "facts" and all the other circumstances to which it is connected. The author uses an illustration to clarify what he means.

During the last war many Christians in the Netherlands wondered what they ought to say in the event that they were hiding someone and an enemy came to the door asking if that person were there. Those people argued: If we say no, we surely lie, because the person is here. And we may not lie. But if we say yes, the person will be caught and probably shot. Then we have committed treason and that is not allowed either. The unfortunate mistake made by these people was that they had a conception of truth called correspondence-to-facts. They did not understand that to say yes in such a case, was, instead of speaking the truth, giving *false* witness. The truth in this case would have been to take a stand in the love of that brother for Christ's sake. Further, the meaning of the entire situation was such that the man for whom the enemy was inquiring, viz, a person-whom-they-had-the-right-to-kill, was not there. That was indeed why he was *hiding* there. Now, in this case what could be verified? The only thing that would have stood up to the test of impartial observation would have been that the person was there. But he was not. What could be verified was 180-pounds-of-fearfully-breathing-flesh-in-the-closet. But the *truth* could not be verified. Notwithstanding the *fact* that there was a man in the closet. (p. 55.)

This strikes me as the baldest kind of sophistry. Carried over into the field of theology however, this has very dangerous consequences and implications. The whole position of Hart sounds suspiciously like the position of those who deny that God can be known in Himself — or that the knowledge of God in Himself is

not important. This is a relativizing of truth.

This suspicion is strengthened by the footnote appended to the quote on pp. 55 & 56 (made above):

Theories of truth that speak of absolute objectivity make truth to be a conceptual matter of doubtful origin. Intellectualistic doctrines of truth cannot possibly account for the biblical notion of truth as *something to be done and lived*. (These italics are mine, H. H.) Truth primarily concerns man's relation to the Word of God and not his first of all having correct ideas or beliefs.

This footnote is particularly interesting. The author maintains that it is not primarily what we believe which is important. It is rather what we do and how we live. But what is forgotten is the fact that what we do and how we live is only something important when it is rooted firmly in what we believe. And what we believe is what God has objectively revealed concerning Himself. It is true that no single proposition can be understood by itself in isolation from the whole of Scripture. But the whole of Scripture is nevertheless objective revelation of God as the God Who saves His elect people through Christ. And that central truth has meaning only because of all the individual truths which are incorporated in Holy Writ.

It is not difficult to see how all this fits in with the author's view of Scripture and of the church institute. And this is the basis for communal christian action in every sphere of life.

Two more quotes on this same subject will give some idea of the importance which the author gives to this.

And I would therefore venture to say that what has been said so far should not be taken to be *merely* someone's *view*, but should be approached as an attempt to let *the Scriptures* be their own witness. The necessity in our lives is not that of being *stated* correctly in some sound theological doctrine of Scripture, nor even of being formulated in an orthodox manner in the confession of the church. Its place is to *function* as the canon of a new creation. (This expression "canon of a new creation" is one the author uses often in the last chapter. By it he means that the Bible is the authoritative rule of life in the kingdom as the author defines that life; i.e., as communal social action. H. H.) Views, doctrines and confessional statement of the Bible have their place, which is to serve as a formulation of obedient response; meaningful only when such a response is actually there. p. 121.

Preaching is not meant primarily to *inform* but to *reform*, not first of all to unravel doctrines, but to build lives. Preaching should be a directive to the ordinary every-day lives of the congregation's members. It should give a message which presents an immediately-understood challenge, a dynamic motivation to act in the Kingdom. p. 139.

All this is why the author can say:

What we have to avoid at all cost, if biblical living is to be meaningful living, is on the one hand to

undermine the full *authority* of the Bible and on the other hand to *reduce* the Word of God to a *set* of truths, a *collection* of infallible propositions.

It is no wonder then that the author has quite a different conception of what constitutes a lie. Only the whole context of the circumstances of a "fact" can determine this. He approves therefore of the lie of Rahab for example — although he insists that Rahab told the truth when she denied the presence of the spies in her house. He errs when he maintains that Scripture approves of Rahab's lie. The fact is that Scripture says nothing about it. Hart may not argue from Scripture's silence that Scripture condones it.

Another interesting question which is also connected with all the foregoing is the question of the possible postmillennialism in Hart's thesis. Does not the christian communal and social action which Hart pleads for necessarily imply postmillennialism? Does Hart give any indication of being postmillennial? The answer to this question is not easy. If placed before the question, I am sure Hart would emphatically deny any postmillennialism in his views. But there are quotes from the book which are troubling nonetheless. They are not definite and conclusive. But one wonders if they do not have some of the overtones of postmillennialism nonetheless.

On page 68 Hart writes:

To gain a real foothold in western culture which is completely overpowered by the secular grip of Humanism takes, I would think, more time than barely one hundred years and more men than a few thousands. To dethrone or compete with or even challenge successfully a power which has had its strongholds established and built up for some two thousand years is no mean thing. Yet, we may keep our hopes and our courage high. For when we are doing the Lord's work there is no power ultimately strong enough to withstand him; as he made known to us in such men as Gideon.

Or again, on page 71 we read:

(The antithesis) means that we must take hold of this world and reform it to the Spirit of Christ, reconcile it to the recreative power of the Savior of this world, in an antithetical spirit of compassion.

In a footnote to this quote the author reveals his agreement with Kuyperian common grace:

The Holy Spirit does not only work in the Body of Christ. There are enough examples in the Old Testament which teach us that God often leads a pagan people to carry out one of his missions. Thus when during the Enlightenment Humanists protested against the tyrannic forces of science loosened by some of their brethren, we may count that as a gracious blessing of God. And we should remember that such a turn for the better is not to be credited to those Humanists, who used the betterment in idolatry, to serve themselves. p. 83.

All this is not sufficient to prove the author's possible postmillennialism. But these quotes certainly

are of such a kind that they place upon the author the obligation to answer forthrightly and explicitly whether or not he believes that united christian social action will result in success here upon earth in the sense that the various institutions of society are indeed to be subjected to the influences of christianity. The author has not done this in the book.

For the rest, a large section of the book deals with the prevalent spirit of Humanism which has been the moving force of society for the past many centuries. The book shows the bankruptcy of Humanism and the inevitable anarchy of society if Humanism prevails. It shows the evil of the scientific method as a tool of Humanism. It speaks boldly and loudly for the antithesis. It criticizes at length Cox's book: "The Secular City" and exposes the errors of Cox's position. All these are worthwhile parts of the book.

But when the author jumps from the antithesis to

Christ's concern for the whole world and bases upon this cosmic concern of Christ the Christian calling to influence every social, economic and political sphere of life, the logic is not clear. Indeed, while we are prepared to grant that the child of God in the midst of the world must be an instrument in Christ's hands to make known the truth of God and His Word as it touches every part of life, we find the basis for the absolute necessity of christian communal social action extremely weak.

In the Appendix Hart admits that he may have said things which may sound as if they stand outside the tradition of Reformed thought. He justifies this by appealing to a lethargic church which has to be "alarmed" so that it will spring into action. He has succeeded in "alarming" me. The alarm is caused by a conviction that the basis for christian communal social action is extra-Scriptural.

In His Fear

BUT BY EVERY WORD (1)

Rev. John A. Heys

Man lives by bread.

His earthly, physical body is sustained by bread; and he must therefore receive a certain amount of that bread regularly, if he is to retain his earthly life. Take that bread away from him, and in effect you take away his life.

But man does not live by bread alone. He lives also by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. The man who refuses to live by these words will find, as did the fool in Jesus' parable, that although he has his barns full of that bread, God will require his life from him sooner or later. Likewise, long before this, Adam and Eve found that the wages of not living by the words that proceed from the mouth of God is death! Uzzah, who violated that word and touched the ark of God, also found that life was no longer his to enjoy. II Samuel 6:1-8.

This basic principle, which Jesus voiced to Satan in the wilderness, when He was tempted to seek bread apart from the words from God's mouth, and which is a quotation from Deuteronomy 8:3, we will use in our consideration of the matter of membership in a labor union in the light of Holy Writ. Here, to begin with, is Scripture's answer to the "bread question," that is, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4.

Those who are not willing to bow before this Word of God need read no further. Those who wish to place man's word in the place of that which proceeds from

God's mouth will find no support in these lines. But if your soul is troubled, and you sincerely seek light in these dark and evil days and would have the "bread question" considered in the light of God's Word, read on. And may God give strength and comfort and guidance to you and courage to walk according to His Word.

Let it be pointed out then from the outset that the words that proceed from *God's mouth* are the words which we must heed. It is He Who gives us our bread. It is He Who alone can and does give life. He is the one to Whom we must give account for all our deeds in this life. We can avoid His word; but we cannot escape Him. We can strive to live by bread alone; but we cannot flee from the words of judgment that will proceed forth from His mouth. Let us beware lest words from the mouth of man work a sinful influence upon us to cause us to dare to defy the Lord of life!

As we search His Word we find nothing that forbids us to organize into a labor union. We do find that Abraham was confederate with some of the Canaanites, and that Scripture in no way condemns this. Genesis 14:13. However, there are two qualifications which Scripture does make in regard to any such organizations. The union, society, organization or federation must have for its purpose the fostering and not the hampering of our Christian stewardship. Its purpose must not be to foster the satisfaction of our carnal covetousness. A man's calling is to provide for the needs of his family; and to organize with others to

insure this in a lawful way is not denied us by Holy Writ. But to join with others in order to strive for what others have, with a greedy eye and a desire for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, is condemned by the tenth commandment. Let a man be sure that he is organizing or joining with others for his needs, honest needs before God, and not to keep up with the Joneses! A man's life, Jesus says, does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses. And unless he is rich toward God, all his bread will bring him no more good than the rich fool in Jesus' parable experienced, when God took away his life.

Another qualification of organizing into a labor union, or of joining such an organization, is that we may not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. II Corinthians 6:14-18. We are one with unbelievers as members of a particular nation. We are born that way and cannot escape membership in a nation. This is the work of God's providence; and it is unavoidable, for God will have man governed by those whom He invests with authority. But membership in a labor union is voluntary, and may not be sanctioned when it puts one in the position where he will have to behave contrary to the words that proceed from God's mouth. Unequally yoked with the unbeliever he will have to do things the unbeliever's way.

Indeed, a man may have to join himself to an ungodly man for his daily bread. His employer may be an unbeliever; and he may not be able to find any work except to work for the unbeliever as his employee, or he may have to ply his trade in the service of the unbeliever. This is not yoking oneself to that unbeliever. Joining a union of unbelievers, swearing loyalty to its constitution, voluntarily sitting down with them to make policy is agreeing to a program that will advocate going contrary to God's Word.

But we hardly need say anything about this further, for according to governmental regulations this is the only kind of union that is possible anymore in our country. The possibility of a group of believers uniting on the basis of God's Word to seek improvement of working conditions, salary, hours of employment and the like is limited only to those establishments where *all* the employees who organize a union are believers. The Taft Hartley law takes care of that in Section 9, (a), when it declares, "Representatives designated or selected for the purpose of collective bargaining by the majority of the employees in a unit appropriate for such purposes, shall be the exclusive representatives of all the employees in such a unit for the purpose of collective bargaining in respect to rates of pay, wages, hours of employment and other conditions of employment." That simply means that the believers will have to be unequally yoked with unbelievers in these pursuits or get out of the factory, when there are unbelievers in the labor organization that represents

ALL the workers in the establishment. If he joins such a society, he puts aside the words from God's mouth in II Corinthians 6:14-18 and agrees to work with these unbelievers in their policies of collective bargaining, which will also be drawn up apart from and in conflict with the words from God's mouth.

The unbeliever is exactly that: One who does not believe that he has to reckon with the words that proceed from God's mouth. He does not and cannot sincerely say, "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." Rather does he with Pharaoh say, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice . . . ?" Exodus 5:2. Or as Paul writes to the church at Rome, "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Romans 8:7. He cannot see heaven and earth as God's. He considers it all man's to do with as he pleases. He knows no Christian stewardship. He never sees himself as God's royal priesthood. And, what is more, for that is what Paul says, he sets himself up as God's enemy. He opposes God in all his thinking, willing and acting. And essentially it means that he is still intent on becoming God, according to Satan's lie, and take from Him the heavens and the earth of which He is the Almighty Maker.

Yoked with such, we must go along with them in their evil way. A little later we will be more specific and list the evil policies and practices which are characteristic of the so-called neutral unions. But at the moment we would simply point out that the policies of the unbeliever can only be contrary to the words that proceed from God's mouth, and can only be those with which the believer cannot possibly agree. For the believer is one who believes in God, and that he is obliged to live for Him, even as he lives through Him with life that comes from Him. Entirely apart from the specific evil practices of the unbeliever, it is contrary to God's Word for a man to join himself to the unbelievers by promising to go along with them in their "collective bargaining" and efforts for an honest wage, safe working conditions and hours of toil. If it is true, and it most emphatically is true, that we must live by *every* word that proceeds from God's mouth, then we simply may not join any organization of any kind that intends to ignore these words and sets itself up to make policies that defy that Word! Let us not, in our attempts to defend such membership in this very act depart from the words that proceed from God's mouth and are recorded here in II Corinthians 6! For then we are trying to live by the words that proceed from Satan's filthy mouth. It was his evil word that first turned man from heeding God's words. He moved man to believe that he could live apart from and in fact contrary to these words from God's mouth. He wrought enmity in man's heart against God. He deceived man into thinking that there was great profit in going contrary to these words of God and to hate

Him for speaking words which frightened man from reaching the glory he "could" have.

And today it is a case of "Either . . . or . . ." There is this Word of God that we must obey Him in all things; and there is this word of Satan that we will live, truly live, only in the way of departing from and of walking contrary to God's Word. The Word of God puts God and His glory first. Satan's word puts man and the lust of his flesh, the lust of his eyes and the pride of his life first. God's Word presents life as knowing God in His favour and covenant fellowship. Satan's word lays all the stress on the physical existence of man with the satisfaction of his flesh. We agreed with Satan and chose to seek self and our flesh.

Thus it is today also that Satan's word has gained such a foothold and we hear the argument that it is man's calling to provide for his family, and that this makes the yoke with the unbeliever right and necessary. This is but another way of saying that we need not heed *every* word from God's mouth. It is the repetition of Satan's lie, "Ye shall not die." It proclaims that the wages of some sins is not death. It places all the value on the things of this life rather than on those of the life to come; and in fact teaches that

we can attain to the things above by seeking the things below. This is but an echo of Satan's lie that we can become like God by doing what God hates.

And let a solemn warning be given to all those who would try to hide behind this argument that providing for one's family is one's calling and makes such yoking with the unbeliever right and necessary. Such an argument is laying the groundwork for acceptance of the mark of the beast when the Antichrist appears. For, if we must go contrary to God's word today for bread, the need will be far greater in that day when we will not be able to buy or to sell, unless we take that mark. But read Revelation 14:11, and you will see that though one may live a little longer on this earth by such violation of God's Word, he loses his soul and will not have the joy of the everlasting life before God's face in glory.

Today we are not in danger of starving to death, if we heed God's Word and flee from all unequal yoking with the unbeliever. In the day of the Antichrist we will not only be in that danger but in that situation. But let us remember today, with a view to those evil days, that we do not live by bread alone *but by every word* that proceeds from the mouth of God.

A Cloud of Witnesses

The Death of Absalom

Rev. B. Woudenberg

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

II Samuel 18:33

We sing from the Psalter, "The tender love a father has for all his children dear," and few things bring out more emphatically the strength of this love than the attitude which King David maintained toward his child Absalom. In a way it was not a good love. Absalom had proved himself a very wicked man through his sins, not just against David and his own family, but against the whole nation. That under all the misuse that David experienced at the hand of Absalom he should not have become bitter and hateful is something which only one who has been the father of a prodigal son can ever appreciate. It seemed that the more he suffered the more David only yearned with heart-rending prayers in hope that somehow, someday this his child might yet come to repentance and salvation. It was much like his fasting for Bathsheba's first child, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be

gracious to me, that the child may live?" only this was more intense. Before Bathsheba's child lay the grave, while before Absalom there loomed the anguish of hell. It was too terrible for David to be able to contemplate.

This attitude of David toward Absalom could be detected throughout the dreadful history. When Absalom took justice into his own hand and slew his brother Amnon, it was more than was his right to do, and he should have paid with his life in turn; but he was allowed to flee to Geshur and live there with his grandparents in peace. When the woman of Tekoah stood before David to plead his cause, the king knew that it was not right, but he followed the inclination of his heart and allowed the murderer to be restored to the royal city. And again when Joab pleaded in his behalf, Absalom was even restored to the rights and privileges of the royal court. Meanwhile he was

allowed full freedom to surround himself with all kinds of luxurious symbols of royalty and to woo the people to himself without restraint. The result was his revolt, and even then David was not ready to press down upon him too severely. It was simply that each move of the young man called for the penalty of death, and before the thought of this the father hesitated and trembled. In the case of anyone else, David, regardless of his age and circumstances, might well have fortified the city as best he could and defended it against any invader trusting the Lord to deliver him; but before Absalom he chose rather to turn in flight lest an open confrontation should prove to be too conclusive.

The time for confrontation had to come, however. For Absalom, the continued life of his father only meant that he was not really established as king yet even if he had taken to himself all of the royal presumptions. David had been anointed of the Lord and the people knew it. He simply had to get his father out of the way before the excitement of his own ascendancy began to wane and the hearts of the people turned back to his father once again. The only thing that he could do was, as Hushai had suggested, to gather as large an army as he could possibly call behind him and to march against the defenses which David had set up in the wood outside of Mahanaim. It turned, David was left with no choice but to prepare his own men for the battle which had to result.

As a good soldier should, David went through all of the preparations he knew so well to make his army ready to meet the impending battle. Even more, he expressed to them his intentions of going along with them into the battle, a thing he no doubt would have done if the men themselves had not persuaded him not to. And yet through it all there was one great fear that weighed more and more heavily upon his heart; it was the fear that this battle might cost the life of his son while he remained still hardened and unrepentant in his way of sin. It finally came out in that last hour when all of the army was passing by in review before him as they left the city. There in the presence of all, David instructed the three captains of the army, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom."

As it was, however, the time of God's longsuffering with the wickedness of Absalom had come to its end. This has often been God's way of dealing with the outstanding men of sin. For a time he will let them go and accomplish their heart's fondest desires. Along the way God may warn them from time to time, but being the men they are, they are completely insensitive to such warning and at most become bitter because of them. Pressing on with all of the strength of their wicked characters, they go from prosperity to prosperity while all the time nourishing within themselves the growing confidence that it is their own strength which has accomplished it and which will make them

finally invincible before all opposition. But the time comes inevitably when God will endure their boast no longer. In a moment He turns his judgment upon them to cut them down and destroy them, as the heat of the sun withers the new mown grass.

The time of climax came soon after the battle began. Absalom's forces began to disintegrate almost immediately. Although a large force in number, the men were untrained and untouched by any true sense of dedication, while David's men in contrast were men who loved their master and who were dedicated to his God in a believing faith. Moreover, among the army of the rebels, no one was more unprepared for battle than was Absalom himself. His driving force was pride and ambition, not courage. Raised as he was in the sheltered life of the royal court, he may well have dreamed of himself as a great hero in battle, but he had never really tasted the hardship and anguish of actual fighting. To be suddenly engulfed in the din of struggling, screeching, bleeding and dying men was more than he was prepared to take.

And so it happened that Absalom himself was one of the first of his own to turn and flee from the battle. Perhaps he felt almost immediately that the battle was turning against him, and perhaps he simply lacked the courage to be able to endure such life and death engagement. He had come into the battle with unwavering confidence, dressed in all of his royal regalia; but now he turned his donkey about and fled along one of the obscure and wandering paths of the wood. It was the end of the battle. At stake was only one question, who should be king, David or Absalom. With Absalom gone, no one knew where, all reason for continued strife was taken away. The rebel army could only turn in confusion and flee for its life.

But this time Absalom was not about to escape so easily. The time for judgment had come, and it was to be in all of the shamefulness which he deserved. Not even the honor of death on the field of battle was to be given him — only the shame of a fleeing coward.

As Absalom rode through the woods, the long flowing hair of which he was so vainly proud blew out in the breeze beyond him. It was handsome hair in the city and had served to attract many; but on the field of battle it was an incongruity. Any experienced warrior could have told him that it would have to be dispensed with for practical reasons. Absalom, however, had taken it proudly with him into the battle, quite confident that his own aura of greatness would somehow protect him. Now as he rode through the wood, it was this very badge of vanity which was his undoing. Along the twisting path his animal dashed, weaving around bushes and beneath low hanging trees. For a time Absalom was able in a wild and reckless sort of way to evade all serious damage; but soon they came beneath the sturdy branches of a huge oak tree which reached down to grasp the head of Absalom

with its limbs. Meanwhile the beast upon which he rode, having taken unto itself the terror of his master, dashed furiously on, leaving Absalom suspended between the ground below and the heavy vegetation of the woods above. It was a strange and freakish situation, one into which only a man with a vain crop of hair such as Absalom's could become ensnared. His long locks of hair were caught up far higher than his arms could possibly reach while his legs could only kick helplessly beneath him. Dangling foolishly like a puppet, he could only hang and scream with anguished shame and wait for someone to come along and cut his prized locks to let him free.

But that was not how it went. To be sure, soon the wood was ringing with the sounds of many men, men fleeing just as he had with only concern for their own lives. As they swept past, if in their wild haste they recognized him at all, there was no love for him any more, only bitter hatred and a passing curse. It was actually the pursuing soldiers of David, when they came, that showed him the greatest respect. They did not free him, but they didn't harm him either. They remembered the warning of their master. They only waited while one of the soldiers ran to Joab and reported to him of their finding.

Through the course of Absalom's rebellion, Joab had done some serious thinking. In earlier years, realizing David's love for his son, he had often pleaded Absalom's cause. He had thought that whatever would make David happy would be best for him and for the kingdom. But now he had come to see how foolish he had been. Neither was he about to repeat his error.

To be sure, Joab had heard David's parting commandment. Yet, when the report of Absalom's predicament was brought to him he flung back at the man, "And behold, thou sawest him, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle."

The man was shocked and thought perhaps that Joab was testing him. Quickly he answered, "Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and

Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom. Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou wouldest have set thyself against me."

But Joab knew just exactly what he wanted done, and he was not one to wait to do it. Answering the man curtly, "I may not tarry thus with thee," he took three darts and hurried to the place where Absalom hung. By this time quite a crowd had gathered about the spot, no one being quite sure how this thing was to be handled. But there was decisiveness in his steps as Joab approached. Taking the three darts he thrust them through Absalom's heart until he was dead. To David's captain it was as simple as that. Absalom deserved to die and ought to die for the good of David and the nation. It was not to him a matter of what David would think or do to him for it. He was determined to do what had to be for the sake of his master.

Even that was not enough, however. Next Joab commanded that ten of the young men who formed his own company should set upon Absalom and cut his body into ribbons. Then he had it cast into a deep pit and all who stood about were commanded to cast stones upon it until the pit was filled and a great heap was built up upon it. There was an old law in Israel that any child who disgraced his parents should be stoned in shame. This Absalom had done and Joab was determined that all should know the shame of that which he had committed.

Through the army of David there went a great sigh of relief when they heard of what had been done. Absalom had brought shame to Israel and now justice had been satisfied. It was only David who could not appreciate what had been done. He looked at the whole thing from the point of view of a father, and when the message was finally brought to him, there was only one cry that went up from his soul: it was this, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" — the cry of a bereaved father, a father whose son had died in his sin.

The Strength of Youth

Situation Ethics — An Introduction

Rev. J. Korterling

Mere mention of the new morality, another name for situation ethics, brings many things to mind. We think of co-eds shacking up for the semester at the pads of their lovers. Our minds wander to San

Francisco and the topless waitresses serving drinks to gawking customers. Sometimes we are shocked by the news media's lurid description of Off-Broadway and its nudism. The beach does not escape the trend. Even in

church we are distracted by the bare knees of the mini-skirted lass sitting in the pew across the aisle.

True, this has something to do with situation ethics.

Yet, the subject is broader than sex. Sometimes we mistakenly correlate the new morality with sexual promiscuity and leave it at that. On the contrary, the effects of this perverse view of ethics can be seen in many ways today. Public swearing, the carnival atmosphere on the Sabbath day, the clamor for a new theology and liturgy in the church, drug addiction, civil disobedience, liberalization of abortion laws, birth control, corruption in high offices of government, stealing and looting, to name only a few, have their roots in this view of morals.

The truth of the matter is that unless we come to grips with this philosophy of ethics, we will not be able adequately to understand the times in which we live. What is more, unless we understand the philosophy behind the evil practices of our day, we will not be spiritually strong enough as covenant youth to reject them and walk righteously in the midst of our evil age.

THE NAME

Situation ethics flies under the banner of the new morality. These two names are used interchangeably to designate this approach to morals. Purposely, however, we have chosen to use the term situation ethics. There are two reasons for this preference. The first is that the name new morality is really a mis-nomer. Inherent in the idea of morality is the right view of conduct. We say that something is moral when it displays right conduct. On the contrary, something is immoral when it contradicts proper conduct. The practical outcome of the new morality is an abundance of immorality. The same thing applies to the designation *new*. In all honesty this view of right and wrong is very old. It is as old as sin itself. In the days of the Apostle Paul, some cried out, let us sin that grace may abound, Rom. 6:1. John Calvin had to contend with the Libertines who advocated the right to sit at the Lord's Supper as well as the table of devils. The new morality is the same old whore described in Rev. 17:4, 5, "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." The only difference is that sometimes in history she wears a more seductive dress. In our generation she is the most enticing.

The second reason for our using the name situation ethics, is that it is more descriptive. When we speak of ethics in a limited sense, the emphasis is not on the conduct and activity of a person, rather it is upon the philosophy or outlook on life that produces this activity. The relationship between ethics and morals is

that between cause and effect. It is at once obvious that one has to have the right ethics if one is to have correct morals. If someone will act unethically, his conduct will be immoral or vice versa.

The adjective "situation" added to ethics, indicates that those who advocate this science of right or wrong lend a great deal of credence to the situation. We will see how this is done, D. V., in future articles. For the present however, we may observe that the adherents to this view of ethics insist that nothing is wrong or right of itself, nothing is right or wrong because it conforms or fails to conform to a certain standard, code, or law, rather the rightness or wrongness of any act must be determined by the situation in which the act was performed. They reject legalism, in which certain acts of behavior are condemned and others are extolled. At the same time they also reject anti-nomism (without law) for this leads to unbridled license. They insist that the Christian must be motivated by the law of love, not as it is spelled out in a code of ethics, rather as it is a dynamic power in one's whole life. The only law that exists for the Christian is the law of love. This law must be the governing rule for the Christian's life. Since no acts are in themselves wrong or right, the Christian must determine for himself on the basis of the love of God and the love of the neighbor whether he should do or not do a certain act.

A SUBTLE VIEW

If one takes time to read seriously the line of argumentation put forth by the adherents to this view, he cannot help but conclude that this approach to ethics is very subtle and for that reason, dangerous. It is not true, for example, that they blandly cast aside the Word of God and ignore it. They distort the Word of God and do violence to proper interpretation; yet the subtlety lies in this, that they claim to be the faithful adherents to the Word of God.

To illustrate this briefly (documentation will follow later), they point out that Christ distilled the entire law to its simple form of love God and the neighbor, Matt. 22:37-39. The key word is "distilled." We ask, is this text a distillation or a summary? The difference is crucial. They interpret Paul's reference in I Cor. 6:12, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient," as meaning that according to the law of love, Paul claims he could do anything he wanted to, only he recognized that expedience or "the situation" had to be considered. They say that David's act of breaking the law by eating the shewbread was condoned by Christ in Luke 6:1-5, the reason being that the situation warranted this act. Similarly, Rahab told a lie, but is still considered one of the heroes of faith, Heb. 11:16, the situation making all the difference.

Following this "argumentation" from Scripture, those who advocate this view of ethics resort to all kinds of subtle reasonings to justify conduct that is

contrary to Christian behavior. Since nothing is wrong in itself, any act could be right, it just depends on the circumstances. Murder of the neighbor in order forcefully to take his possessions might be wrong in one circumstance (a lazy man wants money for his beer and doesn't want to work for it), but in another instance it might be justified and motivated by love (a poor black man, the victim of discrimination, wants a decent meal for his family). Pre-marital sexual relations might be wrong in one instance (a young man or woman who promiscuously spends the night with anyone) or it might be properly motivated in another (a young couple engaged to be married, but completing their schooling). Telling a lie may be wrong for some (simply to be kept from being penalized by the law) or right for another (to keep a mental patient from being overly burdened). So we could go on and on.

This is subtle reasoning because on the surface it has the semblance of credibility both scripturally and morally.

ITS INHERENT EVIL

If we are going to evaluate meaningfully this approach to morals, we must have certain guide lines to follow. Since ethics and moral conduct deal with the fruits of faith or unbelief, we must at once look deeper than the act itself and ask what is behind this act. What dominates the thinking of such individuals to allow them to act this way not only, but also to provide them with the conviction that this view of ethics is the only real, correct, and Christian view? What then must guide us in making such a study?

There exists a close relationship between Scripture, doctrine, and morals. In fact, we may picture this relationship as a pyramid, the broad basis which serves as the foundation of the structure is the Scriptures. The Bible is the revelation of God. Morality is not determined by man's relationship with man, rather it is first of all God's relationship to man then man's relationship to God, followed by man's relationship to his fellow man. God determines what is right and wrong, not man. Hence His Word, the revelation of His will, is determinative for morals. Our ethics must be Scripturally orientated or it fails.

The central message of the Word of God is not how man should behave, rather it deals with the revelation of *God*. The Bible tells us that God is the Sovereign Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth, that we are totally depraved and subject to condemnation and death, that Christ is the Son of God come into the world to redeem His own from sin and death, that the way of salvation is through repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ, that God in Christ gathers His elect people unto Himself by the preaching of the Word and strengthens them daily until the end when He shall reign as King in the new heavens and new earth. This is called doctrine, the doctrines of God

revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

Following such a correct understanding of God, Who He is, and who we are in Christ Jesus, the Christian is in a position to follow God's instruction and do His will in gratitude to Him for revealing these secrets. Ethical conduct, moral behavior follow as the sublime apex of God's revelation, for by it His name is glorified now and forever.

From this it is obvious that if one's view of the Holy Scripture is wrong, his doctrine will be wrong, and inevitably his ethics and morals will be wrong too.

This is the heart of the error of those who maintain situation ethics. They have a wrong view of the Scriptures, and this is a fundamental and fatal error. Because they view the Scripture as a human account of God's Word they take liberty with exegesis, relegate much to myth and folklore, construct their own doctrine of God, man, Christ, salvation, the church, and the end of all things. When man believes the lie about God, he will inevitably have a superficial view of human conduct.

There must be no doubt in our minds that this system of ethics is the one that is now and will be advocated by the anti-Christ. Proud man rejects God as revealed; he wants to be his own god. Since he believes that he is not a dead sinner, only a sick one, he rejects the atonement of Christ and the sovereignty of divine grace and substitutes the medicine of modern psychology and social gospel. If God is not a personal God, Who is worthy of praise and worship, religion is reduced to human philanthropy. The natural man wants only one thing, to be able to sin and silence his conscience before the God he knows to exist, but Whom he rejects. When the church teaches an ethics that tells man to sin with impunity, you have the lowest form of depravity found on earth.

We are reminded of the word of Peter, "But there were false prophets also among the people even as there shall be false teachers among you, who shall privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction. . . .for when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh through much wantonness those that are clean escaped from them who live in error; while they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage," II Peter 2:1, 18, 19.

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end. . .as obedient children; not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation", I Peter 1:13, 14.

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

In our preceding article, quoting from the creeds of the Reformed Churches, we quoted from the Second Helvetic Confession. In this article, our first quotation, in re the doctrine of sin, will be from the Gallican Confession, A.D. 1559. Concerning the history of this Confession, Schaff writes the following in his *Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. I, 429-492; and we quote:

But it was only after Calvin, himself the greatest Protestant of France, had taken up his permanent abode in Geneva, that the Reformation movement was organized into a separate Church, and acquired a national importance. He therefore, and his friend and successor, Beza, may be regarded as the fathers of the Reformed Church of France. Geneva became an asylum for their persecuted countrymen, and the nursery of evangelists. Henceforward French Protestantism assumed a Calvinistic type in doctrine and discipline, but, owing to the hostile attitude of the government, it was kept separate and distinct from the state. Although cruelly persecuted, and numbering its martyrs by thousands, it spread rapidly among the middle and higher classes, and in 1558 it embraced four hundred thousand followers.

The first national Synod was held in Paris, May 25-28, 1559, under the moderatorship of Francois de Morel, then pastor of Paris, a friend and pupil of Calvin. It gave the Reformed Church a compact organization by the adoption of the Gallican Confession of Faith, in connection with a Presbyterian form of government and discipline, which remained the firm basis of the Church as long as she was allowed to exist and to hold national Synods, twenty-nine in all, the last being that at Loudun, 1659.

From this Gallican Confession of Faith we now quote Articles IX, X and XI. Art. IX reads as follows:

We believe that man was created pure and perfect in the image of God, and that by his own guilt he fell from the grace which he received, and is thus alienated from God, the fountain of justice and of all good, so that his nature is totally corrupt. And being blinded in mind, and depraved in heart, he has lost all integrity, and there is no good in him. And although he can still discern good and evil, we say, notwithstanding, that the light he has becomes darkness when he seeks for God, so that he can in nowise approach him by his intelligence and reason. And although he has a will that incites him to do this or that, yet it is altogether captive to sin, so that he has

no other liberty to do right than that which God gives him.

This article speaks for itself. We do well to bear in mind that this Gallican Confession was composed when Calvin was 50 years old, and the reformer lived only some five years beyond that. In this article we read that man's nature is totally corrupt, that he has lost all integrity, that the light he has becomes darkness when he seeks for God, so that he can in nowise approach Him by his intelligence and reason, and that he is altogether captive to sin.

Article X also speaks for itself, setting forth the result of Adam's sin for his posterity, and we quote:

We believe that all the posterity of Adam is in bondage to original sin, which is an hereditary evil and not an imitation merely, as was declared by the Pelagians, whom we detest in their errors. And we consider that it is not necessary to inquire how sin was conveyed from one man to another, for what God had given Adam was not for him alone, but for all his posterity; and thus in his person we have been deprived of all good things, and have fallen with him into a state of sin and misery.

In this article, the Confession declares that they detest the Pelagians in their errors. And the same absolute presentation of the truth we have in Article XI:

We believe, also, that this evil is truly sin, sufficient for the condemnation of the whole human race, even of little children in the mother's womb, and that God considers it as such; even after baptism it is still of the nature of sin, but the condemnation of it is abolished for the children of God, out of His mere free grace and love. And further, that it is a perversity always producing fruits of malice and of rebellion, so that the most holy men, although they resist, are still stained with many weaknesses and imperfections while they are in this life.

The Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England, A.D. 1563 and 1571, with the American Revision, 1801, devoted two articles to this subject of sin, Art. IX and X. Article IX reads as follows:

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk); but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that

the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh called in Greek the mind of the flesh (which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh), is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized (if this be a quotation of Rom. 8:1, then the undersigned, H. V., prefers the text: there is no condemnation for them which are in Christ Jesus); yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.

Also in this article, the error of Pelagianism is condemned. Article X, speaking of free will, reads as follows:

The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he can not turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength, and good works, to faith, and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, A.D. 1647, also calls attention to the subjects of sin and free will. Chapter VI speaks of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment therefore:

I. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.

II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

III. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generations.

IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

V. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself and all the motions thereof are truly and properly sin.

Also in these articles we read that man became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. And we also read that we are utterly indisposed and disabled, and wholly inclined to all evil.

This utter corruption of man certainly receives emphasis in all the articles we have quoted until now.

And the same emphasis upon man's depravity appears in Article IX of this Confession, which treats the subject of man's free will:

I. God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that is neither forced nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil.

II. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God, but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.

III. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

It is true that these articles speak of man's inability to do any spiritual good. This could conceivably leave the impression that the natural man is able to do good in the things that are civil. However, we do read that he is dead in sin, cannot do anything of himself unto his salvation, or to prepare himself thereunto.

Of interest also is what we read in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, 1647:

Question 14. What is sin?

Answer. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Ques. 15. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

Answer. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

Ques. 17. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

Ans. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Ques. 18. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

Ans. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

In question and answer 19 the Catechism calls attention to the misery into which man fell. But also in these answers we read of the corruption of man's whole nature. It is obvious from all these creeds, quoted until now, that our churches are in good company when they emphasize the truth that the natural man is wholly under the power of sin, and that he is unable to do any good in the sight of the Lord.

Studies in Depth

More Crusade Movements

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

Already we have made a rather lengthy appraisal of five articles on *the Campus Crusade for Christ* in TSB, Vol. 45, pp. 68, 89, 132, 152, 189. But since there are so many other similar organizations, some brief attention may be given them. They are not any more based on the primitive and reformed faith of the church of all ages than the one referred to above, but must be put down as based on the semi-Pelagian and Arminian philosophies. For example, this goes for the *Youth-for-Christ* movement. Billy Graham (see TSB, Vol. 42, pp. 196, 268, 319, 358, 416, 438, 451, 461 and Vol. 43, pp. 10, 66) was YFC's first full-time evangelist. The movement boasts of ushering "in a brand-new kind of evangelism." Its literature and brochures do not clearly define this "evangelism," merely stating that the evangelists "were ridiculed and criticized" because "some churches felt the men were 'going too far' in attempts to attract" crowds. Today, YFC suggests, we smile at those boisterous methods, including the zany ties, loud suits, bizarre programs, novel antics of rally leaders, and the employment of "the extravagant, the clownish, the corny, even the ridiculous." Much of this flamboyance is gone now, we are informed. Yet programs today run such things as take-offs on TV comedians. Then what is meant by "in-depth evangelism" is anybody's guess. There is frequent reference to "the Gospel" or "a Gospel" or to being "solidly Bible-based."

However, the doctrine of "the eternal security of the believer," which we would call the preservation and the perseverance of the saints, YFC regards (1) as a disputed issue, (2) and a satanic tactic to side-track Christians, because (3) it recognizes opposite (Arminian) views on the subject, (4) adopting the policy not to explain this doctrine, (5) putting "winning souls" and "delight in a wonderful Lord" above this truth, further (6) reasoning that a born again man "has great spiritual security," "whatever his position on the matter of 'eternal security.'" In answer to a request to explain this subject and furnish advice on it, YFC youth counsellor editor replied, "Satan delights in side-tracking Christians on disputed issues about the Bible. While many folk solidly behind YFC take one view on this subject, others take the opposite view. God honors most those who busy themselves on the one big issue — winning men to Christ and leading them into a life of victory over sin and growth in the knowledge of a wonderful Lord. As you study your Bible, you will find for yourself your own position on this as well as other disputed passages.

But don't make them issues. It takes a lifetime to invest oneself in the cardinal issues of the Word. Whatever his position on the matter of eternal security, the man who is genuinely born again, whose heart and life are fully yielded to the Lord, who walks openly and honestly before him every day of his life, is a man who has great spiritual security." (YFC Mag., April 1951, p. 63). What a piece of blasphemy under the garb of ultra-piety! Think of one *fully* yielded to the Lord who may nevertheless believe the falling away of the saints! Think of such a one being honest before God every day of his life! But then, too, what is there in the Bible that is not disputed? What fundamental of the faith is not made by today's ecclesiastical Babylon a mere side issue? Further, how utterly unfair, and unkind, it is to imply that insisting on this truth (where is there any *Good News* without it?) is of the devil, i.e., a satanic side-tracking of souls! Then to prate of leading young people to "a life of victory over sin!" What kind of victory is it which has no final perseverance of saints? or does not know whether there is such a thing? What kind of victory is it that possibly may turn into defeat? What is victory without security?

But that doctrine is a "side issue." God is, rather, honoring those busying themselves with the one big issue of soul-winning. This means that He more honors self-styled soul-winners who deny His great work of infallibly leading the elect to glory! Easily men fall into humanism and modernism's principle that life's greatest work is for the advancement of mankind. God honors most the seeking of the greatest good of the greatest number, regardless of Scripture truth. It is also rationalistic subjectivism which makes room for opposite, contradictory views, and which ignores the determining of what is the objective teaching and position of Holy Writ. Then to attribute the inconsistency of such contradictory views to the Holy Spirit will certainly serve to confuse the young mind, to say nothing of the more mature, when it is claimed, We are "standing fast on the facts of the Bible."

Young Life is another teen-age beamed organization. It is not a church, nor does it substitute for church, but is non-sectarian and interdenominational, "standing in the main-stream of historic Protestantism," whatever that may mean. "Doctrinal matters that should be properly left to the various churches are avoided." The movement is international in scope, being found, at least, in Germany, France, Switzerland and Brazil. It seems to be primarily a Christian social

welfare, Bible club and summer camp organization. Its goal is to bring the Christian faith to young people, to reach people with the truth about Jesus Christ, to introduce them to the Gospel. "It believes that every young person has the God-appointed right to . . . decide . . . whether or not to acknowledge . . . Jesus Christ . . ." Arminians never do explain how God gives men the *right not* to acknowledge Christ. You see how their free-willism heads them into antinomianism.

This organization has a Bible institute patterned on the seminary scheme, and requires staff members to be seminary graduates. Activities are carried on in the ghetti, holding teaching academies to educate drop-outs in secular subjects, with a view to leading them to Christ and a respectable place in society. It carries on Christian and social work among probationers. It maintains apartments in the slums for homeless young people, in order to cure them of dope, to get them back into school or into a "meaningful job." It maintains recreation centers providing remedial education, training in skills and arranging "job fairs" where employers may meet prospective employees. As with all these "crusade"-type movements, the brochures, magazines, catalogs, study booklets, teaching manuals, leadership courses and doctrinal statements reveal content, biblical position and methodology as very superficial.

Then there is the *Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship*, which is "not a club where students rush to escape the pressures of the world to be secure, safe and entertained. It is a vigorous society which sees the campus as a mission field. Every Christian student is a missionary on campus." IVCF is part of a world-wide movement, the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, and is active in evangelism and missions through the Student Foreign Mission Fellowship. There is a Christian nurses fellowship. Summer camps are maintained, which emphasize training for evangelism and Bible study. On campus, students and faculty I-Vers meet regularly for prayer and Bible study. The announced goal is to learn "to think biblically," and, "How to communicate the gospel to the secular mind." The aim is "to establish groups of Christian students in colleges, universities and schools of nursing whose purpose is to witness to the Lord Jesus Christ as

God incarnate, and to seek to lead others to a personal faith in Him as Lord and Savior; to deepen and strengthen spiritual life by Bible study, prayer and Christian fellowship; to help students discover their place in world-wide evangelization and missions." IVCF publishes a magazine, *His*, and an array of paperbacks dealing with such subjects as witnessing, Bible study, prayer, intellectual problems and sex. The movement is said to be pastors' and parents' solution to the problem of keeping in touch with their young people who have gone away to college. The I-V missionary conventions feature an interdenominational, international, interracial, non-sectarian and open communion, with the sacrament administered not by or at a church, but by some 224 I-V chapter officers, and to a convention of nearly 10,000, consisting of many denominations and all races. The thankoffering taken at such a communion may consist of gifts and pledges in the amount of \$93,000.00 for "student work overseas." The I-V basis of faith expresses belief in the inspiration of Scripture, the deity of Christ, His substitutional death, bodily resurrection, the need for regeneration and the return of the Lord. Common grace is held. Along with this is the very noticeable contention that God loves all men, and that Christ died for all men. The evangelism mentioned is the usual modern "invitational" type. The underlying philosophy of this and the other movements herein mentioned is that of freewillism. What we have said about such movements as these in the *Standard Bearer* articles referred to above applies as much to those we have just now examined. In closing, we can do no better than to quote Henry Atherton, who in 1929 said, "All systems of Theology are reduced to two outstanding principles, called *Calvinism* and *Arminianism*. Arminianism is man's religion, which can be accomplished by man. Man is the main power: with man it begins, and with man it shall perish. Calvinism is the Divine revelation. It requires the Lord for everything, acknowledging the sovereignty of God; and all its purposes and power must come from God. God elects, God redeems, God ingathers, God keeps, provides, sustains and operates according to His own purpose and wisdom, and all redound to God's grace and glory."

From Holy Writ

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Rev. G. A. Lubbers

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

There is a difference between the type and the parabolic. The type emphasizes that the Old Testament

was a shadow of things to come and pointed toward the heavenly and antitypical reality in Christ, whereas the parabolic unscored the thoughts, the revelation of God. The parabolic pointed toward the content of the things exhibited and not directly to their fulfilment. The parabolic is a means of revelation in action. It belongs to the realm of symbolic prophecy.

Perhaps it was for this reason that the writer here underscores that it was such a parabolic for the "time present." In the Greek we read here "*eis ton kairon ton enesteeikota*." Literally this reads "into the proper time (season) which is present." There are two interpretations of this phrase in question. The first is the interpretation which is given by Westcott and others. It then refers to the time of the Old Testament dispensation while the temple stood. As long as the temple stood it was a parable; it contained lessons concerning good things to come. The time present then refers to the time "pre-Christian epoch in which the unconverted Jews were still practically living." (Farrer) Says Westcott "The Levitical system then, represented by the 'first Tabernacle' is described here as a parable 'to serve for' or, perhaps to last 'as long as' the present season." It conveyed the lessons while the preparatory age continued up till the time of the change. . . As a parable (Chap. 10:19) it is regarded not so much in relation to a definite future which is directly pre-figured ('type') as in regard to its own power of teaching. The parable suggests thoughts: the typex points to a direct fulfillment." On the other hand the Dutch exegete Dr. F. W. Grosheide writes the translation of the phrase in question as follows "It was a type (*afbeelding*) in view of the present time." and then he explains the phrase in question as referring to the time of the N. T. Dispensation wherein the Hebrews now live in these last times. Grosheide does not make a distinction, evidently, between the "parabolic" and the "typical." As is evident from his translation "*afbeelding*" he takes the term "*paraboleen*" to be the same as "*tupos*." And if the term is understood thus then the type simply refers to the time of the New Testament.

It seems to me that since there is a unique thought in the interpretation which distinguished between "parable" and "type" we ought to choose for the former of the two above-given interpretations. For even when we understand the parable for the time present to refer to the Old Testament dispensation, we still have the idea of the imperfection of the type. Only we see the actions in the temple, the sacrifices and the feastday rites are one grand parable, earthly transaction of the heavenly. Such was its design and limitation!!

THE MINISTRY OF THE THREEFOLD DIVIDED TABERNACLE (Hebrews 9:2-5)

The writer to the Hebrews elaborates the fact that

there were three different rooms in the Old Testament tabernacle. And we may safely say that this parabolic arrangement ought to be noticed by us for the revelational content which is suggested and implied. This arrangement of the temple represented parabolic thoughts. Such was its very nature as is plain from the relative pronoun "*eetis*" in the text.

The threefold division of the temple was as follows. There was, first of all, the outer court where the people lived, who were Israelites but who did not belong to the priesthood. (Exodus 27:9-17) Next, there was the holy place where the priest ministered continually for the people, in the morning and evening sacrifices. Here we find the temple furniture such as the golden candle-stick, the table of shewbread, and, in the O.T., the altar of incense. The writer to the Hebrews places his altar within the vail. Perhaps he places it here whereas it is here where it ideally belongs in connection with the prayers of the saints before the throne. And, finally, there was the Most Holy Place, which symbolized the place where the Lord's glory dwelt and was revealed. Here no sinful man or angel could present himself, much less could he dwell there. This was the place where the keepers of the throne, the Cherubim hide their faces from God's glory, while they look upon the mercy-seat where the blood of atonement is sprinkled. Here is the place where the LORD'S glory dwells.

Now it ought to be observed that all Israel was a priestly people. They were a kingdom of priests. Thus we read in Exodus 19:5 "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. . ." This passage is given in amplified and expanded manner in I Peter 2:9 "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people: that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. . ." From these passages it is quite evident that Israel itself was a priesthood. We might call this priesthood: the office of all believers. Apart from this priesthood of the congregation (the people) there would be no point in the other two special, instituted priesthoods in Israel. The latter two priesthoods were there to serve the former, to wit, the priesthood of all the people.

That the priesthood was the chief element and idea of the temple and its ordinances ought to be evident from the fact that the entire temple was built around the priesthood. Everything was subservient to the service of the priests and to their ministrations in the tabernacle. When there came a change in the priesthood there also was of necessity a change in the law. A case in point is that the priesthood in the Old Testament was out of Levi-Aaron, while in the New Testament the Lord of glory is born our of David —

Judah. His is a different priesthood, and therefore a different law and ordinance applies.

In the Old Covenant in the tabernacle there were the regular priests appointed for the temple service in the Sanctuary, while in the Most Holy place, the High Priest might enter once each year on the great day of atonement. Thus everything in the temple was centered about this threefold priesthood. Yet this very arrangement suggests that there were really two walls of separation. It was a ministry in a threefold, divided tabernacle. These were not simply walls, but they were "walls of separation." They were a twofold wall which proclaimed that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been manifested. The entire temple was so "prepared" as to teach this parabolic lesson. The tabernacle was builded, constructed, erected and adorned by the LORD. And all proclaimed in this temple: HOLINESS TO THE LORD! That was the very design. The Lord's people are to be a holy people. And that which separates the people from the LORD is *their sin!* All calls for the purifying blood of reconciliation and atonement; it calls for cleansing by blood. The justice of God must be satisfied! Such was the idea which was built into the temple in every part as well as into the design of the whole.

It is for this reason that the Old Testament tabernacle is built as a pyramid, so to speak. In the outer court the congregation might worship from afar, but they might not enter into the Sanctuary. And, again, the common priests might be ministering daily, continually in the Sanctuary but they might never, never, never enter into the Most Holy Place, which symbolized the very presence of God. That was the point to be noticed. Even they, the priests, might not enter. However, the High Priest might enter into the Most Holy place, in the very presence of God, once per year, not without blood. He would bring a sacrifice for himself first of all, and then for the people. This is clearly stated in Leviticus 26. On this day all the sins of all the people, the uncleanness associated with the sins of the people as having contaminated the very tabernacle itself were all washed away, and Israel starts once more with a ceremonially clean slate.

The walls of separation continued!

The middle wall of the partition contained in ordinances stood as the end of all contradiction, as that which was settled and binding "for the time present," as long as that tabernacle stood and was maintained by the LORD of hosts! It was a divine ordinance and arrangement till the time of reformation at the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ!

THE TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE PARABOLIC TEMPLE-SYMBOLISM Hebrews 9:8, 9

The writer to the Hebrews attributes a certain presence and testimony of the Holy Ghost in the Old

Testament dispensation. And it is noteworthy that the KJV translates not "Holy Spirit" but "Holy Ghost" The writer to the Hebrews speaks of the name "Holy Ghost" in various passages. It is found in Hebrews in Chapter 2:4. Here the Holy Ghost is connected with the works of God in the church after Christ came on earth, and after His ascension into heaven. However this same Holy Ghost also is still testifying in what the Psalmist writes in Psalm 95:7-11, concerning the provocation of the Lord, and falling away from the living God through unbelief. And in Hebrews 6:4 of the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the natural enlightenment of those who live under the means of grace, yet who are not saved by the Lord and brought to the worship of the living God. And Hebrews 10:15 speaks the testimony of the Holy Ghost in Jeremiah 31:33 concerning the New Covenant which God will make in the latter days. This is the testimony not merely of Jeremiah, but it is the testimony of the Holy Ghost. Ever the writer to the Hebrews speaks of the Holy Ghost in connection with the Word of God, the Word of revelation, whether this be in the written record or whether this be in the signs which accompany the Word, or, as in our text, the pointing out of the divine meaning (*deelountes*) both of the words of Scripture and in the ordinances and arrangement of the tabernacle with its divinely arranged and instituted furnishings.

The writer to the Hebrews does not go into the details of the meaning of the furnishings of the temple. How interesting that would have been. Jewish theology and heathen philosophy is full of speculation concerning the meaning of all this. Evidently the Holy Ghost did not mean it for us to need all these details. The central truth in the parabolic message of the temple ordinances ought to come through clear and strong! That is the very nature of the parable. Such is the case with all parables. And thus also here. The one central message in the entire worship service in the O.T. tabernacle as this culminated in the feast of the great day of atonement was: the way into the Most Holy has not yet been manifested!

Such was the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the parabolic symbolism of the Old Testament tabernacle.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Board of Reformed Free Publishing Association urges all, not part, of its members to make a united effort to attend this meeting to be held in our South West Church September 25, at 8:00 P.M.

Young men, the time and need is here that you join this organization and apply those talents given you in this Kingdom work.

Board of the R.F.P.A.

News From Our Churches

August 14, 1969

South Holland received notice that Rev. C. Hanco declined the call they had extended him; Rev. Engelsma also decided against accepting Pella's bid to come over to help them.

* * *

Expressing a need for much volunteer help, a notice in Loveland's bulletin was a plea for typewriters (machine and human) to prepare some 1000 address labels, and to fold and stamp the pamphlets that the church extension committee was to mail for distribution in the city of Loveland. What is the subject of that pamphlet? "*The Christian School-why?*"

* * *

Excerpt from the Principal's Report in a Newsletter from our Covenant Chr. High School:

"Several new courses will be added to the curriculum next year. They include physics, shorthand, electronics, advanced composition, medieval church history, English literature, economics, government, modern world history, and an additional semester of world geography. The teachers and I are busy on these courses. Mrs. A. Quenga is learning shorthand and gathering material for the composition course. Miss Lubbers is busy researching medieval church history and English literature. Mr. Langerak is evaluating text books and seeking advice from experts in the field of social studies. I am working on equipment and notes for the electronics course." From that description one would conclude that Mrs. Quenga is hoping to keep a squiggle ahead of her pupils as her fellow staff members keep a step ahead!

* * *

Young People Hold Pre-convention Hymnsing In First Church Sunday Evening, Aug. 10! According to remarks heard, this was the best singspiration yet! Kalamazoo's congregation scheduled their evening service for 6:30 so that some of their people might join the throng in First's auditorium. Ed Ophof led the spirited singing. The Kregel sisters played a stirring piano-organ duet entitled, "The Heavens are Telling", — indeed, it was literally breath-taking! Mr. Gerald Kuiper sang his own arrangement — a medley of two songs, "My Heavenly Father Watches Over You", and, "It Is Well With My Soul," beautifully rendered in his clear tenor voice so every word might be understood! Miss Patricia Kamps read one of the late Rev. H. Hoeksema's meditations from a 1943 *Standard Bearer* on the prayer, "Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes; and I will keep it to the end." Ken Kuiper gave a resume of the planned activities awaiting them; trips to the mountains, to Hidden Valley, to the

Ocean, to Disneyland; and discussions on Dating, The Generation Gap, Christians in Politics and Christian Witnessing. The songs chosen for the singspiration included, "The Love of God", "Great is Thy Faithfulness", "Standing on the Promises", and several appropriate Psaltar numbers. Jim Lanting led in opening devotions and Rev. Van Baren closed the meeting with prayer, after having addressed the "jet-set" giving them some wholesome advice concerning their behavior while at the convention. We oldsters only hope that the young folk surpass us in evaluating the spiritual aspect of the convention more highly than the physical.

* * *

Our first Jamaica missionary-elect felt constrained to decline the call for him to work on that Island. Rev. Heys' statement was to the effect that he believed it was not the Lord's will that he accept the post at this time.

* * *

Understandably, little trouble was experienced in our Michigan churches during this summer's vacation time in filling our pulpits with ministers. This was accomplished by multiple-trades between Classical appointees and vacationing(?) ministers, and by rearranging the time of services. *Understandably* because of the heartwarming co-operation among our clergy revealing the same "love of the saints" as was manifested between the Apostle Paul and his fellow workers.

* * *

In a notice found in the newest Kalamazoo's bulletin we learned for the first time that Rev. C. Hanco has written an officially published tract on, "What Is Truly Reformed." This is purported to explain briefly what the Reformed faith is. If the purpose of this latest publication is that these be "handed out" then it might be well that our children and young people be the first recipients thereof. In this day of "Reformed" labeling of everything connected with the activities of the churches of the Reformation it is urgently necessary that we and our children be keenly aware of the true character of the *Reformed Faith!*

* * *

Newly arrived at the manse in Loveland, Colo., an infant son born to Rev. and Mrs. Engelsma.

* * *

Church, a word whose letters suggest a timely motto today: Conscientiously *Hold Up Reformed Church Heritage*. . . .see you in church. J.M.F.