

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

Meditation:

Walking By The Spirit

Editorial:

Pluralistic or Antithetical?

Differing Views on the W.C.C.

(see: Examining Ecumenicalism)

Luther and Calvin on Missions

(see: The Lord Gave the Word)

CONTENTS:

Meditation —	
Walking By The Spirit	386
Editorial —	
Our Schools and Government Subsidy (6) . . .	388
Publication News —	
“Behold, He Cometh!”	391
The Lord Gave The Word —	
The History of Missions . . .	
The Views of Luther and Calvin	392
In His Fear —	
Wisdom That Excels	394
A Cloud of Witnesses —	
The Flight of David	396
Studies in Depth —	
The Waldensian Movement	399
Examining Ecumenicalism —	
Differing Views on the W.C.C.	401
From Holy Writ —	
The Book of Hebrews	403
Contending for the Faith —	
The Doctrine of Sin	405
Church News	408

THE STANDARD BEARER

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July and August.

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.
Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

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

Editorial Policy: Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of his own articles. Contributions of general interest from our readers and questions for the Question-Box Department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be neatly written or typewritten. Copy deadlines are the first and the fifteenth of the month. All communications relative to the contents should be sent to the editorial office.

Business Office: The Standard Bearer,
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.
P.O. Box 6064
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$7.00 per year. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

Advertising Policy: The *Standard Bearer* does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$3.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business Office and should be accompanied by the \$3.00 fee. Deadline for announcements is the 5th or the 20th of the month, previous to publication on the 15th or the 1st respectively.

Bound Volumes: The Business Office will accept standing orders for bound copies of the current volume; such orders are filled as soon as possible after completion of a volume. A limited number of past volumes may be obtained through the Business Office.

Meditation

Walking By The Spirit

Rev. M. Schipper

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

Galatians 5: 25.

Walk in the Spirit!

The Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The Spirit of Pentecost!

Pentecost, as you most probably know, has reference to that marvelous experience of the early, new dispensational church when the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, was poured out in the church which is in heaven and on earth. It refers to the little

understood and now almost wholly forgotten fact which Christ promised would be fulfilled in His church as she waited in the upper room, when, according to the prayer of Christ, the Father would send the Comforter, “that He may abide with you forever.”

The idea of Pentecost, however, is not peculiar only to the new day. Already in the old dispensation Pentecost constituted one of the three major feast

days. Along with the feasts of the Passover and Tabernacles the church of the Old Testament also celebrated the feast of Pentecost. Always Pentecost was observed seven complete weeks or fifty days after the feast of Passover. It was sometimes called also the feast of harvest, and the day of first fruits.

In the new dispensation Pentecost falls on the fiftieth day after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. On that day the Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Promise, the Blessed Comforter, Who would lead the church into all the truth, and abide with her forever, was poured out. Poured out on the church—not that which was assembled in the temple, where the rent veil had been repaired and the sacrifices according to the law were being offered—but that which was assembled in the upper room, where a hundred and twenty were gathered with the disciples according to the commandment of Christ, where, said He, they were to wait for the promise of the Father.

Pentecost—when the Holy Spirit made His strange but wonderful appearance as with a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind; and as with cloven tongues like as of fire, resting upon each of them gathered there. With the result, that they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. The Spirit which now dwells in the church, and whose work it is to apply to the church all the graces of salvation merited by the perfect obedience of Christ. The Spirit which is given to the Mediator in His exaltation without measure, so that as the Head of the body He is filled. Thus He is equipped and qualified to function as Head to give to the church all His benefits. Given in turn by Christ to the church, not only on earth, but also in heaven, according to which He blesses her with all spiritual blessings of true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and Who works in the believers the fruits of grace — regenerating them, and shedding abroad in them the love of Christ, and filling their hearts with joy and peace, and all other Christian virtues, mentioned by the apostle in the context, such as, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

It is by and according to that Spirit we are exhorted to walk!

Such is the meaning of the text! The Revised Standard Version is much more correct than the King James. The former has: "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." The latter, as stated above, has "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

We are not to understand the Holy Spirit as being the sphere wherein the church is to walk, as the expression "walk in the Spirit" would seem to imply. Nor is the Holland translation which has: "zoo laat ons ook door den Geest wandelen" i.e., "so let us also walk through the Spirit," the idea of the text, which

suggests that the Spirit is the means through which we are to walk. Rather, we could paraphrase thus to see the meaning of the text: "Let us also walk the line which the Spirit has laid." Accordingly the Spirit is first. He maps out for us the way we should walk. He lays down the standard or norm for our whole life and walk.

It is the calling of the church to heed this standard. She is to fashion her walk according to it. Thus to be orderly, not confused, not mixed, not double, in all her conversation. And this standard of the Spirit can be nothing more or less than the mind and will of Christ. We must not forget that the Spirit here is the Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit therefore will have us do nothing but the will and mind of Christ.

Walking by the Spirit!

Already in verse 16 the apostle had given exhortation as to our walk, when he wrote: "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." Also here the original has: not, "walk in the Spirit," but, "walk by the Spirit." However, the word "walk" has a different connotation than the word in our text. In verse 16 the term means literally: to walk about, and refers to one's outward conversation and manifestation in general, without any specific direction. It simply looks at the matter of one's walk without any special specifications. The word in our text, on the other hand, means literally: to proceed in a row, go in order; hence, to direct one's life. It implies negatively that our walk is not to be careless, without direction; and positively, that it is to be regulated by a certain standard or norm. A good illustration of this we have in the military, where soldiers under the direction of a sergeant are drilled to walk, not aimlessly and helter-skelter, but according to command.

Such is indeed the meaning of the exhortation in our text!

The church is to fashion her walk after the Spirit!

But why is this necessary? Why must this needs be done?

The apostle answers to this in the first part of our text.

If we live by the Spirit!

Not, you must understand, does the apostle here introduce the element of doubt, as the translation might imply. It is not his intention to leave the matter open, so that accordingly we may or we may not live by the Spirit. This is not a question at all in the mind of the apostle. Fact of the matter is the very opposite is true. Again, we could paraphrase the first part of our text thus to get the proper meaning: "Since we are living by the Spirit," or, "Seeing that we do live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." The apostle is emphasizing the truth that the Spirit of Christ is the very principle of our life. O, it is true, as the words "live in the Spirit" would imply, that the Spirit is the

living sphere of our life; the sphere in which we live. But this is not particularly what the apostle has in mind. Rather, the Word of God here underlines the principle of our new life. Christ is the source of our life. By the Spirit Christ lives in us. Thus we live by the Spirit of Christ. By the Spirit we are constantly adapted to the conditions of the spiritual life of Christ. Life in this sense of the word is the constant adaptation to and appropriating of the Christ and all His benefits. This is life!

Hence, our walk must conform to this principle!

Not to conform, constitutes a contradiction!

If our walk is contrary to the Spirit, it is dishonest!

It is against this dishonesty that the apostle Peter warns (I Peter 2:12), when he says: "Having your conversation honest among the gentiles." Practice what you profess, or you prove to be dishonest.

Surely the life of the Spirit is to do the things of Christ. So also the church and the individual believer must do the things of the Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ.

And conformation in walk proves the Spirit is indwelling!

They who walk in darkness show plainly they are possessed of another spirit, the spirit of the lie and of darkness. They walk according to the principle that is in them. But they who are born of the Spirit will live out of and according to the Spirit.

And what the Spirit works in, He also works out! Not so, that we become mere stocks and blocks. Such is the charge often raised against those who believe and profess that all of our salvation is of God. They say that when we maintain that all is of God and nothing of man, that we make man an automaton, a robot, or a puppet in the hands of God, and we deny thereby the responsibility of man. But how wrong is this charge. The elect and regenerated sinner is not a mere puppet, but he is a new creation in whom Christ's Spirit has established His throne, and so governs him that he lives subjectively and consciously according to His will and word. If we may revert once more to that

illustration of the military: who would ever conceive of a company of men being drilled by a sergeant as a mere puppet show? Anyone who has ever served in the military knows that those men on the field are not mere robots, but living, in-the-flesh men, who willingly or unwillingly, but nevertheless most consciously are marching according to orders. So it is also with the Christian who lives by the Spirit, by the Spirit he also walks. The trouble with those who come with the 'stock and block' accusation is that they want to deny the sovereignty of God in the matter of our salvation. And frankly they do not understand either what true responsibility is. As the word literally implies, it refers to the ability to respond. Applied to the subject at hand, it implies that those who live by the Spirit have also the ability to respond subjectively to the working of the Spirit in such a way that they walk by the Spirit.

And how blessed it is so to live and so to walk!

Then what the apostle writes in the preceding context is also true.

Then they that are Christ's will have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (verse 24). Then the works of the flesh will not be performed (verses 19-21); such as, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: for they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Being led by the Spirit we shall experience the fruit of the Spirit in our lives: such as, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law.

Blessed fruit we experience now in principle, and presently in heavenly perfection in glory! That is, this is our experience when we live out of the principle of the Spirit of life, and practice the walking by the Spirit in our daily life.

Editorials

Our Schools and Government Subsidy (6)

Pluralistic or Antithetical?

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

The aspect of "parochiaid" which I am about to discuss, as well as the position which I will set forth in connection with it, could well have been considered under the previous question which I raised, namely, "Justice or Money?" However, because the argument of a so-called "pluralistic society" is raised so fre-

quently by advocates of government subsidy, and because this argument has the appearance of logic, and because it is an argument fundamental (at least in their own thinking) to the entire position of "parochiaid" advocates, I am devoting special consideration to this question.

A few introductory remarks are in order.

In the first place, we may note that this argument is employed by many advocates of government subsidy to non-public schools, not so much by legislative supporters of such subsidy. The latter usually argue on the pragmatic basis that non-public schools are in danger of closing because of financial troubles and that it is cheaper to give money to private schools than to spend hundreds of millions of dollars in expanding the public schools so as to absorb a threatened large influx of pupils from private schools. And they argue, further, that "non-public schools serve a very valid public purpose and make a real contribution to the general welfare." Now also in the latter idea there are principles of education involved, principles which one has to accept if he accepts any government hand-out. And I expect to return to this matter of the fundamental view of education involved in "parochialism" at a later date. However, in the "Report and Recommendations of the Joint Legislative Committee on Aid to Non-Public Schools" of the Michigan Legislature one does not find this argument of a pluralistic society. It is employed rather by private school advocates of government subsidy, especially, I have noticed, by spokesmen of the organization known as Citizens for Educational Freedom, but also by others. These spokesmen have used this argument in their pleas to the government as well as in their pleas for public support of their drive for government subsidy. And they have made it plain on more than one occasion that this "pluralism" argument belongs to the very foundation of the entire "parochialism" position, — even to the point that some legislators have become afraid (and justly so) that ultimately the principle of "parochialism" will mean that private schools will have to receive equal government money with public schools.

In the second place, I want to point out that the basic question in this pluralism-argument concerns the view of society involved in it. If you accept the view of society involved, then you must needs come to the conclusion that government subsidy of private schools (proceeding now on the basis that the government is rightly involved in the business of education) is not only allowable, but *mandatory*. And therefore it is necessary that we carefully study this pluralistic view of society; and I mean study it in the light of Scripture and our Reformed principles. One can also indeed ask the question whether historically and constitutionally our state and our nation recognize such a pluralism.

But the fundamental question for us as Reformed people is a spiritual one. I cannot stress this too strongly. This is the sole question for us as people of God: is it right for us, before God, to advocate and to accept government subsidy of our schools? The question is not whether it is constitutional, or whether the legislature thinks it is right, or whether the courts approve it, or whether such subsidy will be made

available to us, or whether all other Christian schools are going to accept it, or even whether the refusal to accept it will involve us in financial sacrifice and make it very difficult to operate our schools. The only question is: is it right before God? This is the sole question with respect to this pluralism-argument also. Is this view that society is pluralistic the right view, — right spiritually, right from a Reformed viewpoint? Then the question does not become one of a pluralistic versus a non-pluralistic society, or of a pluralistic versus a monolithic society and educational system. But the underlying question in all this talk about a pluralistic society is whether or not we are being blinded to the real character of society. Are we in this description of society as pluralistic being led to consider society merely from a formal point of view, from a purely secular point of view, from the point of view of what are really accidental characteristics, rather than from the point of view of its essential, spiritual character? For this reason I am discussing this subject under the question, "Pluralistic or Antithetical?"

The Pluralistic View

Before we formulate an answer to the question posed, it is necessary to take a look at this view which holds that we live in a pluralistic society. What is this view? And it is but fair that we allow its advocates to speak for themselves.

One who holds to this pluralistic view of society is Dr. John Vanden Berg, vice president and dean of Calvin College. As an advocate of government subsidy for non-public schools, he prepared a statement for the record in connection with a public hearing by the Joint Legislative Committee on Aid to Non-Public Schools in Michigan. This statement was published in the *Banner* of Feb. 28, 1969. After arguing (correctly, but incompletely) that no education is neutral, that all education establishes "some position relative to the significance of God," he continues by arguing that "Given the compulsory and religious nature of education, I believe that an equitable sharing of the educational tax dollar is to be defended on the grounds that it will promote freedom of choice in education and in the process strengthen the cause of freedom in all phases of social life." This idea of freedom he then proceeds to press in connection with the point that the society in which we live is pluralistic. He writes as follows:

In the field of education freedom is the opportunity to teach our children in a way consistent with our ideals and values. In our society, a pluralistic society of some two hundred million people, citizens have different ideals or values to which they are committed. It is inconceivable that these two hundred million people or the more than eight million people in the State of Michigan will all have the same views on education. Because of this it is essential that the

independent or non-public school exist; for freedom requires alternatives from which to choose, including the alternative which is consistent with one's own commitment. A person who has no choice is not free. Public education is a free choice only if alternative choices are available, and only if these choices are available without economic penalty. Such freedom does not exist in the United States today.

In 1925 the United States Supreme Court stated in the *Pierce* case that "the fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations."

Parents have the right to send their children to religiously-oriented schools, yet when they exercise this right they are deprived of all public educational benefits ("benefits" is used here in the sense of "funds," HCH). Professor Wilber G. Katz put it bluntly but correctly when he said that "we exact a price for the exercise of liberty."

Liberty at a price — this is not liberty. This is the suppression of liberty. A genuinely free society cannot impose on its citizens or demand from them, as a condition for receiving the benefits of public welfare legislation, any philosophic or religious creed. To do so would be to ask one to violate his conscience and religious convictions. It also places the government in a position to control the thought and belief of the people. Senator James Gray was absolutely right when at the August 21 hearing of this committee in Lansing he stated, "The power to educate is the power to control." This is precisely the issue. Who is going to be given the power to control? Is this to be the monopoly of the state or is it to be given to the parents who, in my judgment, have the prior right and duty to control the education of their children? Today parents are being deprived of their right to control the education of their children through the economic coercion of the state. For, to paraphrase Justice Hugo Black, "When the power, prestige, and financial support of the government are placed exclusively behind (one philosophy of education) the economic coercion" on all other philosophies of education is plain. In the field of education the government, in effect says: "Give up your notions that God is important in education, or forfeit your rights to the educational tax dollar."

All of this is spelled out a little more clearly and concretely in a "Testimony On Equity In Educational Aid" by the Christian Action Group of Western Michigan (Is this a branch of the Christian Action Foundation?). This statement appears in *Torch and Trumpet*, April, 1969, p. 11. In it we find the following:

We would remind our government, however, that full freedom and equality in education do not yet

exist in fact. This problem has been intensified because American society today is both complex and religiously pluralistic. Social complexity has created the need for upgrading and extending compulsory education laws. At the same time, religious pluralism was increasing in both scope and intensity. As a result of these and other factors, the *one and only system* of education presently supported by government is required by Supreme Court decisions to aim at complete religious neutrality. We question whether education can ever be completely and consistently neutral in its religious values and commitments (only question it? HCH). But it is not our purpose to discuss this point in this statement. For what is absolutely certain is that schools which are required by law to attempt complete religious neutrality are compatible with the religious faith of *only some* groups of American citizens. Other groups of equally loyal citizens, although they accept and support compulsory education laws as legitimate and necessary, nevertheless cannot commit their children to such schools without denying some of the basic tenets of their religious faith. Such groups of citizens, be they Buddhist, Moslem, Jewish, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, or of some other faith, face a cruel and inequitable dilemma in education today. They must either suffer financial disability in paying the full cost of religiously acceptable education for their own children, or violate their religion and conscience by sending their children to schools which are required by law to aim at complete religious neutrality. This arrangement surely constitutes significant social injustice, and seems also to infringe upon constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religion.

The request which follows upon the above statement of position as a conclusion is as follows:

We request, therefore, immediate action by government to ameliorate the present inequities and injustices in education. We ask that quality education be provided on an equitable basis for citizens of *all* races, religions, and social classes. We reemphasize that legislation to achieve this goal must provide maximum freedom of religion in education and equality of educational opportunity for *all* groups of citizens.

This conclusion is then explained to mean that public schools and religiously oriented schools must be put on equal footing by the government and must have the same rights and opportunities. Strangely enough, however, in the last paragraph of their statement they do not press for government action to provide equal treatment, but what they call "greater equity." Now I do not profess to know what "greater equity" might be. To me, equity is equity; and it is a contradiction in terms to speak of degrees of equity. But it appears that this Christian Action Group of Western Michigan means not to press for equality of government support, but only for partial support.

One more brief quotation. This is from an article by

Gordon Oosterman, of the National Union of Christian Schools; and it is quoted from *Christianity Today*, March 28, 1969, p. 7.

The substance of the matter (tax funds for religious education, HCH) is whether our society wishes to have a monolithic system of education, akin to the established church of bygone centuries, or a pluralistic system, as we now have with our churches and press. . . . But when it comes to schools, well, that is different. Everyone gets taxed, but only those whose children attend the public — that is, the state — schools may benefit from their own educational taxes. Like the Dissenters, Baptists, and

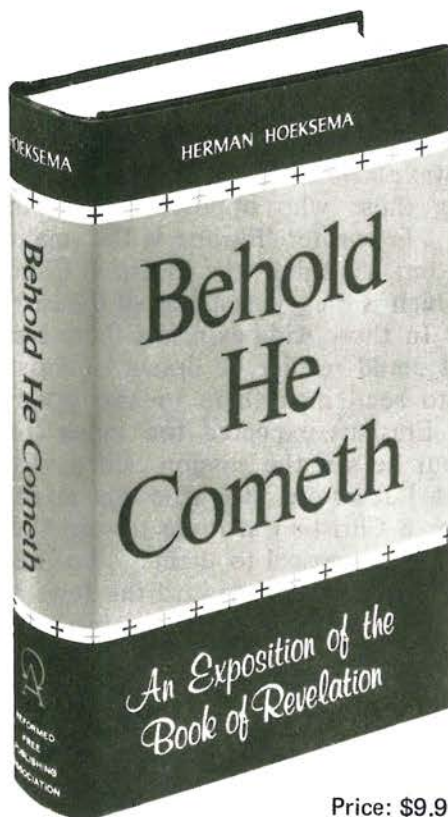
Covenanters of a former time, taxpayers have the choice of identifying with the favored established institution or making the best of their lot.

Space does not permit an analysis of these statements in this issue. But let me suggest that the reader study these quotations for himself. Analyze them. Take note of the fact that the antithesis receives no mention, even when the opportunity to mention it is very obvious. And ask yourself the question: where are the lines of light versus darkness drawn in these statements?

(to be continued)

Publication News

"Behold, He Cometh!"



Price: \$9.95
Order from:

Reformed Free Publishing Association
P.O. Box 2006
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501

By the time these lines appear in print our latest publishing venture, the late Rev. Herman Hoeksema's exposition of the Book of Revelation, "Behold, He Cometh!" will have reached the market. If you are not one of the 435 people who took advantage of the prepublication sale, we urge you to purchase this worthwhile and attractively published book at its

regular price of \$9.95. The 726 pages of this volume are well worth the price.

The R.F.P.A. — Permanent Publications Committee is happy to announce that advance sales of this latest book have enabled us to recover enough of our investment to embark on two new publishing ventures. The first is scheduled for early-fall publication. It will be a popular-style biography of the late Rev. Herman Hoeksema under the title, "Therefore Have I Spoken," by Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema. This book will be attractively printed on high quality paper, and it will be furnished with 35-40 pictures dating all the way back to Rev. Hoeksema's childhood days in the Netherlands. Tentative price of this book will be \$5.95. Watch for further announcements.

Our second new venture will be a reprint of Rev. Hoeksema's exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism. Earlier plans had called for a 1-volume reprint of this original 10-volume work; but this proved to be impractical and prohibitive in cost. We now plan to reprint this work in 3 volumes. The first new volume, scheduled for publication as soon as all arrangements and editorial work can be completed, will include the original Volumes 1, 2, and 3. This will be followed as soon as possible by the second volume, containing the original Volumes 4, 5, 6, and 7, and by the third volume, containing the original Volumes 8, 9, 10. Each of the three new volumes will have approximately 700 pages. Details as to price and publication date will be announced later.

We take this opportunity to say "Thanks" to all who assisted with the pre-publication sale of our newest book. A word of appreciation is also due to Mr. Robert L. Kregel, of Kregel Publications, who rendered invaluable assistance and advice in this venture and who is also acting as distributor of both "Reformed Dogmatics" and "Behold, He Cometh!" HCH

The Lord Gave The Word . . .

The History of Missions

The Views of Luther and Calvin

Rev. R. Decker

It has often been alleged that the Reformers, particularly Luther and Calvin, had little interest in and, in fact, no understanding of the mission mandate of Christ to His Church. An example of this thinking is found in the book, *De Geschiedenis Van De Zending*, by a certain Ds. H. A. Wiersinga. This same charge has been leveled repeatedly at the Protestant Reformed Churches. We have been labeled as "non-mission-minded." We want to quote Wiersinga at length and then examine the writings of the Reformers to determine whether what Wiersinga says is true. It is our contention that he grossly misrepresents the Reformers, does them an injustice. We believe that the Reformers had a keen interest in missions and a Scriptural view of the Church's calling. We also believe that the Protestant Reformed Churches stand squarely in the line of the Reformation when they say: "We believe that this missionary activity includes the work of church extension, and church reformation, as well as the task of carrying out the Gospel to the unchurched and heathen. However, we are convinced that our present duty lies primarily in the field of church extension and church reformation." (Church Order of the Prot. Ref. Churches, 1961 edition, p. 43)

This is what Wiersinga says (translation by Rev. C. Hanko): "Luther and Calvin did not clearly recognize the mission calling of the church. They failed to see almost entirely that Christ's church is a mission church, and therefore must be. Luther never escaped completely the idea of the Roman Catholic Church that the mission calling was laid by Christ only on the apostles. He proceeded from the assumption that the apostles had carried out that mandate in principle. The nations had heard from them the Gospel and had chosen for or against. Since that time the world consists of Christian nations and hardened peoples. The mandate of Matthew 28 does not apply to the church anymore, was not a mission commission. There is no demand to go out for the very purpose of bringing the Gospel to outlying nations. Those heathen that still come to repentance and salvation are the ripples that follow from the great wave of mission performed by the apostles, like ripples that appear when a stone is cast into the water. 'Many imagine,' he says (Luther-R.D.), 'that the ingathering of the other sheep from the other fold has not yet happened, but I say: No, it has happened in the apostolic times.' (Wiersinga does not give us the

reference to Luther's writings so we have no way of checking this statement in its context.)

"Sending out missionaries to non-christian nations was ruled out by Luther. Only when someone should happen to come into contact with a pagan or a Mohammedan was it proper to let him hear the Gospel. Even in 1651 the theological faculty of Wittenberg expressed that the great commission was addressed only to the apostles.

"Luther's attitude was influenced by his reaction to Rome in the fear that too much emphasis would fall on the work of man. Overagainst the Roman Catholic idea that everything depended on the effort of man, Luther emphasized that God will see to it that those who must be gathered in will be brought in. Mission endeavor was above all God's work.

"Among those who opposed Luther in this was Erasmus . . . he wrote: 'Europe is the smallest part of the globe, but what does the Christian Church possess in Asia, which is the greatest part of the earth, or what in Africa? In those wide expanses there are barbarian tribes that could readily be drawn to christendom, if we were to send men there to sow good seed.' . . . Certainly Erasmus expected too much from human activity, but he saw the mission calling of the church better than Luther did. It is true that in 1523 Luther pleaded for a Christian attitude toward the Jews and for preaching the gospel to them . . . but he later took quite a different attitude toward the Jews and poured out some pretty strong invectives against them . . .

" . . . Calvin, even as Luther, was of the opinion that the mandate of Matthew 28 was principally carried out by the apostles. He considered it a moot question whether God would still call someone to the mission field . . . And even though he laid more emphasis on the fact that we must wait for God to give an open door, more than Luther, he did not consider it the specific calling of the church to carry out mission work in heathen lands.

"Both of these reformers failed to understand that the promise of Matthew 28:20: 'And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world,' belongs with the mission mandate, and is inseparably united with it. Then they would have seen that not only the promise but also the mandate is 'unto the end of the world.' They regarded this passage as a conclusion to the entire Gospel according to Matthew, rather than the promise of the ascending Lord that He would

remain with His church even until He comes again. Thus not so much as a promise for the mission church.

"How different the churches of the reformation would have been if their organizers, Luther and Calvin, had understood the Word of God better in this respect. These churches would have been mission churches from the outset. That even now so many Lutheran and Reformed churches have so little zeal for mission endeavor today is the result of the attitude of the reformers. (Does not this unwarranted and unfounded charge make one bristle with indignation? R.D.)

"... Many arguments have been raised to try to defend the stand of the reformers. Mainly:

1. How could the protestants do mission work when the mission fields were closed to them? These countries, namely America, Asia were under the control of the Roman Catholics of Spain and Portugal. To go out into these lands meant gaining permission from Lisbon, and this was not given to a non-Catholic. There could only be an attempt at mission work by the protestants after 1600 when England and the Netherlands gained control of many colonies. In answer to this, let it be said that it is not a question of whether it was possible to perform mission work by the protestants, it is a question of whether they had zeal for it.

2. The reformers were much too busy with the work of the reformation in the churches of Europe to be engaged in mission endeavors elsewhere. All attention and effort had to be focused on the establishment of the purified church life. The reformers were entirely absorbed in that work. Again the same objection holds, did they see their calling? (A remark by Werner Elert, in *The Structure of Lutheranism*, p. 385 is to the point: 'The poor man! — Luther — Instead of founding a missionary society, accompanying Cortez to Mexico, or at least assuring himself a professorship of missionary science he devoted himself, of all things, to the reformation of the church!')

3. Our conclusion must be that the century of the reformation did not much more than put forth a very meager effort toward mission endeavor, while the Catholic church was working very hard at that time. The idea of missions hardly troubled the church at that time. There was not real interest."

Does this serious charge stand in the light of what the reformers themselves said? Let's see. What did Luther say about mission work? It must be understood that if we search for a well-worked out theology of missions in the writings of either of the great reformers we are going to be disappointed. They simply didn't address themselves to that question as such. But we can glean various statements from their voluminous works which indicate how they stood on the question. All of our quotations from Luther are taken from the book *The Structure of Lutheranism* by Elert which quotes from the Weimar edition of *Luther's Works* and hereafter only page references will be cited. This is

what Luther concluded from Col. 1:23 and Mark 16:15 and Psalm 117: "the Gospel and Baptism must traverse the whole world." p. 386. And from Hagg. 2 he concluded: "God wants to bless not two or three nations but the whole world." p. 386. When Luther sometimes speaks as though the Gospel had already fulfilled its mission in all nations — as Wiersinga notes — it doesn't mean that he had no understanding of the idea of missions. This for Luther was the simple conclusion to be drawn from the universal validity of the Gospel. Luther believed that if the Gospel is preached at all it is preached for all nations. The course of the Gospel to all nations is an act in progress in Luther's conception, "The Kingdom of Christ passes through the whole world." p. 387. Did he really believe that the mission mandate was intended only for the apostles and carried out by them alone? Listen: "The preaching of the Gospel *was begun* (emphasis mine, R.D.) through the apostles and continues, and is carried farther through the preachers here and there in the world, is driven out and persecuted; yet it is made known farther and farther to those who have never heard it before.... Or, as the saying goes, when someone sends out a message, the message has gone out, even though it has not yet come to the intended place or the specified location but is still under way." p. 387. And again he says: "For the church is in constant use to convert others to faith and to call them to repentance." p. 388. Luther believed that the Gospel even against those who do not want to hear it, "For the Lord does not want a flatterer as a preacher, since He does not say: 'Go around the village or past it' No, do not go around or past; go in; approach them boldly, and tell them what they do not want to hear." p. 388. In this same connection concerning preaching to the heathen Luther states: "This has not yet been done. This time is in progress, inasmuch as the servants are going into the highways; *the apostles made a beginning* (emphasis mine, R.D.) and are still calling us together." p. 389. In other words in Luther's thinking the apostolic mission to the heathen (Matt. 28:19, 20) is continuing in us today. Luther thought of this in very practical terms as a duty and obligation of every child of God. "Christians should also bring forth much fruit among all the heathen by means of the Word, should convert and save many by eating about themselves like a fire that burns amid dry wood or straw; thus the fire of the Holy Spirit should consume the heathen according to the flesh and make room everywhere for the Gospel and the kingdom of Christ." p. 389.

In addition Luther had a very high regard for missionaries and the mission calling of the church as is evident from these words: "Thus it is the best work of all that the heathen have been led out of idolatry to the knowledge of God."

And finally Luther was aware of the fundamental

importance of the preaching and of the fact that not societies or individuals but the church does mission work: "For if all the heathen are to praise God, it must first be established that He has become their God. If He is to be their God, they must know Him and believe in Him If they are to believe, they must first hear His Word If they are to hear His Word, preachers who proclaim God's Word to them must be sent to them." p. 390.

Admittedly one finds very little in the writings of Calvin that bears on this subject. This is not at all strange. There are many subjects that Calvin never dealt with. Calvin says virtually nothing in all his books on the second coming of Christ. Does that mean that he didn't believe it or understand it? Nonsense! The same applies to the idea of missions. Just because Calvin says nothing specific on the subject doesn't mean he had no understanding of the mission mandate of the church as Wiersinga so unjustly claims.

When we consult his commentary on Matthew 28:19, 20 we find that Calvin nowhere suggests that he felt that the mandate was given only to the apostles and finished by them so that the church no longer has the calling to do mission work. In fact, that Calvin had a correct understanding of the significance of the promise of verse 20 (contrary to Wiersinga's charge) is plain from these words in his commentary: "It ought to be likewise remarked, that this (the promise, "even to the end of the world") *was not spoken to the apostles alone*; (emphasis mine, R.D.) for the Lord promises his assistance not for a single age only, but *even to the end of the world* (Calvin's emphasis). It is as if he had said, that though the ministers of the gospel be weak and suffer the want of all things, (note, not just the apostles but the ministers of the gospel, R.D.) he will be their guardian, so that they will rise victorious over all the opposition of the world. In like manner, experience clearly shows in the present day, that the operations of Christ are carried on wonderfully in a secret manner, so that the Gospel surmounts innumerable obstacles."

Now it is true that not one of the above statements of Luther and Calvin contains a theology of missions, not even all of them taken together. But it ought to be equally plain that they indicate exactly the opposite of what Ds. Wiersinga suggests. Luther and Calvin certainly were aware of the mission mandate of Christ and believed in it, taught it. It simply cannot be said of them that they had no interest in or understanding of the church's calling in this respect.

Why then were virtually no missionaries sent out in those days of the 1500's? Simply because the church at that time was in no position to do so! That ought to be plain. This was the period of upheaval and turmoil. God was calling His Church back to the firm foundation of His Word through Luther and Calvin and the other reformers. The church was being freed from the oppressive chains of Rome and the pope. There was no time, no opportunity to do mission work in the sense that it is being done today. The front line of the battle of faith in the sixteenth century lay between the reformers and Rome, not on some far distant mission field. After the church settled upon calmer times she turned her attention to carrying out the mission mandate of Christ. This was especially true in the 18th century as Rev. Hanko will no doubt show us in subsequent articles.

Finally, we quite agree with the remark of Conrad Bergendoff, "The charge sometimes made that . . . the church of the reformation showed no interest in missions is no longer considered valid, for the reformation itself was a tremendous mission effort opposed by formidable forces." (*The Church of the Lutheran Reformation*, p. 187.) It should never be forgotten that the Reformation of the Church continues even to the end of the world. And, when the Protestant Reformed Churches say: "We believe that this missionary activity includes the work of church extension, and church reformation . . .", (preamble, Constitution of Mission Committee) they are only asserting anew a soundly Reformed truth in the spirit of Luther and Calvin.

In His Fear

WISDOM THAT EXCELS

(Continued)

Rev. John A. Heys

Your little believing children have more understanding than the most learned of the unbelieving philosophers and professors, scientists and educators.

We have the Word of God as the basis for this truth. For the psalmist, a believing child of God, declares, "I

have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation." Psalm 119:99. And as we pointed out last time, he is speaking here of unbelieving teachers who are enemies, for they do not meditate in God's testimonies, nor keep His precepts.

In considering this wisdom, wherein even our little children excel, we may, first of all, retain that word, "more." It is quite proper to translate it that way. The unbeliever has certain natural knowledge and understanding. The believer has an added knowledge and understanding. Because of his world-and-life view the believer does not always search the areas that the unbeliever will explore. He, the believer, has his affections set on the things above and seeks the things where Christ is seated at God's right hand. The unbeliever, however, has nothing but this life and this earth. He has only its gold and silver, houses and land; and he has these for such a short time. He, therefore, must try to get as much out of them as he can and strive in as many ways as he possibly can to squeeze out of them a few fleeting and deceiving pleasures. He will, then, explore all creation with a vehemence not known to the Christian and with a sense of desperation from which the believer is free.

Nevertheless, the believer, because He knows and loves God and knows himself as God's royal priesthood and steward, will seek to serve God with all this earthly creation, and will learn many truths. He will not close his ears either to the facts of creation which the unbeliever may have discovered. The psalmist of our text quoted above did not cast from him all that which his unbelieving teachers had shown him. And we do not shut our ears to the reports of the ungodly about their achievements and discoveries. We listen carefully and analyze the knowledge of outer space that is reported even by a man who will in his report blaspheme God and say he did not find God out there in outer space, and who then concluded that there is no God.

But we have an added, spiritual, knowledge and understanding that controls us in our evaluation and interpretation of what the unbeliever reports and knows. And that is what the psalmist means, for that is what we obtain out of God's testimonies. The Netherlands Confession very beautifully sets forth the truth of our knowledge of God in its second article when it states that we know Him by two means: "First by the creation, preservation and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to contemplate the invisible things of God, namely His power and divinity, as the apostle Paul saith, Romans 1:20. All which things are sufficient to convince all men, and leave them without excuse. Secondly, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word, that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to His glory and our salvation."

In that sense also we can understand the words of the psalmist that he has *more* understanding than his teachers. They had only the elegant book of the creation and preservation of God. This is enough to

leave them without excuse in the day of days. But the believer has also the Holy Scriptures as an added revelation of God which causes him to understand what He sees of God in creation and enables him to believe in this God and to glorify Him.

And yet we have not said enough when we say that the believer has *more* understanding, or an added understanding. For what the unbeliever has is actually misunderstanding. And we ought to translate the text to read, "I, rather than my teachers, have understanding; for Thy testimonies are my meditation." Or, if you will, "I and not my teachers have understanding; for Thy testimonies are my meditation." O, that God's people would only recognize that fact and not swallow everything that comes from the ungodly, unbelieving scientist! They may know something. They may know about matters that we do not know. They can teach us many facts about which we have no knowledge. But they do not understand the facts that they know. They have not wisdom and understanding. They are fools and nothing less than that! The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and what a fool that man is who denies this fact! He does not even understand his own folly.

Quite often in Scripture the word translated as "more" ought to be translated as "rather." We have a classic example of this in Hebrews 11:4. Abel did not offer up to God a more excellent sacrifice. Cain's sacrifice was not pleasing to God at all. It was as Solomon says in Proverbs 15:8 "an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is His delight." There is nothing pleasing in the sacrifice of the wicked. It does not contain something excellent or even approach that which is excellent. But, Abel rather than Cain brought a sacrifice that was acceptable to God, because Abel came in faith. Turning back now to Hebrews 9:14 we have the same idea so that we ought to read, "How much rather (not more) shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." In the preceding verse the author had stated that the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkled the unclean and sanctified them to the purifying of the flesh. Now we know that the blood of these did not in any way save us and could never be the basis for our confidence of salvation. But rather did the blood of Christ do all this. The statement of Paul in II Timothy 3:2 ought to read, "Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." Ye cannot serve God and mammon. It is either God or mammon. And it is a case of loving God or the pleasures of the flesh. And so it is a case of having the fear of the Lord and being wise; or it is a case of not having that fear of God and being a fool in spite of all the facts of which one may have knowledge.

Just consider one example of such folly. The devil

knows more about the events of the life of Christ here on this earth than you and I. He can answer some of the problems that still perplex us. He knows, for example whether the genealogy listed in Matthew 1 is that of Mary or of Joseph, and whether the one of Luke 3 is again that of Mary or of Joseph. He had been watching the royal line of David for a long time and understood at least that much from prophecy, that here was where he would have to be keeping his eyes. He can explain just how matters went when Matthew states that Mary Magdalene came with the women to the grave on the first day of the week, and when he leaves the impression that she was also there when the angel appeared. While John presents Mary Magdalene as coming alone after running to tell Peter and John that Jesus' body was stolen. The devil knows all the texts in the Word of God that stress the cardinal truths of Scripture, as well as what texts can be twisted and taken out of context to militate against these cardinal truths. He knows much; and in his deviltry he is wise. And yet place him next to your child who believes; and the devil is a big fool. And hell is the place of fools and for fools. All those who enter its portals will also acknowledge that they are fools. In Jesus' parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus the rich man admits his folly and pleads for one to turn his brother from that way of folly. What will all the detailed knowledge and skills which our children might learn from the world of unbelievers, or from teachers who sit at the feet of the unbeliever and pass on their philosophies to these children, do for them in hell? How will it assure them of escape from that and point to them the way to God's kingdom?

As we stated a moment ago, the unbeliever has misunderstanding rather than understanding. He has folly instead of wisdom, even though he may have a head full of truthful fact. And teachers with misunderstanding of their subject can only mislead those whom they teach. Shall the blind lead the blind? Jesus asks. Shall the fool make your children wise? Shall those who do not understand life and their calling here below impart to your children a true understanding of these important matters?

And understand it well then yourself, that Christian

instruction for our youth is not a little Bible explanation and memorization. It is not a few or even many lessons in the doctrines of the Church as they apply to our salvation. We come to this next time, the Lord willing, but meditating in God's testimonies is far more than tracing the salvation that God has wrought for us in Christ. This is essential; and this the Church will strive to teach until the unbelievers in their folly will establish their kingdom of opposition to Christ and forbid that we preach and teach the Christ of the Scriptures. The day will soon be here when we may only preach the Antichrist, as the modernist church does, and as the merged factions, who throw away the truth to be big, are striving to realize in their own circles. But in the school where the child is taught the matters of his earthly life, he must be taught all things in the light of and by the light of those testimonies of God.

If we have no understanding of the matter, we are going to let the State pay us or our teachers for giving instruction in history, mathematics, science and the like apart from God's testimonies; and we are exactly going to mislead our children into misunderstanding rather than into wisdom and understanding. It is to be understood that the unbeliever thinks that you can teach these apart from the Word; and therein he only makes it plain that although he knows fact, he has no understanding and wisdom. But an honest meditation in God's testimonies will soon make plain to us that this is folly and that our little children with the fear of God in their hearts have a wisdom that excels that natural wisdom and knowledge of the world.

Well, once again, it is a matter of a few weeks and your children will have to be enrolled or will return to school. What will it be this time? Will their teachers be those who do not understand the principles of wisdom, or will they be those who meditate in God's law? We seek always as far as natural things are concerned to seek that which excels. The inferior we pass by and reject. Why not do this with the matter of the spiritual instruction of your children? It is In His Fear to seek the fear of the Lord for them. It is folly to deny them this privilege when it is within reach.

A Cloud of Witnesses

THE FLIGHT OF DAVID

Rev. B. Woudenberg

And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came . . .

And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of

my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him.

It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day.

II Samuel 16:5, 11, 12

There was something about David by which even the greatest disaster could become for him an experience of deepest spiritual importance. Such was his flight from Jerusalem.

As David turned from his palace and passed out through the gates of Jerusalem, he was conscious of the fact that it was not primarily the treachery of the people that lay behind this. In fact, it was not even primarily the wickedness of his son. It was God's hand that was visiting him because of the evil which he had committed in Israel. It would have been easy to allow his mind to dwell upon the two former aspects of what was happening, thus excusing himself even though leaving his heart bitter. But for David, God was always first in every consideration. Because of it, what might well have been a frantic flight of bitter despair was subtly transformed into a sort of pilgrimage of sad but meaningful penance.

As David left the royal city and climbed the mount of Olivet toward the ridge surrounding the city, there were two visits which could not but strengthen him. First there was the approach of Ittai the Gittite seeking to join him even though he and his company were entirely new to the city and the nation. It was an offer that David finally accepted. And then there came Zadok the priest with his company and bearing the ark of the covenant upon their shoulders. There was warmth and encouragement in this gesture too, even though David felt compelled to reject their offer and send them back with the ark to its proper resting place. But the appearance of new reasons for sorrow had not ceased. It was just as he was passing over the ridge which would block Jerusalem from his sight that the news was first brought to him that Ahithophel had joined Absalom also. It was a painful blow, one of the most painful of all, for Ahithophel had been to him, he thought, a trusted friend.

Often he had confided in him in complete confidence, trusting that all of Ahithophel's advice was from a heart of love and faithfulness. And now, even in this, there was painful disappointment. Undoubtedly it was this that gave rise to the anguished cry of Psalm 41, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

Nevertheless, David was not left without a compensating comfort. Hardly had this news come to him than there appeared his other intimate counselor, Hushai the Archite. He was the picture of sorrow and mourning as he came with his clothing torn and earth upon his head. He was an elderly man, and one hardly

able to make the arduous trip which was lying before them: but the loyalty of his old friend was enough to comfort the heart of David nonetheless.

Moreover, it also brought to the mind of David a plan by which he might be able to offset the evil effects of Ahithophel's treachery, for Ahithophel could be expected to be an extremely effective advisor to Absalom. Thus David said to Hushai, "If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me: but if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear." It was a daring plan and not without risk for Hushai; but he saw immediately the advantages of it and turned quickly to return to the city before Absalom should enter it. He must be waiting for the traitor when he arrived in Jerusalem.

Still, this was not all who came out to meet David in his flight. Hardly had he passed over the crest of the hills separating him from the view of Jerusalem than there appeared Ziba, a servant of Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan whom David had befriended when first he came upon the throne of Israel. The sight of this man was extremely welcome from a purely practical point of view, if nothing else, for with him he brought a number of riding asses and a vast amount of food, two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred bunches of summer fruits, and a large skin full of wine.

David was quite astonished. Not knowing quite what to make of it all, he asked, "What meanest thou by these?"

Quickly Ziba replied, "The asses be for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink."

Still David did not understand clearly, so that he inquired further of Ziba, "And where is thy master's son?"

It was then that the true nature of his reasoning came out. He replied, "Behold, he abideth in Jerusalem: for he said, To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father." Actually what

Ziba said was not entirely true, although he apparently believed that it was. It had been his work to take care of the lands which David had assigned to Mephibosheth while his master remained in the palace and ate of the king's table. When, however, Ziba had heard that David had had to flee from Jerusalem, he had looked for his master to flee from the city also. But Mephibosheth had not come, and Ziba had jumped to the conclusion that he had joined the revolution also in hope of some personal gain. So angered had he become at the very thought of this that he had packed together whatever food he could find on Mephibosheth's estate and had brought it to David.

For David his actions were extremely opportune, for in leaving the city they had hardly had opportunity to make proper provisions for food, and the asses were as Godsent for his family. Neither did David have any real reason to doubt Ziba's conclusion. In gratitude for what Ziba had done and incensed by his claims about Mephibosheth, David said to him, "Behold, thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth."

Overwhelmed by this sudden turn of events, Ziba could only answer, "I humbly beseech thee that I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king." And with that he returned to take possession of his suddenly acquired wealth.

All of this, however, seemed only to prepare the way for the next one who came out to meet David. He was of the household of Saul also, Shimei, the son of Gera; and the bitterness that Ziba had wrongly claimed to exist in the heart of Mephibosheth had long dominated this man's life completely. He had been born and raised as a member of the royal family only to fall down to the level of an ordinary member of the nation when David had been made king. It was a reversal of fortune which he had never been able to accept, so that his heart had burned with bitter resentment all through the years of David's reign. Until now, moreover, it had seemed utterly futile and even dangerous to so much as voice the hatred of his heart within the nation, for David was generally acclaimed as a far more excellent ruler than Saul had ever been. But now suddenly it seemed that everything was reversed, or at least that David, whom he hated with all of the passion of his soul had fallen into disfavor too, just as had Saul's house. At last, the gaul of bitterness which he had held pent up within his soul for so many years could express itself, and he was more than willing to have it so. No sooner did David and his company approach the town of Bahurim where this Shimei lived than he came out to stand on the hillside overlooking the road upon which David traveled to throw stones at

him and curse him as though he were some mean and vile creature. "Come out," he shouted, "Come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: the LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man."

Actually, it was still for Shimei a risky and dangerous thing to give vent to his feelings as he did. Although David had not had sufficient fighting men with him in Jerusalem to defend the city, he had not been without them entirely, and those which he did have were now with him. They were not the kind of men who thought lightly of anyone ridiculing the king whom they honored and loved. One of them, Abishai, the brother of Joab, was quick to jump to the king's defense. Standing before David, he cried out, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head."

It was, however, exactly in circumstances like this that the truly spiritual nature of David's heart came most beautifully to the fore. Defense of his own name and reputation was not to him a matter of prime importance; and it did not astonish him ever that there should be people who disliked him and reacted against him. After all, he was a sinful man too with faults against which men might rightly rail. But this was not his primary concern. Always he remembered that behind every circumstance in life there was a God who had designed those circumstances with a purpose much more just and important than any of the motivations of man. And in this hour David knew full well what God was doing in all of these bitter events that had arisen — God was visiting him for the sins he had committed. Although Shimei may not have understood one bit of what he was doing, the curse which he expressed was no more than what he, David, deserved. The humble penance of his heart expressed itself most beautifully in the answer which David gave to Abishai, "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? Behold, my son, which, came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him. It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day." What did the motives of men's hearts matter to David when he was sure that he rested in the hands of the Lord.

Following custom, The Standard Bearer will appear only once per month during June, July and August.

Studies in Depth

THE WALDENSIAN MOVEMENT

Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

"Turn off the main highway at Morgantown or Hickory, if you plan to visit Valdese. Take the road down into the valley. The little North Carolina town, as you approach it, looks for all the world like a picture of northern Italy. There are the white houses, the red tiled roofs; the rolling vineyards. But it is an American town, too, with prosperous farms, commercial bakeries and a thriving hosiery industry."¹ There are also Waldensian colonies, about 20,000 strong, in Uruguay and Argentina. Especially are these Valdese people, as they are known, to be found in the Piedmont Valley of Italy. John Milton immortalized them as a result of their persecutions in his sonnet, *On the Late Massacre in Piedmont*:

Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,
Ev'n them who kept Thy truth so pure of old
When all our Fathers worship't stocks and stones,
Forget not: in Thy book record their groans
Who were Thy sheep and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontest that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubl'd to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all th' Italian fields where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant²: that from these may grow
A hundred-fold, who having learnt Thy way
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

"Whittier . . . (in) his poem . . . *The Vaudois Teacher* . . . speaks of the Waldenses as going about as peddlers to the houses of noble families and offering first gems and other goods, and then the richest gem of all, the Word of God."³ For peddlers they were, but at the same time, Bible smugglers. As a result of getting the Word of God into the hands of men in this way, many were converted to the Gospel. Whittier put it this way:

O lady fair, I have yet a gem which a purer lustre
flings
Than the diamond flash of the jewelled crown on the
lofty brow of kings;
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price, whose virtue
shall not decay,
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee and a blessing
on thy way.
. . . And She hath turned from the pride of sin to the
lowliness of truth,
And given her human heart to God in its beautiful
hour of youth!
. . . And she hath gone to the Vaudois vales by lordly
feet untrod,
Where the poor and needy of earth are rich in the
perfect love of God!

The Waldensian movement began with an attempt to spread the knowledge of Scripture in the common language of the people. Though outlawed from 1231, the Waldensians were found in every land by 1315. They survive the Inquisition and every form of persecution throughout history to this day. Though regarded as heretics by the Roman Catholic Church, they were not mystically inclined, nor Manichean, as the Cathari (or Albigenses), nor pantheistic as some others, nor in any sense a product of Arianism, but were evangelical, "the strictly biblical sect of the Middle Ages . . . a body of believers which has come up out of great tribulation."⁴ They translated the Bible into the vernacular of the people before 1179, then went about preaching the gospel, two by two, as street preachers and open-air evangelists, as they still do in Riesi, Sicily. They have carried out this work despite many hindrances from the hierarchical church. They rejected the claims of the Romish church, its totalitarian government and mummery, designating it The Beast, and as having become the false, antichrist church in the time of Constantine. They rejected all the Romish institutions, as, monasticism, mysticism, candles, palms, holy water, Christmas, Easter, fasts and feasts. They condemned images, relics, the blessing of such material things, saint worship, the Mary cult, purgatory, and prayers for the dead. They regarded themselves as a true church, with elders and deacons, within an apostatizing church. They formed a practically organized secret church, of necessity so because of persecution, considering themselves the only Church of Christ. They denied they were ever heretics departed from the historic church, but trace their beginnings to primitive apostolic Christianity, claiming to have preserved the purity of the faith down through the ages, while the Romish church was the degenerate church full of the corruptions against which they had always protested from the first. Beza, intimate friend of Calvin, taught that the Waldensian Church was founded by Paul on his way to Spain, and was the one true church that had preserved the faith of the New Testament church.

This bit of history will help us to understand the Waldensian motto, not only inscribed over the portal of a Valdese church in Rome, but pervading the very spirit of the denomination, viz., *Lux lucet in tenebris* (a light shines in a dark place). Romish sources attempt to enervate the thrust of this aphorism by implying that only a coarse wit would refer to it as the place Protestantism plays in Romish Italy, and that

Waldensian leaders would themselves be the first to repudiate such harsh humor in connection with understanding their church motto. But when it is taken into account that as to religion, Italy and Sicily are 99.8 percent Romish; as to politics, fascist, socialist or Communist; as to economics, in many places stricken with the worst squalor, filth, poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, superstition and crime to be found anywhere in the world, right in the shadow of the bastion-like buildings of the Roman church and under the noses of the priests, then the meaning of this motto, no matter how papists interpret it, is well understood the world over. It is also universally known that the papal power could not tolerate the existence of the Waldensian churches. For ages it tried ruthlessly to destroy the truth. "Not less than five times through the centuries it instigated terrible persecutions and massacres against this obscure and peaceable people, and it also perpetrated uncounted individual martyrdoms upon them!"⁵

In days when copies of the Bible were scarce the Waldensians made it popular and prevalent by having among them men who had whole books of the Bible committed to memory. "This period was devoted to committing the New Testament to memory, as well as other books of the Bible."⁶ Memorized portions were then frequently orally repeated. As a result, even the illiterate could repeat from memory the entire four gospels and even the book of Job. In this way the Bible was smuggled from heart to heart under the stress of persecution. Forced thus underground, these living Bible depositories disguised themselves, as many of the Reformers later did, as artisans, laborers, merchants in order to carry the Word of God and spread it abroad everywhere. Every believer was regarded as an oral witness to the truth of the gospel. They defended their practice on appeal to Jas. 4:17, "to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." That Christian women have a place in teaching the Word of God was supported by appeal to Titus 2:3, "the aged women . . . be . . . teachers of good things," and also by appeal to Luke 2:36-38. They strongly believed in preaching, regarding it their chief duty, but being simple, uneducated men they inadvertently propounded many errors. To correct themselves and keep to pure doctrine, a catechism was used and transmitted orally from generation to generation.

They also adopted the doctrine of predestination, taking up as Calvin did the Augustinian doctrine without Augustine's interventionist high church teaching. In 1532 the Waldenses accepted the Calvinistic doctrine, renounced everything Romish and agreed to conformity with the principles of the Genevan Reformer. Their French Bible translation was revised and improved with the help of Calvin's cousin, Robert Olivetan. In 1655 they adopted a confession of faith based on and abridged from the French Reformed Confession of 1559 by Calvin.

In the year of that credal adoption, "Cromwell rescued them from total destruction . . . and instituted a collection which reached the amount of 38,097 pounds, he himself contributing 2,000 pounds." Milton remembered them not only in poetry, but sent the suffering Protestants 2,000 pounds. "William of Orange . . . assisted their grand return in 1689 . . . Holland in 1731 . . . collected 308,199 florins" for their aid. So "they were especially cherished and shielded by sympathetic Protestant Europe, because they were commonly looked upon as the only survivals of the Evangelical primitive Christians of apostolic times . . ."⁷

Present history of the Waldensian Church indicates that for the most part, at least, it has had its day. For there are indications of modern ecumenical compromise which reveal involvement in the current stream back to Rome. For example, a news bulletin of the Americal Waldensian Aid Society carries not only on its letterhead the names of such religious liberals as John A. MacKay, Ralph W. Sockman, Eugene Carson Blake and John Sutherland Bonnell, but a statement to the effect that the Protestant program of the Waldensians has its problems in an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country,—a statement made in connection with another statement that the movement has World Council of Churches (finance) connections. It is a notorious fact that the WCC is leading the dead, apostate Protestant churches back to Rome. Then there is the fact that the Waldensians had representation in an official observer at the Vatican II Council, and representation, in the moderator, at the third assembly of the World Council of Churches. This is like the sin of Jehoshaphat who made an alliance with apostate Israel, which was to "help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord" (II Chr. 19:2). Waldensians also provide a home for Russian refugees, but they spoil this eleemosynary service by also providing a chapel for Russian Orthodox worship. This is like the sin of Solomon who built heathen shrines for his heathen wives (I K. 11:7,8). This modernistic trend is further evident in the ordination of lady pastors. There is also close cooperation with the Methodist church in Italy to the extent of joint publication of a monthly religious magazine and of exchange of pastors and pulpits. With such Arminian and anti-Calvinist infiltration what meaning can there be in membership in the Reformed and Presbyterian Alliance? For Waldensian history as such is not in the line of Pelagianism, ecclesiastical liberalism or Romanism.

¹ American Waldensian Aid Society reprint, *Christian Union Herald*, Feb. 26, 1956, "They Speak for Liberty."

² Reference to the pope's crown, the *tiare*, implying absolute sovereignty over the three spheres of

earth, heaven and purgatory.

³ Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, V, 500.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 493.

⁵ Independent journal of the Protestant Episcopal

Church, *The Churchman*, "Waldensians Survive Centuries of Persecution," Nov. 1961.

⁶ New Schaff-Herzog Relig. Ency., XII, 243.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 251.

Examining Ecumenicalism

Differing Views on the W.C.C.

Rev. G. Van Baren

Many comments and criticisms have been made about the World Council of Churches. Some of these comments are interesting and instructive — and usually reflect upon the person himself as well as that group of people for whom he stands as spokesman. In view of this, I would consider two expressions on the W.C.C. that recently came to my attention. Both come from men who profess to be orthodox, both are Christian Reformed ministers — but one reflects that liberal wing which advocates union with the W.C.C., the other shows rather a "middle-of-the-road" policy which disapproves of union at present but is ready to change position if this is the desire of the majority.

Dr. Paul G. Schrottenboer, general secretary of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod reflects the latter position in a report he has presented on the W.C.C. after he attended the gathering of the W.C.C. at Uppsala. The report is rather strikingly "middle-of-the-road," one might rather term it "hedging." He is not ready to approve — but not ready to disapprove either. Writes he, "Any true appraisal of the W.C.C. will have to bear in mind its world wide mosaic nature. By the same token, just as one should avoid quick and easy condemnations of the Council, lest he misrepresent it, so too he should avoid the facile approbation that interprets every action and statement in such a favorable light as to mean that all changes that occur in W.C.C. ranks are a proof of the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. The truth of the matter would appear to be somewhere between these two extreme positions." This position is reflected throughout the report: we must not be too hasty in approving all that the W.C.C. does — nor must we be too hasty to condemn all of its actions. The article gives the impression that the reporter is willing to go along with any majority decision regarding the W.C.C.

Schrottenboer does point out eight items concerning the W.C.C. which are worth noting. In his opinion, first, the W.C.C. has "become more noticeably biblical and orthodox than its previous deliverances" when it speaks theologically. He concedes, however, that the

reason for this very possibly is not because that assembly desired to speak "according to Scripture," but rather out of a desire to reach some sort of "consensus."

Secondly, he points out, the W.C.C. Assembly openly recognized that there were "many great differences in emphasis, in viewpoint, and in the message of the member churches and delegates."

Thirdly, "the main work of the Assembly was non-theological. Much of it was also non-ecclesiastical." He points to the decisions and recommendations which deal with world economic development, balance of power, disarmament, justice and peace in international affairs, new styles of living. The Assembly formally approved of the Official Report of the World Conference on Church and Society — a report which is far from the teachings of God's Word to say the least. Especially this trend in the W.C.C. marks it as part of that which is false. Without judging individual members or denominations within the organization, one can readily see that the W.C.C. places ever less emphasis upon the preached Word of Christ and more emphasis upon a "social gospel." Even its "social gospel" becomes sometimes revolutionary and opposed to the law of God itself. This can be shown without any difficulty from the reports and decisions taken.

In the fourth place, says Schrottenboer, there "was a marked trend away from the 'vertical' to the 'horizontal' ". He means simply that there was less concern about God and His kingdom than there was about man and his earthly needs. The theme of the Assembly was, "Behold I make all things new." That is a beautiful theme if interpreted in harmony with God's revelation, but Schrottenboer reports that "in the working sessions . . . the theme was used to justify and bolster all kinds of secular innovations, and seemed at times to be an excuse simply to justify change. The changes that were proposed (and often endorsed) were generally those that concern human relations . . . without orientation to God's salvation of man in Jesus Christ."

In the fifth place, there "is an indication that the World Council may be willing to discipline its member churches." One of the complaints in the past against the W.C.C. was that it did not demand that member churches adhere to the Basis — such as it is. Now Schrottenboer reports that they did approve the substance of a report which declared, "Because racism is irreconcilable with Christian faith the churches should continue to rebuke those churches which tolerate racism, and make it clear that racist churches cannot be recognized as members in good standing within the ecumenical fellowship." Schrottenboer considers this an indication that the W.C.C. might be willing to exclude some from its fellowship because of certain "heresy." Yet the example which Schrottenboer uses would seem to show rather that liberal and modernistic trend today to be concerned with every sort of "heresy" except that which is doctrinal. It may well be that the day soon comes when the W.C.C. would exclude from its fellowship "racist" churches — but it will never exclude churches or individuals who deny the divinity of Christ or His cross. This is the trend within churches. The Christian Reformed Church also, in its last synod, was ready to declare that those who involve themselves in forms of racism would be worthy of excommunication — but Prof. Dekker continues to teach in their seminary in spite of his Arminian views. I fear that the trend which Schrottenboer regards as somewhat favorable is but one more clear indication of the goal and aims of the W.C.C. Such action is hardly encouraging.

In the sixth place, Schrottenboer points to a "discernible difference in emphasis and direction between the Staff and the constituency of the non-Western countries." He refers to the fact that the Staff of the W.C.C. seem always to emphasize the social, economic and political affairs but that some of the churches definitely lean toward the evangelistic position. And though this might well be true, the question can not be silenced: who elects this Staff?

Next, he declares, "Evangelicals can freely speak at the World Council, but the influence they exert upon the Council can easily be overrated." He adds, "Evangelicals were not encouraged that they could make a meaningful contribution to the work of the Council by the words of the General Secretary about the critics of the W.C.C."

Finally, Schrottenboer states that the W.C.C. "has stressed some of the most pressing concerns of Christianity today, namely, the relation of church and society and the Christian's attitude to the world."

The R.E.S. secretary concludes by stating the self-evident: the W.C.C. is too great to ignore; but he adds, "There is no reason . . . why the R.E.S. should change its advice to the member churches not to join at this time the W.C.C." He could, I think, have rather emphasized that on the basis of his own observations

and conclusions, it would be wrong for any Reformed church to consider joining such an organization. He points out that its approach is "horizontal" rather than "vertical." He admits that the voice of the "evangelical" does not carry much weight. Why not condemn it outright?

A second article concerning the W.C.C. and the decision of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Synod of 1967 was written in the *Reformed Journal* by Dr. James Daane. Anyone knowing Daane understands that here is a man who strongly advocates joining the W.C.C. In his article found in the January 1969 issue, he takes the C.R.C. Synod to task for its decision rejecting W.C.C. membership. The article reminds one of the teacher who strongly reprimands the pupil for failing to do his homework properly. Daane attempts to show the decision of the C.R.C. Synod to be silly, foolish, absurd, and even contradictory. The sad fact is, that to a large degree he is correct. He points out that the C.R.C. decision declares that the W.C.C.'s activities in political matters are sometimes, even "frequently," but not always embarrassing to a Reformed church. "The failure," says he, "of the Synod . . . to provide examples of what is embarrassing is regrettable. . . . As it now is, we are left in the dark as to the kind of W.C.C. action which is embarrassing to a Reformed church." Again, he points out that the Synod declared that the W.C.C. admits into its fellowship churches to which the qualification "modernist" is "fully or partly applicable." Rightly he points out, "If only the Synod had spoken forthrightly and given the name of at least one church that is truly so modernistic it could not without dishonesty have subscribed to the W.C.C. Basis!" He adds in conclusion, "Nor do I know how, after the Synod had decided to do these things, it could then decide to send two official observers at the Fourth Assembly of the W.C.C. at Uppsala. This constituted a very limited but nonetheless real act of official fellowship with a 'fellowship of churches' against which it had marshalled a series of arguments climaxed with an anathema! Is this the way in which the C.R.C. maintains its own basis and theological position in a 'meaningful way'?"

It is indeed sad that the Synod of the C.R.C. could not have formulated its decision far more definitely and positively as well as without compromise. But it did not. The result is that opponents to that decision can easily point out its logical fallacies and thus seem to prove that opposition to the W.C.C. itself is logically fallacious. This is what Daane does.

He indicates that the C.R.C. Synod actually opposed the W.C.C. on only two grounds (though they listed more than two): first, that the social, economic, and political activities of the W.C.C. are "frequently" of such kind as to be "an embarrassment to a Reformed Church." The second, says he, is that the W.C.C. is not

merely a “forum for the discussion of differences” but is a “‘Council of Churches’ which defines itself as a ‘fellowship of churches’ and thus claims to be at least a provisional manifestation of the unity for which Christ prayed (John 17).” Daane then seeks to demolish these grounds. I am not interested at this time in all of the argumentation he presents in opposition to the synodical decision. I would have, however, two suggestions to Daane. First, instead of revealing the puerility of his own synod in print, he could better protest to it the

decision taken on the W.C.C. — and then properly overture it to take an intelligent decision guided perhaps by his own recommendations. Secondly, though he may have done this in the past, I would like to see an article by Daane showing positively why he would advocate union with the W.C.C. — giving scriptural, confessional grounds as well as showing the wisdom of his advice by quoting the decisions of the W.C.C. itself.

From Holy Writ

The Book of Hebrews

Rev. G. Lubbers

UPON BOTH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND UPON THE HOUSE OF JUDAH (Hebrews 8:8b-9)(continued)

However, when we say upon both the house of Israel and upon the house of Judah, this must not be misunderstood. Often this is misunderstood and misinterpreted by Jewish Millennialism. This prophecy is then made to imply that there would be a restoration of Israel's theocracy in the land of Palestine and Canaan after the order of the former glory under David and Solomon. This prophecy then somehow awaits its fulfilment yet in the future. Christ will be the King of the Jews, even as He is the Head of the church. The kingdom of David, Israel's theocracy and the church are not one; fact is, according to this conception, Israel and the church are two different entities.

Now, I do not hold to this view of the matter in regard to the New Covenant which God will make in “those days.” We do not hold this view for the simple reason that this is contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures concerning the usage and application of the term Israel. The term “Israel” and “Jacob” sometimes refer to the two factions in Israel, but sometimes they are also used interchangeably. I believe that a comparison of the usage of these terms here in the prophecy of Jeremiah will bear this out. Thus in Jeremiah 31:1 “At the same time saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.” Now certainly God is the God of all the earth. But Israel is God's people in a peculiar way. They are His people by choice, an elect generation, a holy priesthood, a peculiar people unto God. Only because God loved them in sovereign love are they God's people. When God says: “and they shall be my people,” it refers to their being the congregation, the church of Christ, gathered by the Son of God out of every tribe, people and nation. “All the families of Israel” refers to the gathering of the church in both the Old and the New Testament. This ought to be evident from the

very nature of the New Covenant based upon better promises. For it is not an earthly house, pitched by man (Heb. 8:2) but pitched by the LORD Himself. (Num. 24:6) And this better tabernacle is not earthly, but it is heavenly. Into these heavens our Savior has passed in his death, burial and resurrection. Israel is, therefore, all the tribes of the earth, the elect out of all nations, and not simply from the natural descendants of Abraham. For the teaching stands, written by Paul in Galatians 3:8 “In thee shall all nations be blessed”. And this is interpreted by Paul as referring to those who belong to Christ. “And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:29) In this seed of Abraham there is neither Jew nor Greek, there are no national boundaries, nor is the Greek a Greek any more, nor is the Jew a Jew, But they are “Sons of God,” the new man in Christ, the greater Theocracy of God. Here the middle-wall of the partition is gone forever.” (Eph. 2:11-19) There is really no difference anymore between those who are near and those who are far off. (Is. 57:11)

Israel and the commonwealth of Israel is the church of the living God both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

Besides, it ought to be noticed that the covenant will be brought to its ultimate completion and perfection in what Jeremiah calls “behold, the days are coming.” This took place at Calvary, in Christ's death, and in his resurrection and ascension and sitting at the right hand of God.

THE NEW COVENANT FINISHED IN OUR HEARTS (Hebrews 8:10-12)

God will covenant a new covenant after those days. It is a sure promise. It is “saith the LORD.” That is the end of all contradiction. For He is faithful who hath promised. (Hebrews 8:10) And, therefore, it is sure in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.

Negatively this is expressed in that the covenant will not be like the covenant which God made with Israel when they brought them out of the land of Egypt, and brought them to the hill of Sinai which could be touched. There was something very wrong with that covenant. It was that the "law" which was given by Moses to Israel could not make a dead sinner alive. If such a law had been given which could make a dead sinner alive, then the law could have profited. But now the flesh profits nothing, and the law profits nothing because it is weak through the flesh. (John 6:63) Yes, circumcision profited, *if thou keep the law!* (Rom. 2:25) But none kept the law, and, therefore, the circumcision became uncircumcision!

That was the principle of Israel's defeat. Yes, even when they tried to keep the law, they did not attain. For Israel which followed after the law of righteousness did not attain to the law of righteousness. (Rom. 9:31.) Why? Why did the Gentiles, which did not follow after righteousness, attain unto righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith? The answer is: it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who giveth mercy. (Rom. 9:16)

This is the great enunciation of the failure of the old covenant which God made with Moses. It was doomed to failure because of the weakness of the flesh, and because it could not make the evil, stubborn and dead sinner alive and willing to love God. Fact is, that the law could only be the power of sin. (I Cor. 15:56)

God found fault with this covenant in Jeremiah. Fact is, that when Israel is at the foot of the mount of God, then already the covenant is clearly pointed out to be a failure. For when Moses comes down the mount with the lively oracles in his hand, the people are busy in adultery and in idolatry, as they dance nakedly about the golden calf. (Exodus 32:8) They turned aside quickly from the way which the Lord had shewed them. And the cry of Israel is a cry of covenant-breaking when they sing: "These be thy God, o Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." That such was covenant-breaking, is symbolised in Moses's taking the two tables of stone on which it was written "I Am the LORD, thy God, who have brought thee forth from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage . . .," (Ex. 20:1) and dashing them in pieces! And what must Moses now learn: that God will make a new and better covenant. Moses fasted for forty days and forty nights, and then he arises from the dust and desires the salvation of Israel. And when God will destroy Israel in His hot displeasure and holy anger, then it is that Moses pleads for Israel. Yes, Moses knows that the people have sinned a great sin! Cries Moses in his deep concern for Israel "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord: peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said "Yet now if thou wilt forgive their sin,

blot me I pray thee out of thy book which thou hast written . . ." (Exodus 32:31,32)

Now God finds fault with this covenant.

Moses cannot act as mediator. He is but a law-giver.

The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Only in Christ do we receive grace for grace from the fulness of grace and truth.

Moses can only plead upon the better promises. These are the promises made to the fathers of yore, to Abraham and to his Seed. Hear him plead in Exodus 32:12,13 "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swearest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever."

Yes, Moses pleads upon the better promises; they are better than the law in his hands, written upon tables of stone. These cannot profit Israel because of the weakness of the flesh. And his appeal is to the very promises which God will fulfil according to Jeremiah in the latter days. Presently Israel's life under the law shall have run its course. It will all have been to no profit at all. The law perfected nothing. The bringing in of a better hope did. Well, here it is spoken of in the prophecy of Jeremiah.

Israel-Judah indeed goes down into Babylon. But a voice is heard in Ramah, and shall again be heard in Bethlehem-Ephraha. And God will call His Son out of Egypt in Christ's death and resurrection. This is the glory of Israel and the light of the nations.

Thus in Jeremiah's prophecy, quoted here in Hebrews 8:6 f.f., the horizons lift, and the prospect of the fulfilment of all the promises are set in full relief. It is the announcement of the ushering in of the year of the LORD.

For this is not the law of commandments contained in ordinances, which are written upon tables of stone, but this is the law, the glory of grace, which writes the law in our hearts!

Before we try to understand this matter of the law being written in our hearts, in depth, let us notice how even at Sinai, in a sense, the covenant was renewed upon better promises. For it must not have altogether escaped the attention of every Bible-christian, that the table of stones which were placed in the Ark of the Covenant by Moses, together with the pot of Manna and the rod of Aaron which blossomed, were not the same tables which were broken. The reason is: this time the Lord gives tables of stone which are based upon a covenant which cannot be broken. To see this point we should attend to what we read in Exodus

34:4-9, where we read: "And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the Lord *descended in the cloud*, (Shekinah) and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by him, and proclaimed, *The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty . . .*"

The underscored portion here in the above quotation is definitely the better covenant words. For these are the words which Moses receives and his face shines. These are the covenant words connected with the glory of Christ. Nay, these are not simply to be written upon the tables of stone but upon the fleshy tables of the heart.

This is evident from the fact that these are the

words of the Covenant which shall be placed in the inner sanctuary of God's throne of grace, the Ark of the testimony, the testimony of the gospel of grace. For in that Ark of the Covenant were three things, and these three are the earmarks of the true church in the desert and in every age and clime. For it ought to be evident that we are here dealing with: word, sacraments and discipline, as exemplified in tables of stone, pot of manna and the rod of Aaron, which was fruitful. Were these not all under the covering of the ark upon which the blood of atonement was sprinkled on the great day of atonement, and the ushering in of the year of Jubilee? (Lev. 25:8, 9)

And thus we stand foursquare in the midst of the ministering priest's work!

The law shall be written upon the tables of the heart.

This is the covenant which is enacted upon better—promises.

Contending for the Faith

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

THE THIRD PERIOD — 730-1517 A.D.

PROTESTANT DOCTRINE OF SIN

Rev. H. Veldman

Fourthly, what does this law of God demand? To this there can be only one answer, in the light of the Word of God. The law of God demands complete perfection, or the entire conformity of the moral nature and conduct of a rational creature with the nature and will of the Lord. We are commanded to love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. And we love our neighbour as ourselves. This obligation, of course, is limited to the capacity of the creature. It is not limited to the ability of the creature. If a creature is not able to serve the Lord with all his heart and soul and strength, he is, of course, not excused from this perfect service of the Lord. But it is limited to the capacity of a creature. The capacity of a child is less than that of an adult Christian or of an angel. He can know less. He can contain less. Nevertheless, it is the absolute moral perfection of the child, of the adult, or of the angel that the law demands. This is also in harmony with the teaching of our conscience. The child of God knows that he sins or is sinful whenever and howsoever he comes short of this conformity to the image of God. He surely knows that coldness of affection, defect of zeal, and the want of humility, gratitude, meekness, forbearance, and benevolence are in him of the nature of sin. Augustine taught this. And the Lutheran and Reformed theologians assert the same principle. Be-

cause of this principle, the following truths are self-evident.

First, there cannot be perfection in this life. Every form of perfectionism is surely founded upon the assumption that the law does not demand absolute perfection in this life, a perfection that is in perfect harmony with the law of God and as determined by the holiness and righteousness of the Lord.

Secondly, it follows from this truth that there can never be attributed any merit to the good works of men in the midst of the world. Fact is, all the good works of the people of the Lord are always corrupted by sin and are as filthy rags, unrighteousnesses.

Thirdly, it also follows from this truth that there can never be any such thing as works of supererogation. No man can ever perform above the demands of the law of God. Rome teaches that a man can merit beyond the law of God. But the Scriptures teach that if a man were to fulfill all the demands of the law and do all that is required of him, he would still be an unprofitable servant, inasmuch as he had merely done what is his duty. Luke 17:10.

Fourthly, it also follows from this truth, namely that the law of God demands complete and perfect obedience, that sin is not confined to acts of the will. The majority of the schoolmen and of the Roman theologians deny that anything is of the nature of sin,

but voluntary acts of the will. Evil motives and desires within us are only sin when we deliberately assent to them and indulge in them. But this is not the view of the Protestant doctrine of sin. If the law of God demands perfection, perfect conformity to its demands, then these impulses of evil are very clearly sinful. And the Protestant doctrine which pronounces these impulsive acts to be of the nature of sin is surely confirmed by the consciousness of the child of God. He recognizes as evil in their own nature the first risings of malice, envy, pride, etc. He knows that they spring from an evil or imperfectly sanctified nature. He knows that they constitute part of the burden of corruption which he hopes to lay down in the grave; and he knows that as he shall be free from them only then when he shall have attained unto everlasting perfection in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, these imperfections never characterized the Lord Jesus Christ. And our Heidelberg Catechism does not merely condemn the sins which the child of God commits consciously, but also the corruption of his evil and corrupt nature.

Finally, it also follows from this principle that the law of God condemns all want of conformity to the nature of God, that it condemns evil dispositions or habits, as well as all voluntary sins, whether deliberate or impulsive. According to the Word of God, there is a sinfulness as well as sins. The Word of God surely speaks of a sinful state, of abiding, inherent forms of evil, which are truly and properly of the nature of sin. All sin, therefore, is not merely an activity or act; it may be and is also a condition or state of the mind. This distinction between habitual and actual sin has been confessed by the Church of God throughout the ages. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself teaches us this distinction when He speaks of an evil heart as distinguished from evil exercises, which are as distinct as a tree and its fruits. The Apostle speaks of sin as a law, or controlling principle regulating or determining his acts even in despite of his better nature. He declares that sin dwells in him. He declares that he does not what he would do and that he fails to perform what he ought to do. Man is a sinner, in all his life and being.

Before we quote from the Lutheran and Protestant Confessions concerning the doctrine of sin, we would present the following quotation from Hodge, Vol. II, 230-231, in which he presents a Statement of the Protestant Doctrine:

From the above statements it appears that, according to the doctrine of the Protestant churches, original sin, or corruption of nature derived from Adam, is not, (1.) A corruption of the substance or essence of the soul. (2.) Neither is it an essential element infused into the soul as poison is mixed with wine. The Form of Concord, for example, denies that the evil disposition of our fallen nature are created conditions within us. The affirmative statements on

this subject are (1.) That this corruption of nature affects the whole soul. (2.) That it consists in the loss or absence of original righteousness, and consequent entire moral depravity of our nature, including or manifesting itself in an aversion from all spiritual good, or from God, and an inclination to all evil. (3.) That it is truly and properly of the nature of sin, involving both guilt and pollution. (4.) That it retains its character as sin even in the regenerated. (5.) That it renders the soul spiritually dead, so that the natural, or unregenerated man, is entirely unable of himself to do anything in the sight of God.

This doctrine therefore stands opposed,-

1. To that which teaches that the race of man is uninjured by the fall of Adam.

2. To that which teaches that the evils consequent on the fall are merely physical.

3. To the doctrine which makes original sin entirely negative, consisting in the want of original righteousness.

4. To the doctrine which admits a hereditary depravity of nature, and makes it consist in an inclination to sin, but denies that it is itself sinful. Some of the orthodox theologians made a distinction between *vitium* and *peccatum*. The latter term they wished to confine to actual sin, while the former was used to designate indwelling and hereditary sinfulness. There are serious objections to this distinction: first, that *vitium*, as thus understood, is really sin; it includes both guilt and pollution, and is so defined by Vitranga and others who make the distinction. Secondly, it is opposed to established theological usage. Depravity, or inherent hereditary corruption, has always been designated *peccatum*, and therefore to say that it is not *peccatum*, but merely *vitium*, produces confusion and leads to error. Thirdly, it is contrary to Scripture, for the Bible undeniably designates indwelling or hereditary corruption, or *vitium*, as *hamartia* (sin). This is acknowledged by Romanists who deny that such concupiscence after regeneration is of the nature of sin.

5. The fifth form of doctrine to which the Protestant faith stands opposed, is that which admits a moral deterioration of our nature, which deserves the displeasure of God, and which is therefore truly sin, and yet denies that the evil is so great as to amount to spiritual death, and to involve the entire inability of the natural man to what is spiritually good.

6. And the doctrine of the Protestant churches is opposed to the teachings of those who deny that original sin affects the whole man, and assert that it has its seat exclusively in the affections or the heart, while the understanding and reason are uninjured or uninfluenced.

In order to sustain the Augustinian (or Protestant) doctrine of original sin, therefore, three points are to be established: I. That all mankind descending from Adam by ordinary generation are born destitute of original righteousness, and the subjects of a corruption of nature which is truly and properly sin. II. That this original corruption affects the whole man; not body only to the exclusion of the soul; not the

lower faculties of the soul to the exclusion of the higher; and not the heart to the exclusion of the intellectual powers. III. That it is of such a nature as that before regeneration fallen men are "utterly indisposed, disabled, and opposed to all good."

We quoted this statement of the Protestant doctrine from Hodge for obvious reasons. Notice how absolute this presentation of the truth is concerning sin! The Protestant doctrine of sin teaches that the corruption of nature affects the whole soul. It teaches that it renders the soul spiritually dead, so that the natural or unrenewed man is entirely unable of himself to do anything good in the sight of God. Now, I suppose that this presentation of the truth can be thus modified that the sinner, because of the operation of a common grace, is able to do good in the sight of the Lord. But notice how absolute these statements of Hodge are! The Protestant doctrine of sin teaches that original sin is not merely negative, consisting in the want or lack of original righteousness. We also read that the Protestant doctrine is opposed to those who deny that the evil is

so great as to amount to spiritual death, and to involve the entire inability of the natural man to what is spiritually good. Of course, we do not hesitate to elide the word, spiritually, here, and teach the entire inability of the natural man to do any good. Notice, too, that the Protestant doctrine of sin is such that original sin affects the whole man, including his understanding and reason. And Hodge concludes with the remark that, according to the Protestant conception of sin, fallen man, before his regeneration, is utterly indisposed, disabled, and opposed to all good. It is good to read sentiments of this nature. This is the teaching of our Protestant Reformed Churches, and we may be assured that, teaching the utter inability of the natural man to do anything good in the sight of God, we find ourselves in good company. Indeed, we are surely in the line of the Augustinian conception of man's sin and corruption. Next time, the Lord willing, we will call attention to what the Lutheran and Protestant Confessions have to say on this subject.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!!

Notice is hereby given to our subscribers, the societies of our churches, and all other groups and individuals that beginning with the July issue of the Standard Bearer the cost of placing resolutions of sympathy, anniversary notices, and all announcements will be \$3.00. Please bear this in mind when sending in your announcements to the Business Manager.

The Board of the R.F.P.A.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church expresses their sympathy to their fellow elders, George Hoekstra and Bert Van Maanen in the passing to glory of their mother and mother-in-law,

MRS. PETER M. HOEKSTRA

May they and the bereaved family be comforted with that greatest assurance, that in life or in death, we are not our own, but belong to our faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.

Wm. K. Kooiker, Gen. Alt.

On June 6, 1969, our parents

MR. AND MRS. TOM ELZINGA

will, the Lord willing, celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our God for the many years they have had together, and pray that He may continue to bless them and cause His face to shine upon them during the remainder of their sojourn here.

Children and Grandchildren

Open House will be held at their home, 567 W. 19th Street, Holland, Mich., from 2:00 to 5:00 P.M., Saturday, June 7, 1969.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies Aid Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to two of its members, Mrs. Gerit Brummel and Mrs. Bert Van Maanen, in the passing of their mother

MRS. PETER M. HOEKSTRA.

May the bereaved be comforted by the Word of God found in Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Egbert Gritter, Pres.

Mrs. John Hoekstra, Vice Pres.

News From Our Churches

May 14, 1969

Jamaican News. In a letter dated May 3 we learn that Rev. Lubbers had preached at five Sunday services and conducted seven mid-week services, entailing some 600 miles of Jamaican left-side-of-the-road driving. Our emissaries were there at the end of the drought season and experienced some torrential rains — one of those storms prevented them reaching Rev. Frame's church one Sunday. The travel involved in their work and the inconveniences appended thereto press them to say, "But the reward is so great when we see how gladly they receive the Word!" By the time you read this they will have come back to the States, and the Mission Committee will be ready to give a full account of their labors in their behalf.

* * *

The Sunday School children of our Southwest Church in Grand Rapids are happy to know that their collections for the balance of the season will be for the benefit of the children in the Prot. Ref. Churches in Jamaica. This is a splendid gesture of children helping to supply the needs of other children in a real, tangible way!

* * *

On the festive occasion of a "burning of the mortgage" evening program, Southeast's congregation presented Rev. and Mrs. Schipper with a new refrigerator as a testimonial of their appreciation his unselfish labors among them.

* * *

In a May 4 bulletin of one of our churches attention was called to the financial plight of our *Standard Bearer*; that only one half of the \$12,000.00 cost of printing is covered by subscriptions and that the other half must be raised by free-will offerings. The congregation responded that evening with a generous offering which takes care of almost 8% of the needed subsidy. 92% to go!

* * *

Redlands' Sunday School rendered an Easter Program and invited the Young People's Society, the Choral Society and a Men's Quartet to take part. An added commemorative feature was a poem by Mrs. J. Ekema and read by Miss Jana Gastra, entitled, "Tis Resurrection Day!"

* * *

Quiet Thought, found in Southeast's bulletin: "Some people flee from temptation, then wait around the corner for it to catch up with them."

* * *

The April 27 bulletin of Hudsonville reminded the people of the birthday anniversary that week of their oldest member, Mr. C. Woodwyk — age 96! What a tremendous development in the manifestation of The Man of Sin this aged brother has seen!

* * *

A sign of progress was noted in Loveland's bulletin as follows: "On Friday, May 2, there will be a

special program in the church basement at 8 P.M. The subject, "The necessity of enlarging our school" will be introduced by Rev. Engelsma, after which there will be an open discussion. All adults and young people interested in this important subject are invited to attend. Refreshments will be served immediately afterwards by the Ladies' Circle." The "enlarging of our school" cannot mean that of a building (for the school is housed in the church), but can only mean adding a grade or more to their present six grade enrollment. To this observer this program is a sure indication of the Grace of God activating this small congregation in their consciousness of their calling to instruct their children according to the vow at baptism.

* * *

The only news we have to date (May 14) concerning the possible change in Manse occupancy is that Rev. Engelsma has a call from Hull, Iowa; that Pella, Iowa has extended a call to Rev. Lanting; and, that Rev. Kortering did not accept the invitation he had received from South Holland, Ill.

* * *

An arresting paragraph found in Lynden's May 4 bulletin: "We have received a request to supply at least 25,000 copies of a 16 page booklet of our "Studies in Biblical Doctrine" for use in the churches of Indonesia, well over half of which are of Dutch Reformed background. If we can raise about \$600.00 to pay for the printing of these we do hope to go ahead in supplying this request." And we might add this observation: If this gives you people who read this an idea — you may send your contribution to: "Studies in Biblical Doctrine; 8541 Depot Road, Lynden, Wash. 98264."

* * *

We just received additional detailed information regarding the content of the above paragraph, and herewith pass it on to you: "One of the fastest growing portions of the Christian Church is in the country of Indonesia. In the past two years over 2½ million Moslems have been converted to Christianity, and there is a great need for study material so that they may grow in the knowledge of their faith. We have been asked to supply them with a series of 16 of our studies, and we would like very much to do this if we can find the financial means. By having these studies *translated and printed* in Indonesia 25,000 of these can be supplied for less than \$600.00." Now you can see how our little congregation in Lynden can be of spiritual help to those converted Moslems in that far-off land on the other side of the globe.

* * *

"Heathen land and hostile peoples soon shall come the Lord to know; Nations born again in Zion shall the Lord's salvation show" *Psalter No. 238.*

... see you in church

J. M. F.