

# The Standard Bearer

**A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE**

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**Jesus, The Resurrection and the Life**

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**Our Schools and Government Subsidy**

**A Suggestion About Communion Practices**

**The R.E.S. and the W.C.C.**

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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

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

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

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

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Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.  
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## Meditation

## Jesus, The Resurrection and the Life

Rev. M. Schipper

*"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"*

John 11: 25, 26.

The funeral was over!

The dead had been laid in his grave!

It was Lazarus, the loved one of the Lord, who had passed away. He was the brother of Mary, who loved to sit docily at Jesus' feet to be instructed of Him; and of Martha, who loved to serve Jesus with the finest of delicacies.

Strange as it may seem, even the loved ones of the Lord must die. Though the Lord loves His people, and Lazarus was His friend, death, that grim reaper, puts in his scythe and mows down that part of them that is of the earth earthy. For flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Four days had passed and yet the mourners



mourned. Especially two had hearts that were filled with grief. Death had torn into a very closely knit family circle. To them the words of the Psalmist must have seemed as idle mockery: "I shall not die but live."

Overagainst the reality of death stands Jesus, the resurrection and the life!

Sharply marked antithesis!

On the one hand there was death, and no one could deny it. Lazarus was dead. According to Martha, four days had passed since his body had been placed in his tomb, and decomposition must already have set in. On the other, the Resurrection and the Life! Not, you understand, the resurrection of the last day with which even Martha was acquainted; but the resurrection and the life in the Person of Jesus, Who said, not — I will be the resurrection and the life at the end of the world; but — I am the resurrection and the life — right now.

Significantly He spoke these words before His own death and resurrection! It was toward the end of His earthly ministry when He received the message that Lazarus had died. Long before the stone was rolled away from His own tomb on the first resurrection morn. He declares emphatically: I am the resurrection and the life.

The effect is mentioned before the cause! He is the resurrection from the point of view of death. But He is the resurrection because He is the life.

Jesus is the life!

He is that essentially!

The Lord said earlier in His ministry: "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." And in the same context: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." John 5:21, 26. He is the life because He is God, the living God. Being co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, He lives the life of God eternally.

Moreover, He is also the Author of all life in the world. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. If there is any life outside of Him, it must find its ultimate source in Him. Remarkably it is Jesus Who claims He is the life; the Person of the Son in human nature, the Mediator between God and man, the Saviour of His people.

Therefore, because He is the life, He is also the resurrection!

The resurrection!

Let us understand it well. It is not simply the power to recall from the grave back into this earthly life. So Lazarus would be raised and return. But strictly speaking this is not resurrection. Lazarus would return to this earthly, corruptible life. And once more he would have to return to the grave. Resurrection means much more than that. It means never more to die, to taste corruption and misery. It means to pass through

the grave, leaving corruption, misery, and the grave behind. It means in principle to possess immortality, and ultimately the perfect participation with body and soul in eternal and heavenly life. O, indeed, He had the power to quicken the dead body of Lazarus and to make it come forth from the grave alive. This power He was about to demonstrate at the tomb of Lazarus — no doubt, one of His greatest miracles. Yet this is not what He is talking about when He declared to Martha: I am the resurrection and the life. He not only has the power to resurrect as the life-giver — He is that power.

Glorious fact!

A fact He would make most clear in His own case a short while hence, when on resurrection day He Himself would issue forth from His own grave as the Prince of Life. The I AM THAT I AM, the Self-Existent, eternally independent God, speaking in the flesh of Jesus, says: I am the resurrection and the life. Not, I will be in the last day. Not, I will be if you believe. But I am, whether you believe or not — I am the resurrection and the life. I am the resurrection because I am the life.

Neither Martha, nor anyone before her had this conception of Jesus. Martha said: "I know my brother shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." She was not a Sadducee who believed not in the resurrection. She understood that there was a resurrection of the dead in the last day. And she believed that in the last day also Lazarus would rise again. But she did not know that Jesus was the resurrection and life now. Yet that is the meaning of our text. In contrast to Martha's future "he shall" the Lord says "I am." And as He was in Martha's time so He is today.

Glorious reality in the face of death and the grave!

On the one hand we may stand before the sad fact of death and the grave. But on the other, stands the glorious fact of the Resurrection and the Life.

He that believeth in Me, even if he dies, he shall live!

The unbeliever never lives. He is dead while he liveth. But the believer is alive with the life of Christ. Fact is, faith is the living bond that ties him to the living Christ. Faith makes the believer to be one plant with Him. He is so engrafted into Christ by faith that he lives out of Him, and appropriates all His benefits.

Gift of God's grace!

Faith is not a work of man, but a work of God in man! Faith is not a condition man fulfills to obtain life, nor is it another work which man must perform to be saved. Salvation is not of works but of grace entirely. Faith is God's means of uniting us so perfectly to Christ in Whom is all our salvation that we consciously appropriate and receive to ourselves His life. Faith is a living bond to the living Christ. God works faith in us, and we believe.

Now notice what the Lord says here!

Concerning the one believing into Me, even if he dies, he shall live. This can only mean that the one who



is engrafted into Christ and has a living bond of fellowship with Christ is alive when he dies. And this is sustained by the last part of the text where Jesus says: "And whosoever liveth and believeth into me shall never die." For the believer, therefore, there is continuity of life even when his outward man perishes and is overcome in death.

O wonderful paradox of paradoxes! We live when we die! Death hath no power over us!

We must remember that resurrection does not begin after death, but before death. And that can only mean that in regeneration, in which all the benefits of Christ reside, included in which is faith — immortality — and life, we possess the life that death cannot overcome. Regeneration is indeed resurrection life, which is immortality, that is, undyingness. We are raised first from spiritual death before we are raised from physical death. And only because this is so, can one look forward in hope to the bodily resurrection. If we are become partakers of His resurrection life in regeneration and we are made conscious of this through a true and living faith, then it follows that the whole man, body and soul, shall dwell in eternal life. Every believer experiences two resurrections therefore. The first is in regeneration — the resurrection of the inner man from spiritual death and corruption. The second, in the resurrection of the outward man from the physical death and corruption in the grave. The first resurrection takes place before physical death, and the latter at the end of the world.

What a comfort for the believing child of God!

In Jesus the dead lives!

Even though he dies and enters into physical death and dissolves into dust in his grave; being in Jesus, he shall live. That is, he shall live in glory as soon as he dies, and he shall live in the body and soul perfectly in the resurrection at the last day.

In Jesus the living never dies!

O, this cannot mean that he will not die physically. That is inevitable. No one shall escape this physical death except those who are alive at Christ's coming at the last day, and they must be changed. But they shall never die in the spiritual sense unto all eternity. For being united into Jesus they live His life forever. And

physical death can only be a transition to a higher state of life in the presence of Christ in glory, and to the highest state of life and glory in the day of Christ.

The believer only possesses this comfort!

As we said, this comfort cannot be for those who do not believe. The unbeliever is dead now — in trespasses and sins, spiritually separated from the Resurrection and the Life. And when he dies physically he enters immediately into eternal death. For the unbeliever death stares him in the face every step of the way, and unless he is regenerated by the grace of God, he presently shall enter the place of everlasting death where the wrath of God abides on him forever, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. Though they also shall come forth from their graves in the last day, for all the dead shall rise, theirs is not a resurrection unto life, but unto damnation.

The comfort of the resurrection is only for the believer! Believers live now even in the midst of their suffering and affliction of this present time. They live when their outward man perishes and descends into the grave. They live everlastingly presently when all this weary night is past in eternal glory.

Believest thou this?

This question cannot be asked of the dead. The dead must have answered it while he was alive. And if he answered this question affirmatively, the Scripture is fulfilled in him: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

The question is directed to you — Martha!

The question is directed to you, My disciples, who are living!

It is directed to the church of Christ which is able to hear the words of Him Who is the resurrection and the life!

And when you by the grace of God are able to say: Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief — then for you the sting of death is gone when you are confronted by it, and the grave has lost its victory, and you live.

You live now, and forever more!

## Editorials

# Our Schools and Government Subsidy (3)

*A Question of Justice or of Money?*

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

### *Not Justice*

The question whether the parochial movement is a

question of justice or a mere quest for money we began to consider in the last issue. I have tried to present



the various claims and arguments made by representatives and supporters of the movement as objectively as possible and to document this presentation by means of quotations.

In this installment I will try to present an evaluation of the movement's claim of justice and right and to present reasons for what I contend should be the position of our covenantal schools with respect to these claims.

Let me state from the outset that it is my firm conviction that the parochial movement, considered from the viewpoint of our Reformed principles, cannot be upheld as a movement that is founded upon principles of justice and right. And to me this leaves the other alternative: it is a clamor for money, for a government subsidy, without regard to and in violation of true principles. I have several reasons for this conviction; and in presenting them I will move from the less important to the more important.

#### *Sundry Considerations*

In the first place, there is the fact that the parochial movement only seeks government *aid*, or subsidy, and then only *partial* aid and at only one level of government involved in education. The current proposal before the Michigan legislature is for 50% of the average net full-time membership allowance to public schools (100% in inner city target areas). And this concerns, of course, only *state* funds, not local school funds. Now this is a very strange way of doing for a movement which is supposed to base its claims on justice and fairness. Certainly, right is right! If I am accused of the crime of murder and am innocent, then I am not going to plead that I receive a 10-year prison term instead of the electric chair. I am going to insist that I should be declared innocent and should receive no penalty whatsoever. Thus, too, if private schools are rightfully entitled to government support, then they should insist upon such support on an equal basis with public schools as a *matter of principle*. Moreover, they should insist that this same principle be applied at the local level. But this they dare not do, — as a matter of *utility*. They know full well that a proposal for an equal share of all school money at local, state, and federal levels would be laughed right out of the halls of government. In fact, they are aware that some legislators already fear that eventually they will be demanding 100% subsidy. To me, all this does not leave the impression of being a movement dedicated to high ideals of justice and righteousness. On the contrary, it leaves the impression of being a movement motivated by expediency and probably of being a movement capable of engaging in some political horse-trading. If my case is based on principles of justice, then I should make my case on that basis, plead it on the basis of what is right and just according to the Word of God; and then, if those in authority will not heed me, I can do nothing but rest the case with the Lord, the right-

eous Judge.

In the second place, in close connection with the preceding, the whole movement gives every indication of being a pressure movement, of trying to gain a place under the sun as a power-structure. Last year, as I reported, pressure was exerted upon parents through the schools. This same kind of pressure has been exerted on legislators. Now it may be argued, perhaps, that this is the only language the world understands and that this is the kind of tactics which must be employed to get the legislature to pay attention and to vote your way. But this does not make it right. This has only too often been the failure of would-be Christian organizations in various areas of life. They seek worldly power, the same kind of power which the world employs in its organizations to gain its ends. A Christian movement, which is based on justice and righteousness according to the Word of God, should be ashamed to employ such tactics. Its proper power is not the power of a power-structure, not the power of numbers, not the power of the majority, but the power of the Word, the power of the truth, the power of the Spirit. True, you will not “succeed” with such methods; you will go down to defeat in this world, just exactly because the world does not recognize such methods. But if “success” is the criterion, then you have already conceded that it is not really a question of justice and righteousness, but one of utility.

In the third place, the advocates of parochial, both within and outside of the legislature here in Michigan, have themselves by their own arguments made the issue one of money. This is also true in other states where government subsidy of schools is being discussed. On the one hand, they claim that they will not be able to keep their private schools open without government subsidy. On the other hand, they point to the fact that the closing of private schools will cost the state more money to operate public schools. They take pains to point out how many students have already transferred to public schools and how many may be expected to transfer to public schools in the near future. And they take pains to point out how many more millions of dollars this is going to cost the state. Again, this does not sound like a justice-movement to me. Nor does it sound to me like the language of those with whom Christian education is a matter of deep conviction and principle. I assure you that if this had been the outlook of covenant parents in the days of the Great Depression of the 1930's, all the Christian schools would have closed their doors. I assure you that if this had been the outlook of our fathers in the beginning of the Christian school movement, no schools would have been started. I assure you that if it had been a mere question of money, our Protestant Reformed school movement would never have gotten off the ground. No Reformed Christian educator or parent should want to have any part in a movement



which makes our schools a matter of dollars and cents or that lumps our schools together with a movement which does this. (I am well aware, of course, that this whole dollars-and-cents argument concerns chiefly the Roman Catholic schools which in many places are in deep financial trouble. This does not change the fact that the Christian school movement has very much involved itself in the fight for parochialism and has joined organizations which employ this kind of argumentation. For this they should be thoroughly ashamed!) And certainly our Protestant Reformed parents can lend no support to a movement of this kind.

In the fourth place, it is, of course, very easy to turn the arguments used in favor of parochialism around. The argument about an equal or rightful share of the taxes can be turned around as follows: every tax-payer has the full right to make use of the public schools which the government provides with those taxes; if he chooses not to do so, but to send his children to the Christian school, he is free to do so at his own expense. And the argument which claims that private schools educate, that they serve the same educational purpose as the public schools, and that therefore they are entitled to state money can also be turned around. If it be true that they serve the same educational purpose and thus serve the general public welfare even as do the public schools, then why did they open in the first place? Besides, such duplication of effort is expensive, whether it be public or private. Of course, everyone will recognize that there is something fallacious about

this whole argument. Either there is a complete denial of the true character of Christian education when you make a statement like this, or there is a devious cover-up of the divergent character of Christian education. "Education" in the public schools and "education" in the Reformed Christian school are two completely divergent concepts.

I have intentionally left out of the picture any question of the constitutionality of government subsidy of parental or of parochial schools. Personally, I do not believe that either the state or the federal constitution allow such aid, especially when I consider the fact that government subsidy of a Roman Catholic (parochial) school would be direct subsidy of the Roman Catholic Church. And I think it requires a considerable amount of devious legal reasoning in order to get around constitutional provisions. But in the changing judicial climate of our day it is entirely possible that legislatures and courts may somehow manage to justify such subsidy some day. And therefore I have not pressed this matter. To me, it makes not a particle of difference whether the state allows it or not; and the constitution is not decisive of the issue for me. I believe the entire movement is principally wrong; and we as Christians should have no part of it.

\* \* \*

My space is already more than used up for this issue; and therefore the rest of my arguments, the more basic arguments, will have to wait until next time.

## A Suggestion About Communion Practices

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

Some questions about the communion thank offering which appear elsewhere in this issue reminded me of other matters concerning liturgical practices connected with the celebration of the Lord's Supper in our churches. Perhaps this is as good an occasion as any to mention them.

I am referring to the wide divergence of practice in our churches with respect to the use of the Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper. In my travels as a wandering supplier of pulpits I have come upon this divergence.

For example, there is divergence of practice with respect to the use of the Form in the second service. Some churches do not use the Form at all, but substitute Article 35 of the Belgic Confession. Some churches use the entire last section of the Form, beginning with the words, "Let us now also consider to what end the Lord hath instituted his Supper. . . ." Some churches use only the last part of this second section. Some churches have used an abbreviation of

the entire Form. And some have eliminated parts of the Thanksgiving at the conclusion of communion. The reason for these changes is probably the desire to eliminate tedious repetition and to save time in the service in which the applicatory sermon must be preached.

As another example, I may mention the widespread practice of reading the so-called preparatory part of the Form on the Sunday preceding the Lord's Supper, and reading only the second part of the Form, beginning at "Let us now also consider . . .," on communion Sunday. This practice has been introduced, I think, partly as a time-saving device and partly on the basis of the supposition (right or wrong) that the first part of the Form should properly be read at the preparatory service.

Now it is not my purpose to enter materially into these various practices and to evaluate them. Some may have good elements in them; others may be totally incorrect and even incongruous. Nor is it my



point that there must be an absolute uniformity of practice liturgically. To attempt to impose an absolute uniformity would be both hierarchical and foolish. Consistories are rightly jealous of their local rights. Fact of the matter is that the Church Order specifically allows room for a certain kind of divergence when it states: "Every church shall administer the Lord's Supper in such a manner as it shall judge most conducive to edification," Art. 62.

My point is, first of all, one that concerns the Church Order. Strictly speaking (and in some cases even broadly speaking), these divergent practices with respect to the Form are in clear violation of the Church Order, Article 62. To the sentence quoted above, that article specifically adds the provision: "provided, however, . . . that at the conclusion of the sermon and the usual prayers, the form for the administration of the Lord's Supper, together with the prayer for that purpose, shall be read." Notice, the article states that "the form" shall be read, not part of the form, not an abbreviation of the form, not Article 35 of the Confession. Once again, the question here is not whether these practices are good or bad. The point is that this is bad church governmental practice. If there are to be changes made with respect to the Form and its use, or if there are to be various options (such as an abbreviated form or a partial reading of the form), these should be synodically approved and legitimized in the Church Order. For every consistory pledges (Art. 86) to show all diligence in observing the articles of the Church Order "until it be otherwise ordained by the general synod." You see, it is exactly when these provisions are ignored "by common consent" and when every consistory does what is right in its own eyes, that articles of the Church Order gradually fall into partial or total disuse and become dead letters. The way to avoid this is very simple: bring about changes in the orderly way. This is the way of respect for our Church Order.

In the second place, my point is that the Liturgy proper (the Forms), in distinction from liturgical practices, is the province of the *churches in common*. Apart from anything else, there is this sound reason for this, namely, that any changes should be based upon thorough study of the historical roots and the principles involved. And for the safeguarding of the Liturgy and of the churches, as well as for the benefit

of the various congregations, all the churches should share in and benefit from such study.

For example, if there is to be an abbreviation of the Form, this should be a well-worded abbreviation, one which retains all the proper elements of the Form and one which is unified and coherent instead of a patch-work of sentences or parts of paragraphs out of the present Form. For another example, take the dividing of the Form. Obviously our present Form is *linguistically* not designed to be divided. Besides, there is the very legitimate question (which ought to be studied both from a historical viewpoint and from the viewpoint of principles) whether the so-called preparatory part of the Form is indeed preparatory (in the sense of our preparatory services) and whether it was ever intended to be used one Sunday in advance of communion. Besides, there is involved what to my mind is a perfectly horrendous anomaly, that when the form is divided, the *institution* of the sacrament is not even read when the Lord's Supper is celebrated! For a third example, it is perfectly obvious that Article 35 of the Confession (though it is a perfectly fine article for a creed) is a far cry from a liturgical form.

Hence, there is plenty of room for study and correction.

And here is my suggestion. Some consistory should carefully formulate an overture to Synod to bring about legitimate correction in this situation. If there are to be certain optional forms, these should be properly founded and formulated, and the Church Order should provide for legitimate use of them. But this requires study and careful formulation by a capable committee; it requires careful consideration by our broadest assembly; and it requires attention to any proposed changes by the churches.

Make no mistake. I am not proposing liturgical revision in the radical sense. I am an avowed enemy of the current revisionist movement which has infiltrated the Reformed community. We have a heritage of inestimable value in our Reformed liturgy; and we must preserve it. What I am suggesting is an overture to bring about and to legitimize only these minor corrections without making any basic changes. And I believe that this will help to preserve rather than neglect and misuse the heritage of our liturgy.

Give it some thought.

## Question Box

# About the Communion Thank Offering

### The Questions

From a consistory which prefers not to be identified come the following questions: 1) Why is the collection

after communion limited only to those who partook? 2) Why is it that the elders take this collection instead of the deacons? My correspondent added the following



related questions: 1) Would it be wrong to take an offering also from those who are no communicants? 2) Would it be wrong for the deacons to take that collection, or is it simply a custom that the elders do so?

### Reply

These are rather interesting questions concerning what, in my opinion, is an element in our communion service which has become too much a matter of mere custom. And it is a good sign when a consistory pays attention to the meaning and reasons of elements in our liturgy. Perhaps if there were more knowledge of our liturgy, Reformed churches would not be clamoring so loudly for liturgical revision.

A little historical background is in order, first of all. For as with almost all of our liturgy and liturgical practices, so also this practice had its origin far back in our Reformed history.

In earlier days (before the individual cup was introduced) the communicants literally gathered at the communion table. That is, they left their seats and either were seated at a table or tables situated in the front of the auditorium or in the front rows. At that time there was no communion *collection*, but there was an *offering*. That is, no one collected the gifts, as is our custom today. Instead, there was a silver dish (sometimes more than one dish), covered with a cloth or napkin. And the communicants, either when they approached or when they left the table (according to local custom), would place their offerings in these dishes. This would explain the fact that in earlier days only the communicants contributed to this offering. There was also a solemn and fitting element of symbolism in this procedure, according to which the communicants literally left their thank offerings at the Lord's table. And a thank-offering intended for the poor of whom the Lord Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my sheep, ye have done it unto me," — such a thank offering this was intended to be. (This part of the custom some of us will undoubtedly remember. I recall that in my first charge, some twenty years ago, they still had the common cup; and they still gathered in the front rows for the communion service. We had no fancy silver dishes for the offering; but we always had two large napkins lying at the front edge of the communion table. And as the communicants arose and returned to their seats at the end of communion, each stopped at the table and placed his coin under one of the napkins.) In earlier days, especially in the larger Dutch churches, it seems that there was a collection for the poor every Sunday; and frequently this regular collection for the poor was not omitted on communion Sunday. Hence, everyone had the opportunity to contribute alms; and those who partook of communion would then be expected to contribute twice: once in the regular alms collection, and once in the communion thank offering.

From the above summary, it is plain that the ques-

tions raised by my correspondent would have presented no problem in former days.

Moreover, in the light of the above historical summary we can suggest some answers. In the first place, the fact that the collection is limited to those who partook probably has arisen out of the earlier custom according to which the communicants left their offerings at the communion table and from the fact that it is intended specifically as a communion thank offering. This, it seems to me, is quite proper: it is a concrete expression of thanksgiving which is quite in harmony with the oral thanksgiving which is found at the conclusion of the Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper. In the second place, it seems to me that in most of our congregations there will be no problem of limiting the collection to the communicants during the morning service, when communion is served throughout the auditorium. Automatically the collection will also be taken throughout the auditorium. The problem usually arises in the second service, when communion is served to relatively few communicants and in a designated few rows of the auditorium. In regard to this problem, there are three options which I can suggest: 1) Take a general alms collection. For those who have just partaken of communion this would be their thank offering. For those who have not partaken at that service, it would merely constitute an offering for the benevolence fund. Perhaps the objection to this would be that we already have a multiplicity of collections in a time when the collections for the benevolence fund have only too often fallen into disrepute and disuse. (Incidentally, the amount of nickels, dimes, and quarters always impresses me as a rather ironic communion thank offering.) 2) Limit the communion thank offering to communicants, as it would be limited if we still followed the old practice of leaving our gifts at the communion table. 3) Get rid of the problem altogether by working toward the elimination of the second communion service for only a few communicants. I do not mean that this service should be eliminated when it is absolutely necessary because there are some who *cannot* attend the first service. But I think consistories could investigate the situation and work toward the goal of getting all communicants to attend the morning service. In many cases, I think that with a little effort communicants could arrange to be present, — by, for example, arranging to have a babysitter in the morning in families with children who are too young to attend church. In none of these options, however, do I see a question of right or wrong; they are a matter of the local judgment of the consistory.

The second main question (who should take this collection?) is rather simple. At present the elders take this collection. In the past, however, the churches had no such custom because of the different situation. The only reason I can see why the elders do take up this collection is that it is a matter of convenience. The



elders have served communion, and they are usually seated in front at the communion service: hence, they take the collection. I do not believe, however, that this practice is correct. The collection of alms is specifically the task of the deacons. Hence, my answer to the second question is that it not only would not be wrong for the deacons to take this collection, but also

that it would be quite in harmony with their office of deacon that they, not the elders, take up this collection.

I hope I have shed some light on these questions. If by my answers I have occasioned further questions, send them in, please.

H.C.H.

## *Pages From The Past*

# **Believers and their Seed**

## **Chapter IV**

### **THE THEORY OF PRESUPPOSED REGENERATION EVALUATED**

*Rev. Herman Hoeksema*

Now it is indeed true that especially through the labors of the late Dr. A. Kuyper, Sr., the theory of presupposed regeneration (the view that all the children of the covenant must be supposed to be regenerated, and that only on the ground of such a presupposition may Holy Baptism be administered to the seed of the church), has again been on the foreground in recent years.

However, this by no means implies that the theory itself is of recent origin. On the contrary, it may be pointed out that the theory dates from the seventeenth century; and it is generally acknowledged that during the period which the (Christian Reformed) Synod of 1924 called "the flourishing period of Reformed theology" there were various theologians who held this view. Even Professors M. Noordtzi, D.K. Wielenga, H. Bavinck, and P. Biesterveld write that "the viewpoint of all Reformed men up to about the middle of the seventeenth century" was "that the children as well as the adults were believers," (*Opleiding en Theologie*, p.76). It cannot be said with certainty just how Calvin presented the matter, although one sometimes receives the impression that also he defends the above-mentioned position. In his "Institutes," IV, 16, 20, he writes that the children "are baptized into future repentance and faith; for though these graces have not yet been formed in them, the seeds of both are nevertheless implanted in their hearts by the secret operation of the Spirit." Here it is indeed asserted that little children in their earliest infancy can be partakers of the gift of regeneration, as a seed of faith and repentance, — something which no one would deny. But the conclusion that Calvin would presuppose this of all children who are born in God's covenant cannot legitimately be drawn from this statement. That this conclusion is not legitimate, and that one would be pressing Calvin's statement too far if he drew this conclusion from it, becomes plain when Calvin just a

little later leaves an entirely different impression. In IV, 16, 21, Calvin writes, over against the opponents of infant baptism: "They contend that this passage leaves not the least room for the baptism of infants, who are not capable of that in which the truth of baptism is here stated to consist. But they frequently fall into this error, of maintaining that the thing signified should always precede the sign."

Zacharias Ursinus writes in his "Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism," p. 370: "... for infants do believe after their manner, or according to the condition of their age; they have an inclination to faith. Faith is in infants potentially and by inclination, although not actually as in adults. For, as infants born of ungodly parents who are without the church, have no actual wickedness, but only an inclination thereto, so those who are born of godly parents have no actual holiness, but only an inclination to it; not according to nature, but according to the grace of the covenant. And still further: infants have the Holy Ghost, and are regenerated by Him. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb, and Jeremiah is said to have been sanctified before he came out of the womb. (Luke 1: 15; Jer. 1:5) If infants now have the Holy Ghost, he certainly works in them regeneration, good inclinations, new desires, and such other things as are necessary for their salvation, or he at least supplies them with every thing that is requisite for their baptism." Let us note that also here it is not said that we must presuppose of all children from their very birth that they are regenerated. On the contrary, the decisive language which Ursinus employs shows that he has in mind only the elect children of the covenant.

Rev. A.M. Diermanse, in his "*De Uitverkoren Kinderen Wedergeboren, Eisch des Verbonds?*" (The Elect Children Regenerated, Demand of the Covenant?), quotes from the well-known work of Kramer:



"Bullinger says that the children have the Holy Ghost. Thus also Micronius. Of à Lasco, in spite of everything, Kramer presents no stronger and unambiguous testimony than this, that faith is reckoned (or: imputed) to the children, since they belong to Christ and Christ fulfills all in them, although it is true that he presents us with expressions which make us think of the *possibility* of regeneration immediately at the time of their reception of human existence. From the London Catechism Kramer cites the rather indefinite statement that the children are also sanctified to be temples of God through the Spirit.

"Guy de Bres speaks as follows: the Apostle says, 'he that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his.' The children belong to Christ, and therefore they have the Spirit of Christ. The children are also renewed by the Spirit of God according to the measure and receptivity of their age. And this divine power, which is hid in them, gradually grows and increases in them, and at its own proper time clearly manifests itself."

Further, in the same work by Diermanse still others are mentioned as proponents of a similar view of the children of the covenant, such as Dathenus, Manzo Alting, Casper van der Heyden, Jean Taffin, Kimedoncius, and Acronius. Also Franciscus Junius must have maintained that the children possess faith in the principle of the *habitus*, inasmuch as they possess the Spirit of faith. And Festus Hommius expresses himself thus, that the children "possess faith in its first act, in its root and in its seed." Voetius taught that all the elect who are born in the covenant of believing parents are partakers of regeneration as soon as they are born. Revetus and Vossius taught that the children are regenerated from the time of their baptism. Further, Puppius, Udemannus, Bontemps, Bastingius, Walaeus, Gomarus, Maccovius, Leydekker, Fitsius, Vitringa, and others are also mentioned by Kramer.

However, with respect to all these expressions of Reformed theologians, we must not overlook the fact that there is a marked difference between their view and that of a certain presupposed regeneration of all the children of the covenant without distinction. For the fathers did not speak of a presupposition, but of the certainty of faith. The children belonged to Christ, according to their presentation, and therefore they were also regenerated and had the Holy Spirit. According to their view, the children are holy and possess faith in principle. In all this there is no presupposition, but certainty. Now it is true that in these expressions they make no distinction between children of the promise and children of the flesh. But it is nevertheless very clear that they have in view only the former, and therefore mean to speak of the elect seed of the church. Of the elect children they confess that, being born in the covenant, they are also at once regenerated. And this is certainly altogether different than the assertion that we must presuppose concerning *all* the

children of the covenant, without distinction, that they are regenerated from infancy.

It should also not escape our notice that in the confessions of the Reformed churches there is not a trace of such a view to be found. Nowhere is it asserted that baptism is administered to infants on the ground of the presupposition that all the children, head for head, born in the covenant, are regenerated. It is not even maintained that the elect children of the covenant are already regenerated at birth. We read in Question 74 of the Heidelberg Catechism: "Are infants also to be baptized? Yes: for since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God; and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult; they must therefore by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the christian church; and be distinguished from the children of unbelievers as was done in the old covenant or testament by circumcision, instead of which baptism is instituted in the new covenant." And in Article 34 of the Netherland Confession we read concerning the baptism of little children as follows: ". . . therefore we detest the error of the Anabaptists, who are not content with the one only baptism they have once received, and moreover condemn the baptism of the infants of believers, whom we believe ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, as the children in Israel formerly were circumcised, upon the same promises which are made unto our children. And indeed Christ shed his blood no less for the washing of the children of the faithful, than for adult persons; and therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of that, which Christ hath done for them," etc. There is in these expressions of our confession certainly no semblance of a doctrine of presupposed regeneration of all children born in the covenant. The confessions do not even express themselves as to whether the elect children are regenerated from childhood.

Not even in the Baptism Form is the doctrine of a presupposed regeneration to be found, as has sometimes been incorrectly alleged. There it is said in the Prayer of Thanksgiving: "Almighty God and merciful Father, we thank and praise thee, that Thou hast forgiven us, and our children, all our sins, through the blood of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, and received us through thy Holy Spirit as members of thine only begotten Son, and adopted us to be thy children, and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by holy baptism. . . ." Beautiful and strong language of faith, indeed! But for that very reason also, all the more free from every presupposition! We will return to this point later. At present we only wish to remark that this language certainly can never be understood unless we proceed from the organic existence of the church, which here gives thanks for the benefits bestowed in



Christ Jesus upon the elect kernel of the church, after which the whole church is named.

Also the Conclusions of Utrecht leave the real issue rather undecided. With respect to presupposed regeneration they declare that it "is less correct to say that baptism is administered to the children of believers on the ground of their supposed regeneration." And with a view to the question whether every elect child of the covenant is already regenerated at his birth, that Synod of Utrecht declared "that the thesis that every elect child is already regenerated before baptism cannot be proved either from Scripture or from the confession,

inasmuch as God fulfills His promise according to His sovereign power at His own time, whether it be before, during, or after baptism." These expressions do not help us very much, since they are negative and rather vague. But they can serve to show that after all that has been written, there still is no sharp and well-defined view concerning the seed of believers. Surely, there is certainly room yet for further development on the basis of the Word of God and within the limits of the lines already drawn in the confessions.

*(to be continued)*

## *All Around Us*

# **TURMOIL IN EDUCATION PUBLIC SCHOOL PRAYERS LITURGICAL APOSTASY BIBLICAL POLITICS?**

*Prof. H. Hanko*

### ***TURMOIL IN EDUCATION***

Every day there are new outbreaks of violence on the nation's college and university campuses. The violence takes on many different forms. Sometimes students take over various buildings and hold them against the combined efforts of campus authorities and the police to oust them. Sometimes school property is destroyed and records confiscated. Sometimes the students are content with picketing, sit-ins, free-speech demonstrations and campus parades espousing some cause. On occasion, speakers, whom a minority of students detest, are physically abused as they step on campus.

The reasons for campus disorders are also many and varied. There are many campus disorders which are prompted by small groups of radicals promoting obscure causes and trying to test the patience of administrators by various disruptions of school activities. There are beatniks and hippies of all shades and sizes who apparently love chaos for the sake of chaos itself. There are nation-wide organizations (such as the SDS) who are constantly agitating for many left-wing causes which include opposition to the war in Viet Nam, opposition to the draft, etc. and which pride themselves in the use of Communist language, slogans, and tactics. In some instances students are destroying school life in an effort to gain a greater voice in administrative affairs. In other instances students are protesting the hiring or firing of teachers and demanding a voice in the questions of teaching ability, right to

tenure, and staff sabbaticals. In many cases the campus rioting has racial overtones. Some students are attempting to force schools to admit more negroes. Negro groups on many campuses are fighting for what sounds suspiciously like integration: separate Negro facilities, more Negro courses in which Negro teachers teach classes in Negro music, Negro culture, Negro history, Negro art, and the like.

But whatever the cause may be, student unrest is bringing the largest educational institutions in this country to the brink of anarchy.

The current debate is on the question of how best to handle student disorders. Some favor a strong stand in which student unrest is simply quelled through naked force. Police, National Guard troops, and other law enforcement agencies are called in to impose peace at the point of bayonets and through the use of tear gas. Students who persist in unruly conduct are clubbed over the head and dragged off. But this has served, in many cases, to create martyrs for various causes and has increased the tensions that already exist. Other schools have adopted policies of appeasement and have more and more surrendered the authority of faculties and boards of trustees to students who are now to have a growing voice and vote in what should be taught, how subjects should be taught, and who shall teach them. If the trend continues, the students will be operating their own schools. This hasn't worked too well. Students do not have a very good idea of what is profitable for them to learn.



No solution yet attempted is working. But this much is obvious, that all the trouble which is gradually destroying the great educational institutions of this country has its roots in the general breakdown of authority which characterizes so much of our modern life. There is no longer any kind of respect for the law and for those who are entrusted with the responsibility of enforcing it. In fact, those who have this responsibility in any area of life are themselves much to blame for refusing to exercise the authority which is their sacred trust. This is true of parents in the home, first of all. But it is equally true of those who rule in positions of government, of employers who surrender their solemn obligations of authority to unions, and of teachers who abrogate their responsibilities and surrender their rights to silly students whose demands are childish and evil. The anarchy which gradually grows to unmanageable proportions in the country as a whole spills over into the halls of learning.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that in the world there is no solution to the problem. The result will be that order will have to be imposed on a degenerate society by a mailed fist and by dictatorial power. No state can allow indefinitely chaos to reign and anarchy to prevail without destroying itself. But the solution is a dictatorship in which the individual has no rights left. This is the direction our country is heading. The time seems not too far away when, out of sheer necessity, the rule of naked power will be the rule of the land and of the campus.

These things too point to the gradual development of Antichrist.

### *PUBLIC SCHOOL PRAYERS*

The issue of prayers in the public schools is far from dead. Some schools are simply ignoring the Supreme Court decisions of 1963 and going their own ways. This is true of the 3200 public school students in Clairton, Pennsylvania who continue to begin each day with prayer and Bible reading.

But the issue remains alive in the halls of Congress as well. Senator Everett Dirksen continues his fight for a constitutional amendment which would make legal religious devotions in the classroom. In an earlier battle for his amendment, Dirksen came within six votes of the two-thirds he needed to get the amendment approved by the Senate. Such approval would be only a first step. Next would come the need for two-thirds approval by the House. Then three-fourths of the states would have to pass favorably on the amendment.

But although Dirksen has not yet succeeded, he has not given up the struggle. The present Congress is faced once again with the problem. The proposed amendment reads:

Nothing contained in this Constitution shall abridge the right of persons lawfully assembled in any public building which is supported in whole or in

part through the expenditure of public funds, to participate in nondenominational prayer.

Dirksen has one powerful lever which he can use to try to pry approval from the Senate. This is the threat of a nation-wide constitutional convention. Already thirty-two of the required thirty-four states have called for one. There are legal questions involved. No one seems to be sure that Congress would be legally required to call such a convention even if thirty-four states did approve. But one thing is rather certain. The majority of people seem to favor some sort of devotional exercise in the public school system. If they would ever get a chance to vote, predictions are that the amendment would pass. This Dirksen is using to pressure his colleagues to vote in favor of his amendment.

### *LITURGICAL APOSTASY*

One important way in which the apostasy of our times is manifesting itself is in liturgical change. In general it is historically true that apostasy becomes manifest in a growing emphasis on liturgy. People, drifting away from the Word of God and bored with the preaching of the gospel, substitute for the living preaching of the Word a vast and elaborate liturgy which satisfies the gratification of the senses, gives a salve to the conscience, and still does not involve any worship in Spirit and in truth. But in particular the liturgy which is adopted as a substitute for true worship and for the preaching is itself a reflection of the doctrinal drift and apostasy of the church.

We hope to concentrate in later issues on several of these liturgical developments which have come increasingly into the Reformed churches. A detailed study of liturgy would be a beneficial thing.

For the present we quote from a liturgical program which was recently used in a United Presbyterian Church in a "Celebration of Christian Unity." The entire program was quoted in *Christian Beacon*. Our quotes are excerpts.

The program was begun with an organ prelude, a call to worship which was a quotation of Ps. 133:3, Eph. 2:4a, Jn. 17:21. There was a processional hymn, an invocation, an anthem sung, a hymn of praise, an offertory, and doxology. But then followed what was called "The service of At-one-ment".

LEADER: Peter and Paul, Athanasius and Augustine,

all apostles and fathers of the Church,  
are worthy of our praise.

Hearing the call of Christ, they followed  
him wherever he led, making disciples,  
establishing the Church,  
defending and expounding the faith,  
suffering martyrdom for their Lord.

Through the generations others followed after:  
Cyril of Jerusalem, and Gregory of Rome,  
Boniface and Alcuin,  
Cyril and Methodius



Anselm and Bernard,  
Francis and Thomas and Dominic,  
Dante and Michelangelo and Bach,  
Jean de Brebeuf, Isaac Jogues and Junipero Sera.  
With voice and pen and hammer,  
as wandering preachers and counsellors to kings,  
in centers of culture and barbarous hinterlands,  
they carried the name of Christ,  
transforming the world after his likeness.  
People: The Lord says: "See I place my words in  
your mouth! . . .

Leader: Martin Luther and John Calvin  
proclaimed anew the simplicity of trust in  
God's love.  
Leading a host of others —  
Cranmer and Knox, Milton and Fox and  
Wesley —  
they reformed the Church  
with the gospel of justification by grace  
through faith.  
Imbued with the reformation faith,  
their spiritual sons and daughters founded  
new nations,  
shaping national life by their knowledge  
of Christ and his ways.  
There rose up other great men —  
Jonathan Edwards and David Livingston,  
Walter Rauschenbusch and Albert Schweitzer  
and Toyohiko Kagawa, John R. Mott and  
William Temple, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, John  
XXIII and Paul Tillich, Martin Luther King —  
Calling the nations to repentance and sacrifice,  
goaded the Churches to throw off their divi-  
sions,  
dying for the world which Christ loves,  
shaking the foundations so that God's truth  
might break into the hearts and minds of men.  
People: Father, we pray especially for those,  
throughout the world,  
who believe in the gospel. . . .  
We pray also for all churches,  
that they may not lay up treasures on earth  
or become monuments to a past age,

clinging to that which is already dead. . . .  
Leader: Eugene Carson Blake, James E. DeWitt, M.  
M. Thomas and Billy Graham are men passionate  
in their devotion to Christ, grieved by  
the divisions in his Body the Church, zealous  
in their searchings of Scripture. . . .  
Leader: Julian Bond, Ghandi, Dag Hammarskjold  
have led their  
brotherhood into a new ear.  
By the power of their minds, and the ceaseless  
exercise  
of their creative force —  
Karl Barth, Thomas Merton, Karl Rahner, Dr.  
Visser't  
Hooft, Harvey Cox, Harry Emerson Fosdick —  
these preachers and scholars, writers and  
teachers  
using old forms and creating new,  
carried the Gospel into the structures of contem-  
porary life. . . .  
Etc.

This is ecumenicity in liturgy. But how can it be the  
worship of God which must be "in Spirit and in  
truth?"

#### BIBLICAL POLITICS?

Conservatives have a knack for mixing badly their  
religion and politics. An example of this was found in a  
book review in a recent issue of *Christian Economics*.  
The book spoke of various documents of American  
history in biblical terms.

1. The Mayflower Compact, the *genesis* of the  
American republic. 2. The Declaration of Indepen-  
dence, our national *exodus*. 3. The Constitution, our  
*book of laws*. 4. Washington's Farewell Address, one  
of our major *prophecies*. 5. The Star Spangled  
Banner, our greatest *Psalms*. 6. Lincoln's Second  
Inaugural, our *gospel* of true Americanism. 7. The  
Road Away from Revolution, by Woodrow Wilson,  
one of our notable *epistles*. 8. Douglas MacArthur's  
address at the formal surrender of Japan on the  
battleship Missouri, our *revelation*.

## In His Fear

# Getting Something for Nothing

(Concluded)

Rev. John A. Heys

Last time we closed our discussion of this matter of  
getting something for nothing by suggesting that we  
examine our own lives to see to what degree we are  
trying to practice this evil.

What now did you find?

Did you give any thought to the area of your church  
life? Must men brand you as one who is trying to get

something for nothing during the divine worship  
service and matters related to it? Is your hand always  
ready to receive anything and everything that the  
Church has to give, but seldom if ever ready to impart  
more than a farthing, and to get away without giving  
that much, if you can manage it? You come to church  
for a blessing, but you have no offering to give. You



have hundreds of dollars to give for worldly entertainment but in the sphere of the spiritual and the worthwhile you cannot find a few pennies to further the cause of God's kingdom. O, do not deny that. Your color television set you deemed a necessity and even though it costs you many week's wages to purchase, you managed to get one. But \$2.00 a week for Christian education, which amounts to less than a black and white TV set, you cannot scrape together. The collection plate in church is passed by or insulted with a sum so small that you slip it in under cover of your hand, lest others see that you give next to nothing.

But you expect the church to do everything for you. If you or your family are hospitalized you expect frequent and regular calls. You will be liberal in your criticism and fault findings, but you will refuse to give a word of encouragement or help to right the wrongs of which you are so free to speak. You assume the Let-George-Do-It attitude, and here in the church take the position that the church owes you a blessing. You will decry the expenses but offer no suggestion as to how it can be done without these necessary expenses. Something for nothing is your slogan.

And what about the members of the various societies and organizations in the church? Members there are who avoid all possible committee work. They will see to it that they are where they can reap all the benefits of the work of these committees. But they will refuse all committee work. When it comes to studying for the Bible discussion they will also leave this to the others. They are glad to go home with the fruit of someone else's toil, but you must not even ask them to read the passage over before they leave home. They come to get something but have no intention of giving anything.

These are conspicuously absent from the business meeting. They will not give as much as their presence and their vote. They will be very free to give you their opinion of how wrong these decisions were. But the only way you can get them to these business meetings is to fail to announce them as business meetings. Again, they are always too busy to attend those nights that the officers are chosen and the committees are appointed. If you do not see them there, they are not apt to be remembered for an office or a committee position. Should you nevertheless place them in office or on a committee, then you will see how freely they will give and how liberally! They will give you a thousand reasons why they cannot serve and ought to be taken off from the position given them.

It is so easy to be a Midianitish Moses!

There was an Egyptian Moses who was bold and ready to fight for the cause that he had chosen. While in Pharaoh's house in Egypt he is a mighty and brave man. You had better not tussle with him. He was ready to do something and that for nothing. No one hired

him to kill the Egyptian who was abusing an Hebrew. But that Midianitish Moses was a different man entirely. At the burning bush he pleads with God not to be appointed to an office, not to be given a work to do. He finds all kinds of excuses for not taking the office. Better was the Egyptian Moses. Better still is the Wilderness Moses who carried the whole rebellious nation on his shoulders, who wore himself out in the cause which he had chosen.

These lines are not intended for those that have nothing to give. They are not written for those who would speak but find it difficult to express their opinion, nor for those who would serve on committees and in offices but have a health problem or the like that makes it difficult and works a hardship upon them or their families. Let these be content in the truth that when others give to them and serve with their abilities and talents, the truth of God's Word stands that it is more blessed to give than to receive. And they, by standing and waiting, in thankfulness that God has given them men that can serve, give these more gifted, talented members, or who are better situated financially, the opportunity to receive this greater blessedness for giving. And they themselves are blessed because they are giving these the opportunity to show mercy.

But what saith the Scripture about all this?

To mind come the words of Solomon in Proverbs 6:6, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." It would be called heresy to quote this text to those who want and demand forty hours wages for thirty hours work, or to the have nots who are not interested in obtaining a job or labor for their hands or minds but want an everlasting and ever increasing handout and believe that it is coming to them whether they work or not. Then also there is the text of Paul in II Thessalonians 3:10 whereby the Word of God not only ignores the cry of the slothful but pricks their bubble so completely. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should they eat."

And has all the showering of gifts for nothing upon the masses that clamor for a share of this earth's goods without any labor on their part solved any of our national problems? Another year has come and gone. Reviews of the year have appeared in almost every newspaper and magazine either in an editorial or a contributed column. And none of them can show that all this disregarding of Proverbs 6:6 and of II Thessalonians 3:10 has solved one bit of our problems. The spirit behind all this rioting and crying for equality and sharing of the wealth is wrong. And you are never going to solve a problem with such an evil motive and spirit by disregarding the Word of God. Let the man who refuses to work when given the opportunity take heed that GOD says that if he will not work, he shall not eat. God is the One Who says that he is a fool and



ought to go to school among the lowly but wise ants.

Once again, these lines are not written for those who cannot work, who would work but are barred from jobs because of color, social standing or the like. It is not meant for the handicapped nor, surely, for those who cannot find work because they will not bow before the godless unions and their demand of allegiance to man above God and advocacy of rebellion against authorities. It is for those who *live* from the principle of getting something for nothing in a deliberate striving to benefit at the expense of others.

And that the unbelieving world cares not about God's Word and tries to solve all its problems apart from that Word is to be understood. Paul tells us that the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Romans 8:7. The Psalms declare that those who say that there is no God — whether they say that with their lips or by the policies they adopt and the practices which they advocate — are fools. But that the church, — maybe it is better to say, but that there are those in the church — who will advocate endless handouts, pampering the Let-George-Do-The-Work-While-We-Enjoy-The-Profits-Of-Their-Labor advocates, is a blot on the very name of the Church of God.

Of course the Church is humanitarian in the sense that she is merciful and deeply concerned with the sufferings of mankind. Of course the individual believers are Merciful Samaritans (rather than Good Samaritans) and do not ask after a man's color or race or family tree before assisting him and putting out a helping hand. But the programs of the world and of the Church must be different and by God's grace are different. The Church approaches all problems in His Fear and therefore turns to the Word of God. The world turns, as did Nebuchadnezzar, to its worldly wise men and astrologers. They have their "authorities" on economics, education, housing, welfare and what have you? They study the works of men. They do not concern themselves with "Thus saith the Lord." And that all this confusion and unrest, that all this rioting and revolution is due to sin and is bred by sin they will never admit. Instead, according to them, it is simply poverty that causes all this revolt and unrest. The solution then is at hand: Give these people what they want! Give them something for nothing! But we will reap a whirlwind pretty soon. For, once tasting that they can get so much for nothing, these are not

going to be satisfied with that much. They will ever reach out for more and more for nothing until they become the haves to mistreat the have-nots which benefited them so greatly.

This is not in His fear and will only bring more and more fear of man to mankind. We have not seen the end yet of the unrest in our streets and in our colleges. For we have not yet seen the cause of it all; and we refuse to see the only cure. Let the Church be warned not to try to find a "social gospel" that will solve the problems of the natural man. There is only one gospel and that is the gospel as it is in Christ. It is the gospel that preaches the complete blotting out of the guilt of God's people through the poverty and death of God's Son in our flesh. It is a gospel that is very particular and not for every individual in the world. It is for every nation, tongue and tribe, but it is not for every man, woman and child in every nation, tongue and tribe. Deny that, when Scripture teaches this from the announcement in the very beginning of two seeds (and one only that would be blessed) through Jesus' words that He lays down His life for His sheep, and when He prays not for the world, and you simply do not understand the true gospel. Is it perhaps because we are not living as pilgrims and strangers and have this world and this life for our goal? Then our position is hopeless, for there is no good news for this world. The gospel promises a world to come in which only some of humanity shall be blessed, for these only will have the forgiveness of their sins. These shall receive something worthwhile for nothing, in order forever to *serve* God in glory.

Indeed, we receive something for nothing. Salvation is absolutely free. We received the Son of God in our flesh without doing anything ourselves. We received His cross in spite of rather than because of our works. We receive the pardon of His blood and did receive it even before we were born or could desire it. See Romans 9:11-13. But we received something for nothing in order that we might be able to do something. We receive salvation in order to be able to serve God perfectly in the new Jerusalem. We are created in Christ Jesus UNTO good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10. Yea, because we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, we receive EVERYTHING for nothing that we may walk in His fear, now in principle and presently in perfection.

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## Examining Ecumenicalism

# THE R.E.S. AND THE W.C.C.

Rev. G. Van Baren

Prof. H. Hanko in the Oct. 1, 1968 issue of the *Standard Bearer* gave a brief summary of the decisions of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod which met at Lunteren in the Netherlands on August 13-23, 1968. Those interested could well review that article.

In this issue, I would enter into greater detail on the decision taken concerning membership in the World Council of Churches. Earlier synods of the R.E.S. have gone on record as being opposed to membership in the W.C.C. as presently constituted. But repeatedly the question arises again. This past summer the R.E.S. reaffirmed its old decision. The following was decided:

The Synod endorses the recommendation in Study Committee Report 8 (on the "Nature of the Church and its Ecumenical Calling") that Synod reaffirms the advice which previous Synods have given to member churches "not to join the W.C.C. in the present situation."

Grounds:

1. Re: The Nature of the W.C.C.

The W.C.C. claims to represent the given unity in Christ, but this is an illegitimate claim, because the W.C.C. does not unitedly and unconditionally acknowledge the authority of Christ, the Head of the Church, as He speaks in the infallible Word, accordingly it does not unequivocally reject that which is contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, nor does it warn its member churches against the false gospel that has a recognized place in many of these churches.

2. Re: The Basis of the W.C.C. and its Functioning.

Although the words of the Basis are in themselves a summary of the gospel and include a reference to the Scriptures, this is inadequate as a basis or starting point for an ecumenical movement, because when understood in the light of history and in the context of contemporary theological discussion it is open to various unbiblical interpretations; and in effect the World Council does permit such essentially different interpretations.

However, the Acts of the R.E.S. reflect what must have been considerable disagreement concerning mem-

bership in the W.C.C. The minority recommendation was defeated — but it reflects an obvious attempt to approve the idea of membership in W.C.C., but in such a way as to satisfy those who saw real obstacles to such membership. The minority recommendation which was defeated, declared:

The Reformed Ecumenical Synod advises the member churches not to take a decision with regard to the World Council of Churches before they have thoroughly studied the ecumenical problems in the context of their own situation and before they are certain that in their particular situation a decision to join the World Council of Churches does not endanger their loyalty to the Reformed confession.

*The majority report of the study committee*

The decision of the R.E.S. opposing membership in the W.C.C. is very brief. But what was adopted forms the conclusion of a rather lengthy critical study of the W.C.C. This entire report can be found in the Acts of the R.E.S. of 1968. I will attempt to present a brief summary of that report.

The report begins by summarizing past actions of the R.E.S. on the W.C.C. From the beginning, the R.E.S. has opposed membership in the W.C.C.: first in Amsterdam in 1949, then in Edinburgh in 1953, again in Potchefstroom in 1958, finally in Grand Rapids in 1963. In 1963 the decision stated in part: "the undeniable fact that outspoken liberals are active, and in some instances, prominent, in the W.C.C., and that some of its member churches knowingly tolerate and even highly honour as preachers and teachers, deniers of cardinal truths of the Christian religion" and also spoke of "the antithesis of belief and unbelief, the true Church and the false, as taught in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession and Ch. XXV, v of the Westm. Conf. of Faith and in such passages of Scripture as Gal. 1:8, 9; II Cor. 6:14-18; and II John 10, 11."

The report continues by discussing three aspects of the organization of the W.C.C.: its Nature, its Basis, and its Conception of the unity of the church.

The report quotes from various W.C.C. decisions to show the official position of the W.C.C. concerning its own nature. In one document, the W.C.C. said concerning itself:



(a) The W.C.C. is composed of Churches which acknowledge Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. (b) These Churches find their unity in Christ. They have not to create this unity; it is the gift of God. (c) But this unity must be expressed in work and life. (d) The W.C.C. wants to serve the Churches as an instrument whereby they may bear witness together to their common allegiance to Christ, and co-operate in matters requiring united action. (e) The idea of a super-church is expressly rejected. (f) The aim of the W.C.C. is rather to express the unity by binding the Churches closer to Christ and therefore closer to one another.

The report asks two questions concerning the nature of the W.C.C. as presented by that organization. The first is, "Is the declaration acceptable from the Reformed point of view?" (In the report, several other documents are summarized in addition to that which I have quoted above.) It concludes that much of the declarations can be endorsed by Reformed Churches. However, the report asks: "What does the recognition of the *'vestigia ecclesiae'* (marks of the church) in one another's church mean and entail? What does it mean, e.g., with regard to the unity as a present reality? Does it mean that we can already say: we are already one in Christ — all that has to happen is to find means and ways to express it in work and life . . . ? Does it also mean: as churches we are already able, to a certain extent and in certain respects, to give a common witness? . . . In our opinion it is HERE, where we find the real problems. . . ."

But a second question also arises: "Has the W.C.C. in its actual existence, both in structure and actions, adhered to this declaration?" The report points out that in spite of frequent claims to the contrary (see quotation above), the W.C.C. stands in permanent danger of acting as or speaking like a Super-Church. The report goes on to show how this "Super-Church" image is evident in official statements made by the W.C.C. There is also the official position of the W.C.C. that it is not its duty to negotiate unions between churches — however the report points out instances where the emphasis in the W.C.C. in recent years has been upon mergers and that there are even instances of pressure being applied toward that end.

Secondly, the report discusses the "basis" of the W.C.C. The original basis of the W.C.C., as stated in its constitution, read: "The W.C.C. is a fellowship of Churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." However, in 1961, at New Delhi, the basis was revised as follows: "The W.C.C. is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit." The report states:

The present Basis, as extended at New Delhi, contains three main statements. (a) A *christological* statement: Jesus Christ is God and Saviour. This is the original and fundamental statement as accepted at Amsterdam, 1948. (b) A *Trinitarian* statement: "the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit." This was already implicit in the original Basis . . . , but now it has been made explicit by the extension. It is more than a mere precise statement of the christological theme. It is a confession of the Triune God Himself. (c) A statement about the *Bible*: "according to the Scriptures". It does not deal with the nature, revelatory character or inspiration of the Bible, but only wants to emphasize the authority which these Scriptures possess for all Christians . . . . At the same time, however, it indicates how the christological statement must be understood, viz., as speaking of the Christ of the Scriptures.

The report points out that if the "Basis" is to be considered an "Erasmian reduction," that is, a reduction of truth to the lowest common denominator upon which all churches can not only agree but also unite, Reformed Christians could not agree. However, if the "Basis" represents a "*concentration*" or brief summary of what is the very heart of the gospel (that Jesus is both God and Saviour), and that all of Scripture must be understood in that light, then Reformed Christians could agree that this might be a basis and starting point for an ecumenical movement.

However, the report does express certain grave and valid reservations concerning the "Basis" of the W.C.C. For instance, what does the phrase "according to the Scriptures" really mean? It says nothing of "plenary inspiration, canonicity, and the historical realism of the historical accounts of the Bible." This part of the Basis is "badly in need of further definition before it can be regarded as a significant step toward a truly orthodox articulation of the faith of the Bible." In addition to that, the report wonders if the "Basis" is sufficient to ward off *threatening syncretism*. There is today the attempt even to relate Christianity to all manner of other world religions. The report points out that also in W.C.C. documents there is a looking upon non-christian religions as vehicles through which Christ addresses Christianity. They quote from the *New Delhi Report* which says concerning the heathen: "We must take up the conversations about Christ with them, knowing that Christ addresses them through us and us through them." If the "Basis" of the W.C.C. can allow for this, it certainly is not adequate.

The report goes on to discuss the question: does the W.C.C. actually maintain that "Basis" which it professes? The position of the W.C.C. is this: "Each church which joins the W.C.C. must therefore seriously consider whether it desires to participate in a fellowship with this particular Basis. . . . On the other hand



the W.C.C. would overstep the limits it has set for itself if it should seek to pronounce judgment as to whether any particular church is in fact taking the Basis seriously. It remains the responsibility of each church to decide itself whether it can sincerely accept the Basis of the Council."

The report concedes that the W.C.C. indeed has no right to exercise discipline over the internal life of the member churches. However, it points out that since "the W.C.C. as an organization has accepted the Basis as its normative starting point and requires from all prospective members a written declaration of agreement, in our opinion, this gives the W.C.C. the right

AND the duty to exclude from membership those churches, which, after affiliation, would deny the Basis in *official statements*. Secondly, the report points out that the W.C.C., in affirming the positive statement of its Basis, must also emphatically warn against all teachings in conflict with it — specifically modernism and liberalism. But this, the W.C.C. refuses to do. As one man wrote: the W.C.C. has "infinite tolerance in matters of faith, of which the W.C.C. 'knows everything,' and pious intolerance towards unbelief, of which it shows nothing."

I hope to conclude a summary of the report on the W.C.C. as given at the R.E.S. in the next issue, D.V.

## Contending for the Faith

# THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

THE THIRD PERIOD — 730-1517 A.D.  
DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH OF ROME

Rev. H. Veldman

In our preceding article we had begun to call attention to the view of sin as held by Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas was the Doctor Angelicus of the schoolmen, and by far the most influential theologian in the Latin Church since the days of Augustine. Anselm taught that original sin, although simply the loss of original righteousness, is nevertheless truly and properly sin. Others, however, including Abelard, took the position that the loss of original righteousness left Adam precisely in the state in which he was created, and, as his descendants share his fate, they are born in the same state. There is therefore no inherent hereditary corruption, no moral character either good or bad. This, of course, is Pelagianism. It is true that, because of this lack of righteousness, the lower powers of man's nature gain the ascendancy over the higher, and that man grows in sin. Sin consists in assent and purpose. Only when the soul assents to this dominion of the lower nature and deliberately acts in accordance with it, can it be chargeable with any personal, inherent sin. And children, therefore, are not born in sin. Aquinas, according to Hodge, although approaching much nearer to Augustine than the other theologians of his age, taught a certain synergism which enters into all other systems. As we noted in our preceding article, he taught that original sin consists in two things, first, the loss of original righteousness and, second, the disorder of the whole nature. The one he called the *formale* and the other he called the *materiale*

of original sin. Aquinas, therefore, taught that sin is more than simply the loss of what Adam originally possessed in Paradise. And we concluded our article with the observation that this positive part of original sin is called concupiscence. It is of the utmost importance what Aquinas means when he speaks of concupiscence.

We now again quote from the Systematic Theology of Hodge, Vol. II, 172, f.f:

Most frequently, in accordance with the *usus loquendi* (currently in use, H.V.) of his own and of subsequent periods, this positive part of original sin is called *concupiscence*. This is a word which it is very important to understand, because it is used in such different senses even in relation to the same subject. Some by concupiscence mean simply the sexual instinct; others, what belongs to our sensuous nature in general; others, everything in man which has the seen and temporal for its object; and others still, for the wrong bias of the soul, by which, being averse to God, it turns to the creature and to evil. Everything depends therefore on the sense in which the word is taken, when it is said that original sin consists, positively considered, in concupiscence. If by concupiscence is meant merely our sensuous nature, then original sin is seated mainly in the body and in the animal affections, and the higher powers of the soul are unaffected by its contamination. By Thomas Aquinas the word is taken in its widest sense, as is obvious from its equivalents just mentioned, aversion



from God, corrupt disposition, disorder, or deformity, of the powers of the soul. As to the constituent elements of this original corruption, or as he expresses it, the wounds under which our fallen nature is suffering, he says, they include, (a) Ignorance and want of the right knowledge of God in the intelligence. (b) An aversion in the will from the highest good. (c) In the feelings or affections, or rather in that department of our nature in which the feelings are the manifestations, a tendency to delight in created things. The seat of original sin, therefore, with him is the whole soul. This concupiscence or inherent corruption, is not an act, or agency, or activity, by a habit, i.e., and immanent inherent disposition of the mind. Finally, original sin is a penal evil. The loss of original righteousness and the consequent disorder of our nature, are the penalty of Adam's first transgression. So far the doctrine of Thomas is in strict accordance with that of Augustine. His discussion of the subject might be framed into an exposition of the answer in the "Westminster Catechism" which declares the sinfulness of that estate into which men fell, to consist in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature. The point of difference relates to the degree of injury received from the apostasy of Adam, or the depth of that corruption of nature derived from him. This Thomas calls a languor or weakness. Men in consequence of the fall are utterly unable to save themselves, or to do anything really good in the sight of God without the aid of divine grace. But they still have the power to cooperate with that grace. They cannot, as the Semi-Pelagians taught, begin the work of turning unto God, and therefore need preventing grace, but with that grace they are enabled to cooperate. This makes the difference between the effectual (irresistible) grace of Augustine, and the synergism which enters into all other systems.

This view of sin, we do not hesitate to say, is a dangerous conception and presentation of the truth. When one departs from the truth of the Word of God, his conception is the more dangerous the nearer he approaches to the truth of the Scriptures. In many ways the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas came so close to the doctrine of Augustine. The only point of difference between the former and the latter was a matter of degree, of emphasis. Aquinas spoke of the man's corruption which he had derived from Adam as a languor or weakness. Men, in consequence of the fall, are unable to save themselves, or to do anything really good in the sight of God without the aid of Divine grace, but they still have the power to cooperate with that grace. They cannot begin the work of turning unto God and therefore need preventing grace, but they are able to cooperate with that grace. We recognize this, do we not. Our churches experienced this, also and particularly in 1953. Indeed, so they said, the work of salvation is all of the Lord, BUT man is also responsible. To teach, as did Aquinas, that man cannot

save himself or do anything that is really good in the sight of God, and then to say that he still has the power to cooperate with that grace of the Lord, surely means that the latter teaching is fundamentally a denial and setting aside of the former. Heresy has a subtle way of creeping into the church of God. We must always be on our guard against any synergism that enters into all other systems. As we shall see later, Arminianism is also characterized by this subtle perversion and denial of the fundamental truths of the Word of God.

Besides calling attention to the views on sin by Anselm, Abelard and Aquinas, Hodge also calls attention to the doctrine of the Scotists. Of Scotus Hodge has the following, and again we quote:

Duns Scotus, a Franciscan, Professor of Theology at Oxford, Paris, and Cologne, where he died A.D. 1308, was the great opponent of Thomas Aquinas. So far as the subject of original sin is concerned, he sided with the Semi-Pelagians. He made original sin to consist solely in the loss of original righteousness, and as this was purely a supernatural gift, not pertaining to the nature of man, its loss left Adam and his posterity after him, precisely in the state in which man was originally created. Whatever of disorder is consequent on this loss of righteousness is not of the nature of sin. Men, therefore, are born into the world in *puris naturalibus* (i.e., in the simple essential attributes of his nature, H.V.), not in the Pelagian sense, as Pelagians do not admit any supernatural gift of righteousness to Adam, but in the sense that they possess all the essential attributes of their nature uninjured and uncontaminated. As free will, i.e., the ability to do and to be whatever is required of man by his Maker, belongs essentially to his nature, this also remains since the fall. It is indeed weakened and beset with difficulties, as the balance wheel of our nature, original righteousness, is gone, but still it exists. Man needs divine assistance. He cannot do good, or make himself good without the grace of God. But the dependence of which Scotus speaks is rather that of the creature upon the creator, than that of the sinner upon the Spirit of God. His endeavour seems to have been to reduce the supernatural to the natural; to confound the distinction constantly made in the Bible and by the Church, between the providential efficiency of God everywhere present and always operating in and with natural causes, and the efficiency of the Holy Ghost in the regeneration and sanctification of the soul.

This view of Scotus, it seems to me, is very similar to that which was advocated by Abelard. And it also seems to me that this conception is not merely akin to the views of the Semi-Pelagians, but that of Pelagianism. Abelard taught that, properly speaking, inasmuch as there can be no evil intention in infants, there can therefore be no sin in them. When born, all men possess all the essential attributes of their nature uninjured and uncontaminated. And that Scotus advocated and defended this view of original sin was not



due to ignorance, inasmuch as he was the great opponent of Thomas Aquinas. Indeed, notwithstanding the genius and writings of Augustine, Pelagianism had certainly made deep inroads into the hearts and minds of the church. The heresy of Pelagianism is so palatable to the natural man!

Also of interest is the following observation of Hodge:

The Dominicans and Franciscans became, and long continued the two most powerful orders of monks in the Roman Church. As they were antagonistic on so many other points, they were also opposed in doctrine. The Dominicans, as the disciples of Thomas Aquinas, were called Thomists, and the Franciscans, as followers of Duns Scotus, were called Scotists. The opposition between these parties, among other doctrinal points, embraced as we have seen, that of original sin. The Thomists were inclined to moderate Augustinianism, the Scotists to Semi-Pelagianism. All the

theories however above mentioned, variously modified, had their zealous advocates in the Latin Church, when the Council of Trent was assembled to determine authoritatively the true doctrine and to erect a barrier to the increasing power of the Reformation.

And so the battle lines were drawn when the Council of Trent was convened. This council was convened to combat the rising tide of the Reformation. It may well be Rome's counter reformation. The Reformation had exposed many obvious evils in the Church of that day. Efforts had to be put forth to counteract this rising tide of Protestantism. This explains the assembling of the Council of Trent. This council also considered the doctrinal position and teachings of the Church. Although striving to reform the Church, it also set itself to maintain the doctrinal positions and teachings of the Church. And so it also expressed itself on the subject of sin. To this, the Lord willing, we will call attention in our following article.

## *The Lord Gave The Word....*

*Ps. 68:11*

# **The Spread of the Gospel Throughout Europe 500–1000 A.D.**

*Rev. C. Hanko*

The period from five hundred to one thousand after Christ is often referred to as The Dark Age. There was much corruption in the church, especially among the popes that controlled the church. Paganism and barbarianism still prevailed in much of the continent of Europe. And there was often a bitter struggle between the church and the pagans. One of the clerics of France wrote in the early part of the tenth century (909), "The cities are depopulated, the monasteries ruined and burned, the country reduced to solitude . . . . As the first men lived without law or fear of God, abandoned to their passions, so now every man does what seems right in his own eyes, despising laws human and divine and the commands of the church. The strong oppress the weak; the world is full of violence against the poor and of the plunder of the goods of the church . . . . Men devour one another like fishes of the sea." (The History Of Christian Missions," by Stephen Neill, pg. 97).

From the point of view of mission endeavors this period is particularly interesting to us who are of Dutch or of German descent. For this was the period in which most of Europe broke away from pagan barbarianism to the christianity of that day. We will have occasion to mention especially the mission

endeavors that were made in what is now the Netherlands and parts of Germany. Actually in Europe there were two movements being carried on at almost the same time. One effort was being made by the pope in Rome to win Europe for the Roman Catholic persuasion. The other was the labor of individuals mainly from Ireland and England exerting their influence upon the mainland of Europe and more or less independent from the pope.

It was Gregory I (590-604) who insisted on the universal supremacy of the pope. He liked to refer to himself as the Servant of servants, the Vicar of Christ, with the right and authority to rule over the entire world, both from a religious and a political aspect. Bent on increasing his prestige in other lands, and at the same time endeavoring to keep his monks from becoming involved in the affairs of the world, he sent them out to win converts for the Roman Catholic Church. Some were appointed for Anglo-Saxon England, while others were directed to Germany which was still for the most part barbarian. In 596 Augustin (sometimes referred to as Austin) with forty monks was appointed to work in England. The Anglo-Saxons had come from Germany in 449 and had invaded eastern England and southeast Scotland, and forced



the existing church farther into the interior. Now Ethelbert, King of Kent, had married a woman from Paris who professed christianity. This likely influenced the king to receive Augustin and his followers, to listen to his sermon and to promise him protection. A few years later Ethelbert was baptized and thereupon many others professed christianity. Augustin was made bishop of Canterbury, after which he made serious efforts to bring the Celtic Church into the Roman communion, but these efforts met only with failure.

It may be well to mention that Augustin used his own peculiar method which was sanctioned by the pope and was later used elsewhere, the effects of which are still evident today. Instead of condemning the pagan practices and festivities that he would meet, he tried to combine them with the worship and activities of the church. He was encouraged by the pope that "the heathen temples of these people need not be destroyed, only the idols found in them . . . . And since the people are accustomed, when they assemble for sacrifice, to kill many oxen in sacrifice to the devils, it seems reasonable to appoint a festival for the people by way of exchange. The people must learn to slay their cattle not in honor of the devil, but in honor of God and for their own food; when they have eaten and are full, then they must render thanks to the Giver of all things. If we allow them these outward joys, they are more likely to find their way to the true inner joy . . . . It is doubtless impossible to cut off all abuses at once from rough hearts, just as the man who sets out to climb a high mountain does not advance by leaps and bounds, but goes upward step by step and pace by pace." (Bede, "Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation.") This all sounds very nice, but it obviously does not reckon with the complete change wrought by the Holy Spirit in regeneration and conversion of the elect. It is no wonder that so many who professed to be converted became only nominally Christian. And this undoubtedly accounts for the strange mixture of religious and pagan elements in the celebration of Halloween as indulged in by so many still today. Even the celebration of the birth of Christ is a concoction of Christ-mass with its baby Jesus in a manger, combined with Santa Claus, "Jingle Bells," and tinsels and tissue paper and gifts.

Apart from the efforts of the pope at Rome, there were also many monks, particularly from Ireland, who went out as missionaries either alone or in groups into the British Isles and into western Europe. These monks were not ordained and sent out by the church according to the principle laid down in Acts 13, but were either appointed by some abbot or bishop or went out entirely on their own. Many of them were motivated by the desire to separate themselves from their families and country, to become "wanderers" as a form of asceticism that was considered pleasing to the Lord. One of these was Columba, who became

missionary in Scotland at about 560 A.D. Forty years later a monk by the name of Columbanus appeared on the scene. Since the monasteries ruled the churches, it need not surprise us that monks went out as missionaries. This was even the case from the churches already established in England.

One of the outstanding men of the time was Willebrord, who was born and raised in England. He had spent a few years in a monastery of which Wilfried was abbot. This Wilfried had been on his way to Rome when a contrary wind forced him to the shores of Friesland, where he spent the winter at the court of Aldgild, preached and also baptized a few converts. Later Willebrord went to a monastery in Ireland, since these monasteries were considered to be more spiritual than those of England. There he met a certain Egbert, who was not able to go to the continent of Europe himself, but who sent Willebrord at the head of a company of twelve monks. Willebrord went to Utrecht, where (690) the Friesian king Radboud had his residence. Since the king had just suffered a defeat from their archenemy the Franks, he was not ready to listen to anyone who professed a like religion to that of the Franks. Willebrord and his companions could gain no open door in northern Frisia, which is now Netherlands. He was forced to go south of the Rhine, in that part of Frisia that was occupied by the Franks. At the encouragement of the French king, Pepin, he was made archbishop, so as to have more influence over the other bishops. When Utrecht fell into the hands of the Franks in 695 he was given the seat of archbishop there. He rebuilt a number of the churches and the monasteries that had been destroyed in that area.

Besides working in Frisia, he also brought the gospel to the Danes. He met much opposition in his first attempt, but he did manage to take with him a few young Danes to train them in Utrecht and later allow them to return to their own people.

Boniface, another well known figure of this time, worked along with Willebrord for a few years. In 716 he ventured to go directly to the king Radboud and to admonish him that he should no longer oppose christianity. Although Radboud respected his courage and allowed him to work in his domain, Boniface met with very little success in spreading the gospel. After a few years he went into Germany to preach the gospel there. In spite of much opposition from the pagan Germans, he did gain and baptize some converts and even pressed farther into the country. The pope, pleased with his efforts, first made him bishop and then archbishop of Germany. He is said to have been more of an organizer than a preacher of the gospel, since he worked hard especially to improve their agriculture and raise the standard of their living in general. At a ripe age of almost 80 years he returned to the Netherlands. From Utrecht he went in 753 to



northern Friesland. A year later he is said to have been waiting for a group of converts to be confirmed, when he and his companions were suddenly attacked by the pagans and killed. It appears that he was very devoted to the Roman Catholic Church and completely subservient to the pope, so that he even brought churches already established into the Romish community.

Under Charlemagne (742-814) the Holy Roman Empire had control of much of western Europe, particularly in the area which is now France. The king tried to convert the barbarians to christianity "by the Word and by the sword." He forced many to be baptized by the edge of the sword. But he met fierce opposition from the Frisians in what is now the Netherlands and from the Saxons in what is now Germany. They fought back and even destroyed a number of monasteries and churches. Charlemagne even had intentions of uniting the newly revived eastern empire with his own. This was to be accomplished by his marriage with Irene, who was then at the head of the eastern empire. But all his schemes failed when she lost her throne.

One great unifying force in western Europe was the fact that the pope insisted on Latin as the sole liturgical language in the churches. He considered the languages of the barbarians as uncouth, uncultured and ill-adapted for liturgical usage. The weakness was that worshippers understood little, if anything, of the form of worship. Dead formalism with a certain atmosphere of the mysterious filled the churches.

It would take up too much space to write in detail about the spread of the gospel to central and eastern Europe, even into Russia. The Orthodox Greek Church did send missionaries into the Scandinavian countries. Sweden in particular saw a number of churches established throughout the country. The eastern churches worked rather zealously toward translating parts of the Bible into the languages of the common

people. Through all the efforts that were put forth by the tenth century a large part of Europe had become nominally Christian. There are accounts that even speak of the spread of the gospel as far as China already in the seventh century. And after the ninth and tenth century a Christian Church is said to have existed there for almost two hundred years.

It is no wonder that this period is considered the dark age, even from the point of view of all the corruption prevalent in the church and from the aspect of the mission labors that were being performed. The Roman Catholic Church was interested in power at any cost, both religiously and politically. Many converts were forced into the church at the threat on their lives, so that they became only nominally Christian. They often kept their pagan practices and used them in the religion taught by the church. Even the missionaries that went out on their own accepted the approval of the pope, sought the aid of kings in order to gain protection and prestige, and were at times more interested in culture and social improvement than in the truth of the Scriptures. This became a seedbed for many evils that later cropped up in the church.

And yet in spite of all this, the Lord obviously also had His elect people also at that time, and gathered His Church unto Himself, small and insignificant as that may have been. There must have been even at that time those who were impelled by the love of Christ, both in preaching the gospel and in receiving it. One can only marvel at the wonder of grace, that God proves so repeatedly in history that He and He alone gathers His Church through His Son, Jesus Christ, and by His Spirit and Word. And even as He gathers His Church, so He also defends and preserves a remnant according to the election of grace, even in the darkest hours of history. His strength is accomplished through weakness, but always according to His purpose.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Prof. H. Hanko*

*BIBLE STUDY BOOKS; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.*

*St. Mark, by I. H. Marshall; 64 pp., \$1.25 (paper).*

*St. Luke, by E. M. Blaiklock; 94 pp., \$1.25 (paper).*

*St. John, by R. E. Nixon; 85 pp., \$1.25 (paper).*

*Acts, by R. P. Martin; 90 pp., \$1.25 (paper).*

*I Corinthians — Galatians, by R. P. Martin; 126 pp., \$1.25 (paper).*

These books are not commentaries in the strict sense of the word. They are intended as helps for daily Bible



study somewhat on the order of "Daily Manna." Yet they are not primarily meditations on various texts, but brief expositions. The material is divided in such a way that each book contains enough for three months of work. Eventually the set is intended to include volumes on the whole Bible. They are much too brief to serve as useful commentaries and could conceivably be of greatest value to one who has almost no knowledge of Scripture but who sets himself to make a systematic study of all the books. The soundness and value of the individual books vary considerably with the author.

*THE TREASURY OF ALEXANDER WHYTE,*

*edited by R.G. Turnbull; Baker Book House, 1968; 256 pp., \$1.95 (paper).*

Selected sermons from this noted Scots preacher who, for many years occupied the pulpit of Free St. George's Church, Edinburgh. Not always expository, often embellished with much speculation and imagination, the sermons of this man who is often called "the last of the Puritans" are excellent reading and will give many pleasant hours to one who drinks at their waters.

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*Books for the Lenten Season.*

*REJECTED BY MEN,*

*by the Rev. Herman Hoeksema.*

In thinking on the meaning of the Crucifixion and our glorious salvation, we do well to ponder the supreme cost. In this meditation is given some timely help in understanding certain deeper aspects of that suffering.

Order now by sending \$1.50 to

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR  
P.O. Box 1230  
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501

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*"EASTERN LADIES' LEAGUE"*

The Spring Meeting of our Eastern Ladies' League will be held, the Lord willing, Thursday, April 10, 1969, at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. G. Van Baren will be our speaker. Plan to spend an evening of Christian fellowship.

Tillie Sietstra, Vice Sec'y.

*THE HARVEST OF MEDIEVAL THEOLOGY,*

*BY Heiko Oberman; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968; 495 pp. \$3.95 (paper).*

The author, in this very technical and learned book, treats the theology of Gabriel Biel who lived in the 14th Century. But his purpose is far broader than an evaluation of the theological position of one man. He uses his discussion of Biel to evaluate the whole of Medieval theology (in distinction from Medieval philosophy), the important role which nominalism played in the pre-reformation era and the influence of medieval theology on the 16th Century Reformers, particularly Martin Luther. The author places Biel "somewhere in between" Thomas Aquinas and Martin Luther but leaves the particular study of Luther for some later volume. It is a book written for theologians and historians. While the author's theses are sometimes overworked, the book is a valuable addition to medieval studies and is an aid in understanding the theological conflict which resulted in the Reformation.

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*RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY*

The Ladies Aid Society Ruth, of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Gerald Korhorn, in the loss of her brother

MR. HERMAN KORHORN

May she and her bereaved family find comfort that in life or death we are not our own, but belong unto our faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Rev. Jason Kortering, Pres.  
Miss Sybil Engelsma, Sec'y.

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*RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY*

The Martha's Ladies Aid of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church herewith expresses their sympathy to their fellow members, Mrs. John Brummel and Mrs. Ben Blyenburg, in their recent sorrow of bereavement of their mother, grandmother, and sister,

MRS. CORNELIUS WASSINK.

May our Covenant God comfort with His Word and Spirit in the assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God." (Romans 8:28).

Mr. Egbert Gritters, Pres.  
Mrs. Bert Van Maanen, Sec'y.



## News From Our Churches

March 14, 1969

The call that First Church directed to Rev. Heys to be Missionary to Jamaica was done for Synod which appointed it to be the calling church. Because this involves our entire denomination First Church asks that the missionary-elect be remembered in your prayers that he may know the will of the Lord for him in this matter.

\* \* \*

Rev. Vanden Berg, of Oak Lawn, declined the call he had received from our church in Pella, Iowa. Their next trio included the Revs. Decker, Lubbers and Woudenberg, and the call went out to Rev. Decker, of Doon, Iowa.

\* \* \*

January and February's weather in the plains states raised havoc with the schedules of mid-week meetings and many of the Sunday services, as revealed in the bulletins of Edgerton, Hull, Doon and Forbes.

\* \* \*

The Men's Society of Doon travelled to Edgerton to meet with that society Feb. 17 to discuss the sixth chapter of Revelation. The after recess program featured a paper by Mr. Fred Hanko. The men of Hull's congregation received a special invitation to this combined meeting to spend an hour of spiritual fellowship with them.

\* \* \*

In the calendar of future events found in one of Kalamazoo's bulletins the people were reminded that Rev. Heys was scheduled to give an illustrated lecture on the work done among our friends in Jamaica. So, one by one, our churches are becoming better acquainted with the site and with the people who have been so mysteriously drawn to the truth as it is proclaimed from our pulpits and on the pages of our publications. And with such a champion of the cause, as is the man beside the screen with his pointer, who can resist his enthusiasm to help those hungry and thirsty souls in their search for spiritual nourishment!

\* \* \*

One of our church bulletin announcements went like this: "The consistory decided that bulletin announcements dealing with social functions should be kept as brief as possible". The reason for this might have been due to the general lack of space available for these, but it might also have been prompted by the few which come to the bulletin clerk's desk which have caught the contagion of the Advertising Agencies of the public press.

\* \* \*

The Board of Doon's Prot. Ref. Chr. School has decided to eliminate the kindergarten class for the year '69-'70 because of the paucity of eligible students.

One of the Prayer Day sermons in our churches was an exegesis of Psalm 37:5, "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." The pastor was a means of The Hearer of our prayers to encourage his flock (are the special mid-week services in all our churches poorly attended?) to receive their support from this inspired text.

\* \* \*

Hull scheduled their Annual Prayer Day Service a day earlier to make it possible for Rev. Lanting, of Edgerton, to supply their pulpit on Tuesday evening and be able to serve his own church on Wednesday.

\* \* \*

At a conference attended by ministers, elders and seminary students held in South Holland at the time of the Classis West meeting Rev. Engelsma gave a paper on "The Geneology of Jesus".

\* \* \*

Loveland's consistory has graciously released Rev. Engelsma for six weeks to work in the Pella area in behalf of the Mission Committee. This will be a greater hardship for Loveland's pulpit committee because the seminary supply will not be available to them as it was to Southwest and Hudsonville. So another congregation is willing to be content with reading services that Pella may enjoy the lively preaching of the Word.

\* \* \*

The Annual Society meeting of our new Covenant High School was held March 13, electing new board members and adopting the budget for '69-'70. The new board members are H. P. Meulenberg, of the Adams area; Gordon Van Overloop of the Hope area; Bernard Windemuller, member-at-large. 28 new members signed up and the society adopted the huge budget of \$112,000.00, anticipating a \$40,000.00 drive and some \$4,200.00 from church collections and \$67,000.00 from tuition at \$600.00 per student. The twelfth grade will be added next year, and, with the graduates from Hope and Adams coming in, it is expected that the enrollment will be about doubled. If we can judge the caliber of the Board members and the staff there will be no toleration of sit-ins, student demands, nor any of the other expressions of rebellion abounding in the world today which threatens the very existence of normal educational institutions. *"And be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may know what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

Rom. 12:2.

... see you in church

J.M.F.