

# The Standard Bearer

**A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE**

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**The Thanksgiving Acceptable To The Lord**

### **Editorial:**

**The Erring Views of Dr. H.M. Kuitert (7)**

**The Right of Dissent (see The Strength of Youth)**

**A Progress Report**

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.

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

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

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

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

## Meditation

## The Thanksgiving Acceptable To The Lord

Rev. Marinus Schipper

*Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name."*

*Malachi 3: 16.*

Very important is the little word "then" which introduces this verse of Holy Writ!

It shows that what is said in our verse is occasioned

by what precedes. It indicates a contrast — a contrast between the righteous and the wicked in Israel. It marks the difference in reaction between the pious and the



ungodly to the same condition prevailing in the land of Canaan. While the ungodly mocked and derided God, then the pious feared and remembered His Name. This little adverb also points up the time in which that which the text and context describes took place. It was a time of great need. Israel was suffering under the mighty hand of God and His judgments. It was then that the pious spoke one to another and thought upon God's Name.

As we gather in our respective places of worship on the approaching Thanksgiving Day, it will hardly do to compare the situation of our time with that of the people of God in that day. Ours can hardly be said to be a time marked by devastating famine and dire want. In the year which has so swiftly gone by the heavens opened to give abundant showers and sunshine to the planted seed. The harvest has been plentiful. The wheels of industry have increased their revolutions. Instead of want, most of us have been and will continue to bathe even in luxury. How different it was in the land of Israel at the time of our text. The heavens were shut. What did not die on the ear, the grasshopper and the caterpillar devoured. The barns were empty, and man and beast groaned under the mighty hand of God. What was once a land flowing with milk and honey had become an arid wilderness.

Yet, though the darkness in the land of Israel was of a different nature, there is a similarity between the time then and now. O, it is true, we do not suffer famine and want, but the darkness of God's judgments hangs heavy over the world of our day as it did then. The horrors of war and the horrors of famine are alike horsemen of the apocalypse bringing death and destruction on earth. Riots and disobedience, anarchy and revolution, murder and stealing and the accompanying devastations so prevalent in our time are not merely the indicators of the depravity so characteristic of the world of our day, but they are the judgments of God, which precede the final pouring out of His wrath upon the wicked.

And is not the reaction to these judgments the same as in the day of Malachi? Do not the wicked proceed in their wickedness unabated? Do not the carnal murmurers in the church still say that the proud are happy and that it does not pay to serve the Lord? And is there not yet the remnant of pious ones who, beholding the same things, speak to one another, walking in the fear of God, and who remember His Name with thanksgiving?

Remembering with thanksgiving!

Jehovah's Name!

That name of God wherewith He so uniquely appears to His people!

Jehovah, the I AM THAT I AM! It signifies that He is the eternal One, without beginning and without end. He is the self-sufficient One, the independent God. He is the uncaused Cause. He did not become, but He always was.

It signifies that He is the unchangeable One. And therefore the faithful One. "I Jehovah change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." He is the All-Wise God, Who knows the end from the beginning.

Jehovah, the Almighty God!

To Whom belongs all strength and power in heaven and earth. Who holds the valleys in His hands and metes out the heavens with a span. Who holds the stars, the sun and the moon in their courses, and lays the seas in basins that they cannot exceed their bounds. Who gives life to all His creatures; and when He withholds His hand they die.

The Righteous and the Holy God! Just and good is He!

The central revelation of Whom is Jesus, the Son of God, our Saviour! Through Whom we came to know Jehovah as our God, and God as Jehovah. Through Whom also God was pleased to reveal, and realizes His everlasting covenant. In history He did this on the cross and in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Subjectively He does this through the Spirit of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in our heart; the Spirit whereby we cry: Abba, Father.

Remembering that Name!

That is, meditating upon it, making much account of it, to esteem and prize it. That the pious thought upon Jehovah's Name was no mere abstraction. That is, they did not simply see Jehovah as the cause of the darkness and of their trouble. Nor did they simply conclude that He was able and powerful enough to change the conditions in which they found themselves if He saw fit. It is possible, you know, to think of God that way. Perhaps we too are often guilty of this. When there is war and all kinds of trouble we are liable to exclaim: This is a judgment of God. Or, we consider objectively that Jehovah sits on His throne in the heavens ruling over and controlling all things after the counsel of His will. While all our thoughts of Him are nothing more than an intellectual, mental observation concerning Him. But not so did the pious think upon His Name.

No, this thinking was and still must be something much more concrete. That Name of Jehovah is the object of our love and esteem. We bow before it and worship. We acknowledge that in the revelation of that Name Jehovah is good to us, even when we are required to pass under suffering and want.

This is to be done in every circumstance — in prosperity, but also in adversity. In times of prosperity it is true, we are liable to feel independent and self-sufficient, and thus forget that Name. While on the other hand, in prosperous days it would seem that it would not be difficult to rejoice and be thankful. But in times of adversity it is often different. Then it is that we feel the need of calling on His Name and remembering it, while at the same time it seems easier to rebel and murmur — finding fault with our plight and concluding that the way of the Lord is not right.



But true thanksgiving is the acknowledgment of Jehovah's Name in all things! It never depends on material abundance. It rather depends on the fear of God. And it seeks to acknowledge that the Name of Jehovah is good in all our ways.

They that thought upon Jehovah's Name feared the Lord! Not a fear of fright is the fear of the pious. Such is rather the fear of the ungodly. When God's judgments are upon them they cower, and will even call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, that they may be annihilated before the face of Him with Whom they have to do. Not so do the godly conduct themselves before the face of God. They tremble, but it is because they stand in awe of Him. They fear, but it is because they love Him.

That the pious feared the Lord implies that in the day of trouble they trembled in holy reverence. They walked carefully. They admitted that because Jehovah their God is holy and just in all His ways they deserved to perish as the ungodly because of their sin and unworthiness. It means that, acknowledging their unworthiness of being called His people, they implored His grace. It implies that in prosperous times they with meekness rejoice in thankful acknowledgment of Jehovah's Name. They did not look for reason of prosperity in themselves, but saw it all in the light of Jehovah's mercy toward them, and in His covenant promise to bless them.

This being the manner in which they sought to remember Jehovah's Name, it can also be easily understood how they sought one another and spake often to one another.

The pious sought the company of the pious, and in their company spoke often to one another as they thought upon Jehovah's Name. Not just on a certain day, a Thanksgiving or a Prayer Day, perhaps suggested by the carnal who seek Jehovah's face only for bread, or who when they are afraid will require a special prayer meeting to ask Jehovah to stop the war or cause the famine to cease — not so and for that reason did the pious come often together. Nor did the pious gather with the wicked. Rather, because the pious saw the blackness of God's judgments and they feared before Him, and because they saw the carnality of the wicked in Israel, they sought the company of the God-fearing and spake often one to another.

Blessed company of the saints!

How different it is to dwell with those who seek the Lord only for bread! Who murmur when all things

appear to be against them. Who can be "thankful" only when they revel in the abundance of material wealth. Who seek earthly things only to satisfy their lust.

How blessed are they who seek the company of those who fear the Lord! How lovely it is to abide with them who think upon Jehovah's Name!

And the Lord also counts them blessed!

Their blessedness consists, first of all, in the fact that Jehovah also dwells with them. How else could He hear their conversation? In their company He pricks up His ears to listen in when they speak to one another. He takes note of what they say, and considers their thoughts, the thoughts of their hearts as they flow out in words — words which have respect to His holy Name, and which clearly show that His fear is in their hearts.

Indeed, Jehovah dwells with those who fear Him. Far is He from the godless. He despises their very image. He holds them in contempt. His only thought concerning them is that they may be destroyed forever. But the thoughts and words of the pious are His delight. He dwells so close to them that not one thought or word concerning Him will be missed or forgotten. He makes a recording of it.

A book of remembrance was written before Him!

O, how blessed are those who fear Him!

He records their confessions of unworthiness. He takes note of their prayers of repentance. He remembers their expressions of gratitude for all His loving kindnesses over them as they come together to remind one another of the saving strength of His right arm.

Make no mistake about it! This is not simply a figurative description to impress us with the fact that somehow Jehovah takes notice of His people.

Indeed, He has such a book of remembrance! Not, you understand, because He is liable to forget them, or that somehow because their thoughts and words are many some of them may get lost. But because He wants all to see and hear, the wicked, the devils, the angels, and all the host of the righteous redeemed, He has a book. Presently He will open this book and read from it. Then it shall become plain to all that the Lord loves the righteous in whom His fear dwelt, and who out of that fear served Him — who, even in the days when they suffered want under His providential hand, were able to thank and exalt His Name.

Then shall He reveal to all that the thanksgiving of those who feared Him was acceptable in His holy sight.

And they shall abide with Him eternally!

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And this fellowship of friendship, in which we shall serve God as His friends, will be raised to the highest possible degree of perfection in the sphere and on the plane of heavenly glory. It will not be a return to the original state of rectitude and bliss in the first paradise, but will be exalted above that state as Christ exalted above the first Adam. And it will be everlasting. No tempter shall ever be able to intrude into that house of God, and to destroy that state of perfect blessedness, nor shall there be any possibility of falling into sin and death again, for that perfect glory is centered in the Son of God in our nature, our Lord Jesus Christ. Such is eternal life!

— H. Hoeksema, "The Wonder of Grace," p. 126



## Editorial

# The Erring Views of Dr. H.M. Kuitert (7)

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

### *Evaluation of Kuitert's View of Scripture (continued)*

In the November 1 issue I began a discussion of the crucial issue of organic inspiration as it relates to all the current discussion of the so-called "human element" or "human factor" in Holy Scripture. At the conclusion of my last editorial on this subject I set forth the several elements of organic inspiration, and I promised to elaborate on these and to point out their significance. To this task the present editorial is addressed.

In the first place, then, in studying the manner of the inspiration of Scripture we must be deeply aware of the fact that when we speak of inspiration and of the inspired Scriptures, we stand face to face with a *wonder*. And no more than we can fathom any of the divine wonders, no more can we comprehend this wonder of inspiration. For the fact of the matter is that when we stand face to face with the wonder, we are confronted by the incomprehensible God! He is the God of the wonder! You can know Him, but always your knowledge is knowledge of the Incomprehensible One, knowledge of the God Who doeth wonders. When you and I are confronted by His works, — also His work of the inscripturated Word, — we may see those works, contemplate them, understand what they are, understand their meaning and even probe deeply into them and discover their riches; but always they remain beyond us, fathomless, uniquely works of God, incomparable, not works of a mere creature. Always there is that certain "Thus far, and no farther" about God and His works, the boundary beyond which we cannot and may not attempt to go. Always the words of the Dutch versification of Psalm 118 apply to any of the wonders of God:

Dit werk is door Gods alvermogen,  
Door 's Heeren hand alleen geschied;  
Het is een wonder in onz' oogen;  
Wij zien het, maar doorgronden 't niet.

And a wonder Scripture certainly is. Not only is revelation itself already a wonder. But add to this the fact that God causes His Word of Self-revelation to be communicated through the agency of mere, finite, imperfect (though holy) men, and through the medium of finite, limited, human, earthly language, in such a way that it is and remains *His Word*, and then you can begin to sense the mystery of this wonder somewhat. But the wonder is faith's dearest child! And it requires exactly a boldness which is peculiar to faith to single

out from among all the multitudinous writings of men this one book, the Bible, and to confess of it, without any reservation or limitation: "This is the Word of God written!"

The latter is precisely and emphatically the confession of *faith*! That faith does not require a prior investigation. It does not insist on comprehending. It does not first demand an explanation with respect to all the many questions which may arise in connection with the "how" of inspiration. Faith lays hold on the wonder! It *believes*! And it investigates and probes into the riches of what it believes always within the confines of its own nature as faith and always within the limits which are set by the very fact that what it believes is the *divine wonder*.

This, I say, we must bear in mind when we consider the various questions which arise in connection with the inspiration of Scripture. This does not mean whatsoever that questions may not be asked, and that answers may not be sought. Nor does it mean that our faith becomes a kind of "easy out," a kind of skirt behind which we hide when we are faced by knotty theological problems, so that we irrationally seek refuge in a simplistic motto and refuse to seek and to formulate answers to any questions. But it does mean:

1. That we must be careful lest we begin to base our belief of the truth that Scripture is the Word-of-God-written upon *our* would-be solutions to *our* problems. Then we already have the cart before the horse. Then we are already on the road of *rationalism* (not, mind you, of rationality; faith is quite rational). And that road of rationalism is the road of unbelief, the road which ends inevitably in the denial of the infallibly inspired Word of God. For if my faith in this regard depends upon my ability to find a satisfactory answer to every question and every problem which may be raised in regard to this truth, and if then I cannot find a solution which in every way satisfies my puny mind, then my faith as to Scripture's being exclusively the Word of God falls with my inability to find answers.

2. That we must be careful in our consideration of the various questions raised in connection with inspiration that by our answers to these questions we do not *destroy* the problem, and thereby, at the same time, deny the wonder of Scripture's being exclusively the Word of God. It is always a rather facile method to solve problems by destroying them. This is precisely what is



done when, in seeking answers to these questions about inspiration, we conclude by saying after all that the Bible is the Word of God plus the word of man, or that the Bible is the product of two factors, a divine and a human. In that case, you have no problem to solve because you have destroyed the problem. But then, paradoxically, you have a worse problem, namely, that you have no Word of God any longer. For you have exactly denied the wonder!

3. That all our attempts to explain and to understand somewhat the meaning and the manner of inspiration must take place within the framework of the Scriptures themselves, must be guided and ruled by the instruction of the infallible Word itself. And this will mean that when we have finished our consideration of problems and questions, we will discover that the more we come into contact with and probe into the riches of this truth, the more our faith comes to stand directly before the wonder of a sovereign God. The end will be that we profess, on the one hand, in the language of Psalm 118: "We see it, but we fathom it not!" And, on the other hand, the end will be that we exclaim: "Thou, O God, art the God of the wonder! How great was Thy 'special care' which Thou hadst for us and our salvation when Thou didst command Thy servants to commit Thy revealed Word to writing!" (Confession of Faith, Article 3)

In the second place, the concept of *organic inspiration* takes into full account the fact that the Holy Spirit employed human instruments in the production of the Scriptures, *and that these human instruments were not suppressed*. The latter is a self-evident fact, which no one can deny and which no one wants to deny. In fact, it is one of the beauties of Scripture and its inspiration which shines forth from every page of Scripture. Of this the child of God does not have to be afraid in his contemplation of the truth of inspiration. This simply adds to the wonder and the beauty of the Scriptures.

Consider this for a moment.

The Holy Spirit employed many different human instruments in His wonderful work of inspiration. Some of these men we learn to know rather well from the pages of Scripture; others we know personally very little. Some of them we cannot even identify, so far they recede into the background in the writing of Scripture. To others we cannot even assign a definite date in history. Moreover, the Scriptures were written over a period of some 1500 years; they were produced in lands separated by hundreds and thousands of miles. Among the human instruments there were well-educated men, like Moses and Paul; there were also among them simple Galilean fishermen and farmers and peasants. They were inspired to speak and to write when they were guiding flocks, when they were in prisons, in palaces, in courts of great world-rulers. The Scriptures were written by men who apparently had no knowledge of one another and who had no knowledge of what

others were writing and were going to write. In all the production of Scripture there was as little outward and mechanical unity as is imaginable. And yet there is the most beautiful inner harmony and unity and completeness conceivable.

But there is more to this wonder.

That which belongs to the individuality of these writers comes to manifestation in Scripture. The sacred writers wrote in their own language, Hebrew or Greek, not Holland or French or English. They wrote from the point of view of their peculiar times and circumstances, not only in general and as far as the difference between the old and the new dispensations is concerned, but also in detail. This is true not only of historical books, but even of prophetic writings. The prophecy of Isaiah, for example, could only have been written in the particular setting of time and place and minute circumstances and historical events in which it was written. This is not mere speculation; it is Scripture's own testimony, Isaiah 1: 1: "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." Isaiah, moreover, could have been written only by an Isaiah. The same is very obviously evident in many of the psalms: their background and setting very obviously played a part in their contents. Further, variety is evident in the styles of the different writers. Paul does not write as does John; and Luke does not write as does Matthew.

It is very evident, therefore, that men spake, men wrote, men taught, men sang, men prophesied, men recorded facts and events, and that too, with all their individual peculiarities of character and talents, of time and place, of history and circumstances. This is included in the wonder of infallible inspiration, and yet so, mind you, that nevertheless, "this Word of God was not sent, nor delivered by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

One would have to be a blind fool to ignore this facet of Scripture. And Dr. Kuitert's snide caricature was entirely beside the point when he said in the course of his lecture, "Inspiration does not mean that something drops out of the blue." I do not believe that anyone wants that kind of inspiration, or has taught it, or that any exegete of note proceeds on the basis that this is the way Scripture came into being.

But for all this, we are not by any means left with the alternative that then Scripture must be a product of combined factors, divine and human, and that it is a mixture of divine and human elements. This position exactly destroys the *wonder* of Scripture.

The wonder is not that God employed men, after all, without really employing them.

The wonder is not that God employed men so that the outcome was a mixture.

The wonder is that God caused His own Word, the exclusively divine and true and infallible Word, to be



committed to writing *through* men, yet in such a way that it remained exclusively *His Word*.

In the third place, the only way in which we can understand this at all is in the light of the old, tried and true, Reformed, Scriptural principle of sovereign predestination and sovereign grace. When one loses sight of this principle or wilfully discards it, he is at loose ends as far as every aspect of the truth is concerned. This is true also of the truth of inspiration.

Must we conceive of inspiration as meaning that the Holy Spirit somehow simply *discovered* men, ready-made men, who could properly serve as the instruments of inspiration? Not at all. Then, surely, the Spirit was limited by men and their fitness. Then, surely, the product of inspiration would have been partly divine and partly human.

Must we conceive of inspiration as meaning that the Holy Spirit merely *used* men? Not at all! For, in the first place, when you apply the predicate *used* to the Holy Spirit, that can never be understood in the same sense as when you apply the predicate *used* to any man. There is a vast difference, the difference between Creator and creature! And, in the second place, when the Holy Spirit “uses” anyone, the Spirit is in no sense *limited* by him whom He uses.

We must understand, instead, that Scripture is altogether a divine work.

This means, in the first place, that we begin with *God’s counsel*, and that too, in connection with His sovereign purpose of salvation with respect to His people in Christ Jesus. That “special care which He has for us and our salvation,” mentioned in Article 3 of the Belgic Confession, proceeds, remember from His eternal good pleasure. And all that is involved in that special care likewise proceeds from that same eternal good pleasure. This applies to Scripture itself: God sovereignly and from eternity conceived of the whole of Scripture. It also applies to the *writing* of the Scriptures: God sovereignly and from eternity conceived of and determined upon the special organs of Christ’s body, organs of inspiration; and He ordained all the details of their personality, character, talents, education, mode of thinking, style of writing, personal experiences, place in history, etc., in such a way that each one would be fit to serve his individual place in the writing of Scripture, and that too, in such a way that when he wrote, what he wrote would be God’s Word infallible.

Secondly, God realizes His own counsel. What He purposes He also executes. Hence, the Holy Spirit does not *find* writers of Scripture; He calls and forms these divinely ordained organs of inspiration in time. An Isaiah was born and grew up and was formed, both naturally and spiritually, down to the very minutest detail, in order that he might fulfill his peculiar task in the production of the prophecy of Isaiah. The same was true of all the human instruments.

Thirdly, even then God did not leave the writing of

His Word to men. By the same Spirit He continued to realize His own counsel, inspiring, moving, bearing, illumining, guiding these human instruments to write infallibly what would be exclusively His Word.

Hence, it is all of God, none of man!

And who is to say that this is impossible, that God cannot do this, that these human instruments in relation to the Sovereign Potter were not so much clay which He molded according to His own good pleasure? Who is to say that as the alone Sovereign One He is not able by His Holy Spirit so to use and to move holy men to speak and to write His own Word, and yet to do so in such a way that they speak and write quite in harmony with their own, God-given, individual natures and characters and times and circumstances? Is He not God?

We may, in this connection, draw a parallel between the work of salvation and the work of inspiration.

We confess that God’s grace is irresistible, or efficacious, and that all of the work of salvation is from beginning to end the work of sovereign, irresistible grace. What does this mean? When the Almighty regenerates, calls justifies, sanctifies, preserves, and glorifies one of His elect, can it ever happen that such a man is not regenerated, called, justified, sanctified, preserved, and glorified? That would be absolutely impossible! But does that work of grace ignore and suppress the fact that the elect saint is a *man*, a rational and moral creature? Does it make of him a stock and block, a puppet, an automaton? Not at all! What then? Must we say that salvation is a cooperative venture of God and man? Not at all; it is solely the work of God’s sovereign grace, not at all the work of man. When all the saints have been redeemed and glorified, then in the grand song of the redeemed which shall echo through the ages of eternity there will be not a single note ascribing anything of the work of salvation to man. That song will sing the praises of God alone. Why? Because the work of salvation was the work of the sovereign God alone. O yes, God saves *men*; and when He does so, He deals with them in harmony with their nature as *men*. He does not treat them as trees or animals or stones, but as *men*. He never intervenes essentially between their nature and their actions. But in the work of sovereign grace He with absolute sovereignty operates upon and in the heart and mind and will of elect men and accomplishes *His* purpose and *His* work in such a way that it is exclusively *His* work and in such a way that all the credit, all the praise, must be exclusively *His*.

Thus it is, principally, with Scripture also, as I have outlined in the preceding.

Is this mysterious? Indeed! Is it ineffable? By all means! And exactly at the point where the Spirit of God touches the heart and mind and will of holy men in such a way that they infallibly write God’s Word, and yet write it as men, we come face to face with this ineffable mystery. How does that operation take place? What exactly takes place? Can you describe that work as



such and explain its possibility? No, I cannot; and there is no need of this. All I need do is believe, and then stand in awe before the wondrous works of God.

But once more it becomes plain how important is the principle of sovereign predestination, — not as a dry, staid, isolated truth, but as a fundamental working-

principle in the entire structure of the truth.

And I believe that in the final analysis the reason for all the problems and all the lack of solutions with respect to Scripture with which the church is plagued today lies in the fact that the church has largely forsaken this principle of sovereign predestination.

## *All Around Us*

### **A Comfort in Times Like These**

#### ***The Supreme Court and Church Cases***

#### **The Gereformeerde Kerk Goes Its Own Way**

*Prof. H. Hanko*

##### ***A COMFORT IN TIMES LIKE THESE***

I write these words on the eve of the national election. I do not know who will be the next president. By the time you read this piece a president will probably be chosen — although there remains the possibility that no present nominee will command an electoral majority, that the election will be given to the House of Representatives, and that the next president will not be known till next January.

Why anyone would actively seek the office of president in these troubled times remains, to me, something difficult to understand. The desire for power, for possible fame (which seemingly are the only motives driving one to pursue this office) must be strong indeed. Every columnist in the newspapers or in the news magazines, as well as every commentator on the radio, insists that it will be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for any man to solve the problems which this country faces in one term of four years. The opinion is all but unanimous that the next president runs a greater risk of going down, four years from now, in ignominy and defeat than any other president before him.

The complexity of the problems the nation is facing is great indeed. While every nominee, as a matter of political necessity, assures the crowds he harangues that he has the solutions to the grave difficulties we face, each is notoriously vague on what these solutions are. While every nominee fills the air with cries that he is the one needed to avert the overwhelming crisis into which we have entered, he is hopelessly general about the means to be employed to stave off this crisis. Quite obviously, and not surprisingly, the nominees themselves simply do not know how to handle the problems

which beset us.

It seems almost certain therefore that no matter who is elected, the country is in for some very bad times indeed. It seems almost inevitable that things will get worse instead of better, regardless of who is leading the nation.

What are these problems? They are well-known to all. It is only their magnitude which is not, perhaps, generally known.

There is the nagging and festering sore of the Vietnam conflict. At this writing there seems to be hope that peace will finally come and that we are on the threshold of a cease-fire. Perhaps by the time these words appear in print the war will be over. But there remains the general and unsolved problem of war in our times. Other hot spots in the world do not snatch the headlines while peace in Vietnam is in the air. But the threat of conflict between Russia and the U.S. remains. And other wars take their daily toll. It seems as if our boys will be serving in the armed forces for a considerable time to come regardless of what happens in far-off Asia. The world has not solved (and cannot solve) the tension of the nations.

There is the bitter problem of racial unrest. This is a big issue in the present campaign. It is almost the entire justification for the presence of a third party candidate. Those who realize the immensity of the problem know hardly where to turn for a solution. No solution seems adequate. Even half solutions seem hopelessly unattainable. There is a certain despair which hangs as a pall over the country, a despair created by the fury of black vs. white.

Law and order. Perhaps this more than anything else has attracted the attention of people as they weigh the



respective positions of the candidates for the presidency. This year's figures on crime, released by J. Edgar Hoover, are frightening. Murder was up 11% in 1967 over 1966. Rape climbed 7% above the last figure. Robbery an unbelievable 27%. There were 3.8 million serious crimes last year, including 494,500 crimes of violence and 3.3 million property offenses. All this means that two out of every one hundred Americans will fall victim to a serious crime from robbery to murder some time this year. In the three worst cities (Los Angeles, New York and Miami), the figure is one out of twenty-five. To set these figures off in yet sharper contrast, murder is up 22% per 100,000 population over 1960. Rape is up 71%. Robbery is up 70%. These are cold statistics. But they convey the frightening fact that crime rages through the streets of the country like a roaring lion.

But the Supreme Court must bear a large part of the responsibility for this. For the Supreme Court is intent on protecting the rights of criminals to absurd extremes and ruling as if those against whom crime is committed have no rights at all. On the flimsiest of grounds the highest court has turned loose on society a flood of confessed murders, thieves, rapists, and hardened convicts to prey on the populace.

The use of narcotics is spreading so rapidly that it seems to be almost out of control. Criminals are the peddlers and dealers in heroin and marijuana. But the Supreme Court considers the rights of these evil men to be more sacred than the rights of the victims.

The life of a policeman today is one of constant danger. One of every eleven police officers is assaulted every year. In five years' time 278 policemen have been killed violently. But the Supreme Court has tied the hands of law enforcement agencies and created a climate in which the respect of the populace for law officers is almost nil.

Respect for the law. This is what is gone from the land. Students take over universities and dictate their demands. Teachers walk out of classrooms on strike. Youth, garbed in filth and totally irresponsible, do as they please with no one to challenge their chaotic expression of "the right to dissent."

Pornography is an increasing evil. A flood of the vilest and most obscene material imaginable inundates the country. Pornography is a multi-billion dollar business. And much of it is aimed at and sent into the hands of the youth of the nation. But the Supreme Court condones much of it in pictures, magazines, and films because, so they say, in this sky-high mass of revolting and repulsive filth it is possible, perhaps, to find a grain of material of some social value. Sodom and Gomorrah will presently look like rather good cities in comparison with America if these trends continue.

These are some of the problems alarming the nation. This is the situation in this land of ours on the eve of another election. When all agree that there are no easy

solutions (if indeed there are any at all) to these problems, no wonder the nation looks in despair to the future.

But one who knows and loves the Word of God need not be alarmed or dismayed. Basically it makes no difference who wins the next election. The supreme comfort of the child of God is a peace and serenity of heart which comes from knowing that Christ rules sovereignly over all. Nothing can happen without His will. Nothing can take place except He, in the name of the Father, order it. And all which Christ, with sovereign disposition, does must and will serve the final realization of the kingdom which presently we shall inherit. There is no comfort greater than this.

### THE SUPREME COURT AND CHURCH CASES

The Supreme Court in its new session will have many cases to decide upon which are, in one way or another, involved with the affairs of the Church.

One item which will be closely watched especially by ecumenical leaders is a case involving two Georgia congregations which were at one time affiliated with the Presbyterian Church US (Southern). These congregations left the parent denomination and claimed the right to their church property. The case was first treated in a county court which ruled that the congregations could retain their property. This decision was unanimously upheld by the Georgia Supreme Court. The reason for awarding the property to the dissident congregations was that the parent denomination had departed substantially from the doctrinal and church political basis upon which it was founded. The importance of this case is to be found in the fact that, if the Supreme Court should uphold the lower court rulings, any congregation which can prove that a denomination has departed from the historic basis of the church can leave without being penalized by the loss of property. This would be a blow to ecumenists because it would encourage other congregations who are inclined to go along with unsuitable and controversial mergers for fear of losing property to leave and to establish independent churches.

"Friend of the court" briefs have been filed in this case siding with the denomination which is appealing the decision. The United Presbyterian Church USA, the Reformed Church of America, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Episcopal Church have all filed such briefs. A lay organization known as Concerned Presbyterians, has also filed a brief defending the rights of lay members in Southern Presbyterian congregations.

According to the *Presbyterian Journal* two cases involving teaching in the schools are also coming to the Court. One involves a teacher in Arkansas who is challenging a state law which makes it unlawful to teach the theory of evolution in any tax-supported school. She claims that this law limits her freedom of speech and religion. From the opposite side comes an appeal from two congregations of the Bible Presbyterian



Church in the Northwest part of the country which are asking the court to rule out courses of study in the University of Washington in which secular and sectarian instruction in a Bible course is given. Their complaint is that the Bible course under attack is taught from a liberal and modern viewpoint and ought not to be taught in this fashion in a tax-supported University.

Another case involves an appeal of a minister convicted under anti-littering laws in Chicago for distributing parts of Scripture in a park.

If nothing else, these cases give ample evidence of how difficult has become the problem of the relation of and separation between church and state.

#### *THE GEREFORMEERDE KERK GOES ITS OWN WAY*

The last meeting of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod decided that it was clear and obvious from Scripture that women are excluded from the teaching and ruling offices in the Church.

The *Gereformeerde Kerken* are in disagreement with this position and have decided to permit women officebearers in spite of this decision. We quote from the *RES Newsletter*:

According to an Informatiedienst bulletin, a large number of congregations of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands are now installing women into the office of deacon and elder. The present action stems from a decision of the General Synod earlier this year to permit women elders and deacons but to wait with implementing the decision until after the meeting of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. The Synod instructed a committee to consider whether additional reasons would arise in the deliberations of the RES why in principle women should not serve in these offices and then to report to the next General Synod

instead of informing the congregations to proceed.

The Reformed Ecumenical Synod, contrary to the recommendations of its study committee, declared that it is the clear and obvious teaching of Scripture that women are excluded from the teaching and ruling offices of the church.

The committee of the Reformed Churches has now reported to the local congregations that the RES gave no grounds for its declaration, that in the discussion no grounds were considered and that there was no occasion to change the advice which the General Synod had given.

What this means as far as the structure of the RES is concerned we do not know. It is, I think, possible for a denomination, though a member of the RES, to go its own way if it disagrees with the decisions of the RES. But the fact remains that the decision of several congregations in the *Gereformeerde Kerken* to proceed at the word of a Synodical appointed committee in spite of what the RES has said leaves the impression that the committee at least had already really decided to do this before the question was discussed and decided upon by the RES. Especially the grounds offered by the committee seem to indicate this. However that may be, this is certainly not proper procedure. At the very least the committee and the congregations should have given close attention to the decision before acting — something there was no time to do. And it would have been far more in keeping with the nature of the RES to bring Scriptural and Confessional objections to the decision of the RES at the next meeting before going contrary to these decisions. The Synod of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* at least must have had something like this in mind.

The action that has been taken reduces the RES to an open debating society.

## *In His Fear*

### **CONSISTENT BENDING**

*Rev. John A. Heys*

As the twig is bent the tree will grow.

Our children come into this world bent away from the upright position wherein God created man in the beginning.

Carefully and continually therefore must we train them to look up and to face upward in their thinking and willing to serve the God in heaven as His royal priesthood.

And consistency is the jewel of such covenant twig bending. Consistency is requisite for any kind of training. Consistency is so vitally necessary in the training of the covenant seed. It is so vital that it almost

seems unnecessary that we call attention to it. Yet here again, consistent and persistent sounding of that which is in His fear is so essential for writing a department of In His Fear.

To train up a child in the way that he *should* go certainly requires of us first of all knowledge of that way in which he should go, and that we know it better than he does. The teacher must go ahead of his pupils and not walk beside them, learning with them and faltering with them. To teach you have to know your subject thoroughly. For the child will not learn it beyond the point that his teacher knows it. Whereas



parents are not all born teachers and have neither the time nor ability to teach all the subjects, the parents place their children in the hands of the school teacher. They expect that this teacher knows his subject. They hire him because he claims to have the qualifications; and the board has put him on the payroll according to specific requirements of training and learning.

But what about knowing that subject spiritually?

When we are dealing with covenant children we may not avoid that question. Teaching the mere fact may not be Evolution, but it surely is Atheism. Evolution is but a phase of Atheism. And we live in one big atheistic world. "God is not in all their thoughts" may be said of some. But of others we certainly have to say that God is in none of their thoughts. Look about you in the schools and universities of the day. All things are explained without God as well as in a denial of God. Evolution is that Atheism that denies the work of God in the work of creation; but there are so many fields and departments of life in which He is also ruled out by silence.

In history the God, Whose counsel determines all things and plans them in inscrutable wisdom, is not even mentioned. The wisdom of the living God is not broached in the teaching of the sciences in the amazing construction of the human body, of the bodies of the animals, of the marvels of the plant world, and of the analysis of the chemicals that form a particular substance. Mathematics is nothing more than a system convenient for man and cleverly devised by that speck of dust, but does not reveal the justice, the holiness and the wisdom of God.

All this is nothing more than Atheism. It may not be an open denial that there is a God. It may not oppose the thought that He is and that all this is His work, but it surely does not render the praise to Him and robs Him of what is due His name while ascribing that glory to an actual creature or a mythical Fate. And it certainly is not bending the twig and training the child in the way his thinking and acting should go. Send your children to the world to be trained, and you send them to atheists. Send them to unbelievers and you give these atheists the opportunity and right to unbend them from that upright position wherein they should stand and wherein the church has been striving to hold them. And really, when they should stand upright facing God with all their being, does it make any difference whether they bend over to the right or to the left? The question is not, in what direction do they bend *away* from the way in which they should go? The question is, In what direction *should* they go? And therefore the question also is, And how can I best serve bending them in that direction? Refusal to use the name of God and to render Him the praise due to His name is to leave the twig bent in its native position; or if it be a covenant child, it is to untie the cord that the parents and church have tied to train that twig to grow upright and, it is to let the twig go

back to its normal position.

This is a serious matter and a danger that covenant parents ought to avoid as much as they can. James says that a doubleminded man is unstable in all his ways. A child torn between two teachings becomes a double-minded man and is unstable in all his ways instead of being a twig bent in the way it ought to grow. Inconsistent training will make an inconsistent child. And the end result of that wavering is that the twig is going to assume its original position. Water follows the line of least resistance. The soul of the child, when restraints are removed and the tie used in bending the twig is let go by worldly teachers — even when they do not openly deny God and man's calling before Him — will droop down with the prevailing winds to be bent away from God and His covenant.

Of course patience must be used in training the child. But using patience is not the same as letting the restraining pressure off for a time. It is not letting that twig snap back to its normal position for a moment to give it a breather, a recess, a time to express its own wishes and to say in what way it wants to go. Patience in Scripture is endurance. Literally the word means "to remain under," and the idea is that when the billows sweep upon us, they sweep over us, but we remain firm under all those onslaughts. And James tells us that the trying of our faith works this endurance, that is, it hardens us to be able to withstand stronger and stronger attacks of the enemy. The parent, or teacher, who is to train that child and to bend the twig must himself have that patience of endurance. How sad a picture when the parent gives in before the child does and becomes weary in well-doing. To be sure, keeping that restraint on the child does require exertion on our part and produces a weariness. Especially is this true when we are already weary in the physical sense because of the toils of the day and after we have reached the prime of our life, and the aches and pains of approaching old age begin to manifest themselves. The all-wise God of our salvation has His good purpose in giving us children in the stronger days of our life. One of the manifestations of that fact that old age is creeping up upon us is that we become tired sooner and take longer to recuperate. But one of the signs also is that because of this physical weariness we become weary of well doing sooner and more often. That our youngest or younger child is "spoiled" and gets away with what the older children could not pull off without impunity is not simply due to the fact that it is the last child. Very often it is exactly that we have become weary in well doing and want a little more time for our own comfort, when the burdens of life seem harder to bear. O, indeed! we need patience in the sense of endurance for the strenuous task of bringing up our children in His fear.

The cost of Christian school tuition is constantly rising, and, rather than enduring, we are inclined to begin to argue with ourselves that it is not so important and



that because of all the weaknesses and faults in the present system, we do better for our children to let the world teach them. Then, so we argue, the lie is so blunt that they will be shocked and not inclined to accept it, surely not as readily as the subtle departure that leads by little steps to the same blunt end. And it takes patience, endurance to resist such arguments of the flesh. For arguments of the flesh they surely are, even though we come to them when deeply concerned for our children's spiritual wellbeing. Paul says, "Come ye out from among them." He asks, What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, what communion hath light with darkness, what concord Christ with Belial, what part he that believeth with an infidel? in II Corinthians 6:14 and 15. There is a measure of contact that we must maintain with departing believers; but the Word of God demands a complete break with the infidel. For it is plain that he will not at all, at any time, to any degree seek to bend your precious "twig" in His fear. And although the ten tribes were a departing kingdom, steeped in idolatry, God still sent such mighty prophets to them — in love and grace — as Elijah and Elisha. For in a departing kingdom and departing church He still has His elect, still sends His Spirit and blesses the truth when it is taught to the child. That Spirit is not at all, at any time in the communion of the unbelievers. Where Christ is not taught He does not come with His Spirit to apply the teaching. That is exactly why He calls OUT of the church at Laodicea His elect people, so that He may again sup with them. Where Atheism and Evolutionism are taught, there is nothing for the Spirit to apply and bless to the hearts of the hearers. And though a departing church may teach these to a degree, there still is that truth which can be and will be blessed. When the church becomes completely false, we shall have no fellowship whatsoever but stand outside and call to repentance.

But there is another word in Scripture that is translated as patience. And it means "to be long of breath." It is our usual word for patience. When we have

it we are not "swift to speak" and retaliate. We are swift to hear what God has to say to us in the situation. And here again, as far as bending that "twig" is concerned, as we said, it does not mean that we look the other way when the "twig" begins to droop away from that upright position in which we have been trying to hold it by our teachings and discipline. It does not mean that we have pity for that child to see him so tightly laced. It is a rather dangerous and foolish thing when you see someone faint to have a "pity" that at once wants to make him stand up on his feet and holds him in an upright position. He must, in order to recover, lie down. It is dangerous and foolish, when the child is being trained to stand upright in his life facing God with all his being, to pity him in such a way that you let him face the flesh and the world for a time. As the twig is bent, means, surely, as it is *kept* bent, not as it once in awhile is held.

Patience, in this instance, means that we are consistent. It means that we do not let go the restraints. But we hold our breath. It means that WE suffer in silence the anguish which our flesh experiences when we see our children's rebellion against the restraints. For their good, that they may endure and become steadfast in the way in which they ought to go, we do not open our mouths to spoil all our work by venting our flesh's venom; and we do not beat them with the rod of our fleshly displeasure. It simply comes down again to the simple fact that to bend them in His fear we must do so in His fear. It means that we stand upright next to the twig which we want to train to stand upright. The vine that you want to grow up on an upright post instead of crawl along the ground requires an upright pole. You say, "Of course." We say, "Go and do thou likewise with those who are to be trained in His fear."

But do not stop there! Do your utmost in your area to establish a school wherein church, home and school all agree as to how the twig is to be bent, and agree that it is to be bent into the upright position revealed to us in the Word of God.

## *A Cloud of Witnesses*

### **David and Uriah**

*Rev. B. Woudenberg*

*And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah.*

*And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set up Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.*

*II Samuel 11:14,15*

With the coming of final success and prosperity, David's life fell into its most serious spiritual eclipse. All

through the troubled years of his young life while enemies threatened on every side, David had remained



relatively faithful in his service of God. It was when the enemies disappeared and offered him less and less opposition that David began to slip. It was gradually so, to the point that he himself was hardly aware of it as it happened. It began with nothing more than the decision to find a little relaxation and rest for himself while the army under the capable leadership of Joab went on to fight his battles without him. Certainly it must not have seemed an unreasonable thing, for who, after all of his hard and difficult years of struggle, deserved a rest more than he? But it meant that David's attention was now turned to seeking his own satisfaction, and that could lead to no good in the end.

The real trouble began rather unexpectedly when in his leisure hours he happened to see from the palace roof a beautiful woman washing herself in a neighboring garden, and desired to have her for his own, even when he learned that the woman was already married to one of his most faithful and valiant soldiers. But his lust having been aroused, he was in no frame of mind to deny himself; and, using his royal authority, he called the woman to him and seduced her. No doubt, no sooner was it done than he felt the pangs of a guilty conscience and resolved that it would never happen again; but at the same time he seemed to find ample reason to excuse himself. Had he not often seen much more serious faults than this enacted repeatedly by conquering armies? Why then should he feel so badly? And after all was he not king with certain prerogatives denied to others? It took but a few days and he had talked his troubled conscience into comparative submission. He thought he felt at ease about the whole episode.

But sin has a way of refusing to be forgotten; and particularly in His chosen people God does not readily allow it to happen. No sooner had it seemed to David that he had gotten his conscience squared away than the message came from Bathsheba, she was with child. To David it came as more an irritation than anything else, for somehow it seemed inconceivable that he, the king, should actually be discovered in such a compromising situation. And yet it was awkward. The fact was that Bathsheba's husband Uriah was away with the army and had not been home for many months. If things went on as they were going, the whole thing would surely have to come out in the open. Something had to be done; and David was quite sure that he knew how to do it. He would merely summon Uriah home from the battle field and provide him with an opportunity to visit his wife. In the end, who could be so sure that the child was not born a bit early?

What David was unprepared for, however, was the kind of man that Uriah was. To be sure, it was not surprising that David should have called for Uriah to give to him a report of how things were going in the battle. Although a Hittite by birth, Uriah had become an Israelite and in so doing had come all the way. It was

hard to find a man more faithful than he either in the service of Jehovah or in the strife of the battlefield. He was by every measure the kind of man that David was most likely to appreciate, one who had molded his own life after the example of his captain and king. It all appeared perfectly natural, therefore, that David called for Uriah and questioned him concerning the course of the battles in which they had engaged. Uriah was quite capable of giving the most pertinent information, and what he said could be relied upon as perfectly trustworthy too. It was just that this was not David's real reason for calling Uriah, and with that the very uprightness of Uriah was to interfere.

Having concluded his questioning of Uriah, David turned and said, almost nonchalantly, "Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet." In fact, he even sent a servant after him with a special gift of food for him and his wife. Everything was going according to plan, and it looked as though soon his own reputation would be out of danger completely.

Uriah, however, was not only a man of dedicated faithfulness to his God and his king, he was faithful too to the men with whom he lived and fought. Even here surrounded by the peace and plenty of their beautiful capital city he could not forget that his fellow soldiers were out in the bitter hardship and danger of the field of battle; and he would not either. His fellow soldiers were sleeping out on the hard and cold ground; he would not go down to his house to sleep in the comfort of his own bed. The wives of his companions had to go without the joy of their presence; his wife would have to go without his also. Obedience to authority had brought him for the moment out of the reach of enemy danger, but he would not use the opportunity to exploit his own pleasure. It was the kind of faithfulness such as can not often be found or even appreciated. But it was the kind of faithfulness which David himself in his better days had taught to his soldiers, such as when he refused to drink for his own pleasure the water which had been brought to him from the well of Bethlehem but poured it out as an offering to the Lord, saying, II Sam 23:17, "Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this; is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" Uriah had seen the beauty of such faithfulness in love as David had shown in his day and had molded his life after it. Thus when the opportunity was there, he would not go down to his own house but slept at the gate of the palace with the servants of the king.

The next morning as a matter of course and just to get the matter finally out of his mind, David inquired as to what Uriah had done the night before when he had left the palace. It was then, when he heard that Uriah had not even gone down to his own house that first the cold bite of fear lay hold upon his heart. Could it be that this man Uriah was not going to cooperate with his plan so simply and logically laid out? In a state of



agitated excitement which could hardly be hid, he called for Uriah and demanded authoritatively and yet plaintively, "Camest thou not from thy journey? why then didst thou not go down unto thine house?"

For Uriah it must have seemed a great mystery why one so great and important as the king should be concerned with such small and personal details of his own life; and yet he had the reason clearly before his own mind and there was no reason to hide it. Innocently he answered, but with a certain beauty of humble faith, "The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing."

David of all men in another day might have appreciated such a simple and humble expression of dedication on the part of one of his soldiers. It was the very same dedication which had carried him and his men on through many a hardship when all of the world seemed turned against them. But it was also the same dedication from which he had also turned, almost unconsciously, when he had sent Joab out alone with the army while he had remained safely home seeking his own leisure. Now to him it was abhorrent, nothing but an instance of bull-headed pride, he may well have thought. Still, how was he going to fight it? And so, vying for time, he dismissed Uriah saying, "Tarry here today also, and tomorrow I will let thee depart."

Desperately and with a growing sense of fear David tried to think of something he could do; but his heated mind could come up with only one thing he could try. Calling Uriah to him in the late afternoon, he had a great feast spread before him with a great deal of strong drink. It was not what Uriah desired; but how could he possibly refuse the table of the king. Thus, while the king hovered insistently over him, he ate and drank far beyond what he ever had before and wanted to now until he became quite drunk. Then once again David repeated his instructions for Uriah to go down to his house. It was an ugly thing to do, to send a man down to his home in that condition, even under ordinary circumstances; and now David's motive made it doubly repulsive. But David was a desperate man, and nothing was beyond him.

But Uriah was a man in whom his faith and dedication were very deeply implanted. His determination to seek no pleasure for himself while his companions were in the dangers of battle was not just the thought of the moment. Even in his stupefied condition, it stood out in his mind; and once again he stopped at the gate to sleep with the servants.

The next morning it was much earlier and much more anxiously that David made his inquiry concerning Uriah. When the answer came back that again Uriah had slept with the servants rather than going to his own home, it

was disappointing, but it also aroused in David a feeling with which he had always been most unfamiliar, a feeling of angry hatred. If Uriah was so stubborn and uncooperative, it was too bad. He had had his chance and now he would suffer the consequences. Back to Joab by Uriah's own hands he sent the instructions, "Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die."

Joab, the trusted captain of David's army, was a cold, calculating and clever judge of human nature. He understood David much better, perhaps, than David did himself. He had always been able to gauge with considerable accuracy just how far he could go without losing David's favor; and he seldomly risked the danger of stepping beyond this. It was not that he had not often wanted to do so. He was an ambitious military tactician whose greatest pleasure in life was to lead his army on to greater and more spectacular victories. But in this goal he had always been greatly hampered by David's primary concern for the safety of his men. Thus, because of the need to retain David's favor, he had often had to give up some of his most spectacular but most risky plans of battle.

When, therefore, this new order came from David, it was to him like a great break in his own favor. To be sure, it was amazing. Never before had he known David to engage in such a personal vendetta: but that was David's worry, not his. All he knew was that it was something he could use. For the time being at least, he would be able to send out his men on any campaign he desired, no matter how dangerous, as long as Uriah was in the front lines of the battle. And so Joab did until at last Uriah was killed by the enemy.

When at last the time came when a report of his activities had to be sent to David, Joab felt freer than he ever had before. He simply instructed the messenger, "When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king, and if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also."

As it was, however, Joab had nothing for which to worry. For the first time, perhaps, David listened to a report of battle with no concern for the safety and welfare of his men. All he listened for was the report of Uriah's death, nothing more or less; and when he heard it, he quickly returned the reply, "Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it; and encourage thou it."

It appeared that all would come out all right for him. As soon as decently possible, he merely took Bathsheba into his home and made her his wife. Now it seemed, his sin could be forgotten.



## *Contending for the Faith*

# THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

The Second Period— 250-730 A.D.

The Pelagian Controversy

Semi – Pelagianism

*Rev. H. Veldman*

We concluded our preceding article with the remark that the late Rev. H. Hoeksema was of the opinion that, although many historians leave the impression that the Synod of Orange' A.D. 529, represents a last victory for the Augustinian conception of predestination and sovereign grace, this synod much rather left the impression that it was afraid of the strict Augustinian principles, and that his doctrine was certainly not maintained by this synod. Although maintaining, on the one hand, the total incapability of man to do any good, it also denied, on the other hand, the infallible and irresistible operation of sovereign grace. We will now call attention to this synod and its decisions.

On the one hand, the synod of Orange laid down the following propositions, according to Philip Schaff:

1. The sin of Adam has not injured the body only, but also the soul of man.
2. The sin of Adam has brought sin and death upon all mankind.
3. Grace is not merely bestowed when we pray for it, but grace itself causes us to pray for it.
5. Even the beginning of faith, the disposition to believe, is effected by grace.
9. All good thoughts and works are God's gift.
10. Even the regenerate and the saints need continually the divine help.
12. What God loves in us, is not our merit, but His own gift.
13. The free will weakened in Adam, can only be restored through the grace of baptism.
16. All good that we possess is God's gift, and therefore no one should boast.
18. Unmerited grace precedes meritorious works.
19. Even had man not fallen, he would have needed divine grace for salvation.
23. When man sins, he does his own will; when he does good, he executed the will of God, yet voluntarily.
24. The love of God is itself a gift of God.

However, to these propositions or chapters the synod also added a Creed of anthropology and soteriology, which, in opposition to Semi-Pelagianism, contains the following five propositions:

1. Through the fall free will has been so weakened,

that without prevenient grace, no one can love God, believe on Him, or do good for God's sake, as he ought (implying that he may in a certain measure).

2. Through the grace of God all may, by the co-operation of God, perform what is necessary for their soul's salvation.

3. It is by no means our faith, that any have been predestinated by God to sin, but rather: if there are people who believe so vile a thing, we condemn them with utter abhorrence.

4. In every good work the beginning proceeds not from us, but God inspires in us faith and love to Him without merit precedent on our part, so that we desire baptism, and after baptism can, with His help, fulfil His will.

5. Because this doctrine of the fathers and the synod is also salutary for the laity, the distinguished men of the laity also, who have been present at this solemn assembly, shall subscribe these acts.

Rev. H. Hoeksema remarks in his notes on the History of Dogma that there is nothing in the decisions of this synod of Orange concerning sovereign election and reprobation. And this is understandable in the light of these five propositions. The second proposition declares that all may, by the co-operation of God, perform what is necessary for their soul's salvation. Although it is true that this synod maintains the Scriptural doctrine that the natural man cannot perform any good, we do well to call attention to the second proposition. In this proposition the synod declares that it is by no means their faith or belief that any have been predestinated by God to sin and that they condemn with utter abhorrence all those who believe so vile a thing. This is a denial of the Scriptural truth of reprobation, as, for example, set forth by the apostle Paul in Romans 9: 11-13, 17, 21-22: "(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth:) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated . . . For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew



my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth . . . Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering (the objects of this longsuffering are not the vessels of wrath, but the vessels unto honour, H.V.) the vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction."

Augustine, in his struggle against Pelagius, was concerned in the deepest sense of the word about God's sovereign predestination. He was very keenly aware of the connection between the doctrines of man's total depravity and God's sovereign predestination. And the two are, of course, inseparable. The Augustinian doctrine of sin and grace met with opposition already during Augustine's lifetime, not only in the person of Pelagius, but also by semi-pelagians, who made the miserable attempt to effect a compromise between the conception of Augustine and that of Pelagius. It is true, as Rev. Hoeksema remarks, that the teaching of Augustine in regard to sovereign grace and predestination found indeed some defenders. But even these defenders assumed a half-hearted position over against the opponents. This was even the case with Prosper, who was a disciple of Augustine and had stood in close contact and fellowship with him for many years. Of his defense of the Augustinian conception the following may be remarked:

1. On the one hand, he wants to maintain completely the sovereign predestination of God without compromise. There is, according to him, an election and reprobation. And especially in regard to the former, he maintains that it can be explained only out of God's sovereign good pleasure.

2. Nevertheless, Prosper also maintains and teaches a general will unto salvation in God, approximately in the same sense in which the former Professor Heyns taught such a general will in the Theological School of the Christian Reformed Church for many years. For this general will unto salvation Prosper appeals to the text that is so often quoted by Pelagius and Semi-Pelagians, I Tim. 2: 4. God wants prayers to be sent up to the throne of grace for all men, and that, too, on the ground that He will have all men to be saved. Here, therefore, Prosper teaches very clearly a general will in God unto salvation, that is, a will in God unto the salvation of all men.

3. It lies in the nature of the case that in the light of this general will unto salvation in God, the doctrine of sovereign reprobation could not be maintained. Prosper teaches that it cannot be said that men are lost because God wills it. To be saved is indeed a free gift of God's grace. But that many are lost must be attributed to those that are lost themselves. No one is lost because of original sin alone. They are reprobated because of their actual sins, which are foreknown and foreseen by God.

And the synod of Orange was far from maintaining the positive doctrine of predestination and sovereign grace.

Finally, concerning this synod of Orange and its subsequent history Philip Schaff writes the following, Vol. III, 869-870:

In pursuance of this requisition, besides the bishops, the Praefectus praetorio Liberius, and seven other illustrious men, signed the Acts. This recognition of the lay element, in view of the hierarchical bent of the age, is significant, and indicates an inward connection of evangelical doctrine with the idea of the universal priesthood. And they were two laymen, we must remember, Prosper and Hilarius, who first came forward in Gaul in energetic opposition to Semi-Pelagianism and in advocacy of the sovereignty of divine grace.

The decisions of the council were sent by Caesarius to Rome, and were confirmed by pope Boniface II, in 530. Boniface, in giving his approval, emphasized the declaration, that even the beginning of a good will and of faith is a gift of prevenient grace, while Semi-Pelagianism left open a way to Christ without grace from God. And beyond question, the church was fully warranted in affirming the pre-eminence of grace over freedom, and the necessity and importance of the *gratia praeveniens*.

Notwithstanding this rejection of the Semi-Pelagian teachings (not teachers), they made their way into the church again, and while Augustine was universally honored as a canonized saint and standard teacher, Cassian and Faustus of Rhegium remained in grateful remembrance as saints in France. (It was especially Faustus who was of great influence in maintaining the doctrine of the Semi-Pelagians. He taught the doctrine of original sin and the necessity of regeneration. However, he also taught that man himself is able to work out the beginning of his salvation. He can certainly feel his own misery, believe in God, long for Him and seek Him in prayer. He also taught a certain common grace. And, concerning predestination, it was his teaching that this is based on the divine foreknowledge of all our acts. Of a sovereign election Faustus must have nothing, and, of course, still less of a sovereign reprobation — H.V.)

At the close of this period Gregory the Great represents the moderated Augustinian system, with the *gratia praeveniens*, but without the *gratia irresistibilis* and without a particularistic *decretum absolutum*. Through him this milder Augustinianism exerted great influence upon the medieval theology. Yet the strict Augustinianism always had its adherents, in such men as Bede, Alcuin, and Isidore of Seville, who taught a *gemina praedestinatio*, an election unto salvation, a reprobation unto death; it became prominent again in the Gottschalk controversy in the ninth century, was repressed by scholasticism and the prevailing legalism; was advocated by the precursors of the Reformation, especially by Wiclif and Huss; and in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, it gained a massive acknowledgment and an independent development in Calvinism, which, in fact, partially recast it, and gave it its



most consistent form.

This concludes our discussion of the doctrine of sin as in the years, 250 to 730 A.D. The Scriptural doctrine of sin and grace, and of God's sovereign predestination, was never popular. Augustine maintained it, but it encountered considerable opposition, during his life and

in later years. And the Synod of Orange was far from maintaining the positive doctrine of predestination and sovereign grace. To the subsequent development of this doctrine of sin in the history of the church we hope to call attention in following articles.

## *Studies in Depth*

### **A Campus Movement (cont.)**

*Rev. Robt. C. Harbach*

Campus Crusade for Christ believes it has come up with not only a legitimate but a unique way of presenting the biblical truth of the gospel. Continually and everywhere crusaders are raising the question, "Have you heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?" Law One says in part, "God loves you . . ." Law Two states that sinful and separated from God, no one can know and experience His love. Law Three: Anyone can know God's love through Christ, God's only provision for man's sin. Law Four: "We must receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord by personal invitation." A remark or two on each of these four "laws" will be in order. First, they are not laws. What is intended by a biblical law is a biblical *principle*, that is, a settled and determined doctrine of Scripture which becomes formulated and recognized as a general truth, providing the rule and ground for straight thinking, valid reasoning and right action. But all we have in these so called spiritual "laws" are mere assertions made, statements advanced, opinions held, assumptions favored. To illustrate the idea of a principle, Albert Barnes wrote in *Notes on Romans iii, 4*, "It is to be held as a fixed, unwavering *principle*, that God is right and true, whatever consequences it may involve." But certainly it is no fixed and unwavering principle that "God loves you," meaning that "God loves all men." For God did not love Pharaoh. God in His sovereignty said He would raise up Pharaoh "that I may smite thee and thy people . . . from the earth" (Rom. 9:17 with Ex. 9:15f). Nor did God love the people of Amalek, for He swore He would have war with Amalek from generation to generation, to stamp "out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (17:14-16). Nowhere do we read that God loved Esau, but that He hated him (Rom. 9:13). Nor can it be said "God loves all men living." Does He love the workers of iniquity (Ps. 5:5)? Does He love the vessels of wrath (Rom. 9:22)? Does He love those "who were before of old ordained to condemnation" (Jude 4)?

Law Two seems acceptable enough, but a note appended reveals that it is understood to mean that although man separated from God cannot know God, he

is nevertheless "continually trying to reach God . . ." This flies in the face of the fact of man's fall, which killed him, leaving him "dead in trespasses and sins," so that "there is none that seeketh after God." But further, "sinful and separated from God" is not explained in terms of the Fall. What happened to man was that he pulled out the plug of the lamp of his spirit from its wall socket, causing the divine current source to be broken and the light of holiness to go out. The truth is man was electrocuted by a thunderbolt of divine wrath. He is dead. It is absurd to suppose that all a man need do is put the plug back in the wall socket of his soul, so that the separation is removed and contact restored!

In Law Three the Cross is presented not as a real atonement which actually saves certain ones and takes away their sin, but as merely a provision for atonement offered to anyone who will have it. The Cross is not like a magnet with power to draw men to Christ (Jn. 12:32), but like a bridge which "makes it possible for man to come to Him." It is up to man to cross over. Law Four refers to Christ's "invitation" to open the heart and life to Him (Rev. 3:20). This text is supposed to teach that Christ stands and knocks at the hearts of unregenerate sinners through the instrumentality of "invitational preaching," that natural men have a "common grace" and natural ability to open their hearts to Him, and that this is implied in the standing there and knocking, as He who is all-wise would not do so if none were able to open to Him. It is also supposed that the opening of the heart does not occur by an irresistible power, but by the consent and concurrence of the will of man. This is contrary to Ps. 110:3 and Rom. 9:16. Not an "offer" or an "invitation" is this text; nor a divine call or command, but a promise, the "if" expressing not a condition awaiting fulfilment, but stating a fact, as in "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God" (Mt. 12:28).

The presentation of Campus Crusade material is about as stereotyped as anything one could find. Whether it comes packaged in a 16 2/3 rpm record, in a pocket-size leaflet, in a letter-size pamphlet, a study



sheet, a booklet or a magazine form, it is all the same old stereotypy. This is evident even in the "testimonies" given by crusade members from all walks of life and variant backgrounds. They all use crusade jargon. Testimonials contain such hackneyed expressions as, "God loves you," "I accepted Jesus," "an egocentric life," "exciting life," "life characterized by doubt, frustration and lack of purpose," "invite Jesus into your life" and "shared . . . Christ." Most testimonies are rather egocentric, especially one like this: "Allowing Jesus Christ to live His life through mine is the key to life for me." Egotism abounds as the result of modern "evangelism" because it appeals to man's natural ego. Men are informed that it is in their power to come to Christ, and that if they but make this response, it will become a means to peace, happiness, fulfilment and the solution or the rising above life's problems. Natural men are attracted to natural advantages. Man is flattered in the opinion that he can take the first step to God. The ministry flattering to the natural man, though drawing forth a large response, cannot be expected to produce a spiritual man. To make things the most attractive to the natural man, he is informed that the promises of God are to the effect that "we (that is, anybody, any unregenerate men) can cast all our cares on Jesus Christ because He cares for us. How? Easy!" Now note how easy this is. Just "drop everything and follow Him." Faith is made an easy thing. "Faith is represented as something to be done in order to salvation; and pains are taken to show that it is an easy thing. Better far than this would it be to see to it that those with whom they deal are truly convinced of sin, and to labour to set forth Christ before them in His glorious completeness as a Saviour. To explain faith to them that *they* may do it, is to set them still to work, though setting an easier task before them." (John Kennedy, 1875, quoted in *The Invitation System*, by Iain Murray, p. 30). Campus Crusade puts it this way, "What is faith? It is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen." But this, so far from being saving faith, is nothing more than a "faith of miracles." Judas had that (Mt. 10:1). Faith is also mere assent to or acceptance of the truth, as is evident in constant urgings to "accept Christ," "count on God's promises," or "Christ waits for you to invite Him to the throne of your life. You must step down and relinquish it to Him." This is too much like the "faith" of the stony-ground hearer (Mt. 13:5, 6). James says that many who have it, have it in common with the devil's household (2:19). Herod and Agrippa also had it (Mk. 6:20; Acts 26:27). It is not persevering faith (Lk. 8:13; Heb. 6:4-6, 9).

The danger of this superficial, almost vacuous method is that many think they have savingly believed in Christ. With joy they profess to have found Him! (In fact, in giving their "testimonies," they are advised, "Smile often! Ask the Lord to give you a happy radiant face." — something only a joyful heart can produce —

genuinely!) Christianity must be advertized as an "easy-faith." There is then the danger that many of the recruits be mere wayside hearers, stony-ground hearers or thorny-ground hearers, since those in command declare the "message" and its results to be a gracious work of God. Souls are indeed seeking something, but to inform them that what they are seeking is God is misleading (Rom. 3:11). To point to the results of many conversions in the movement as evidenced by such things as faith, exceeding joy and changed lives is dangerous when no consideration is given to the two opposite kinds of faith in James 2:19, 20, to the two kinds of joy in Luke 8:13 and Matt. 13:44, and the two kinds of changed lives in Matt. 5:20; 7:21-27. A true ministry of the Word will prove out well under the searchlight of such contrasts, and will also examine and prove itself in the light of John 6:37, 39, 44, 60-71; 8:30ff and 12:36-43. Let every recruit and recruiting officer go to the Law and to the Testimony and prove whether the "true light" is in them (Isa. 8:20).

It ought also to be pointed out that the texts of Scripture so far indicated reveal that many may be deceived into believing what is in them to be a work of saving grace (when it is nothing more than the enameling of a rotted post), not because of the work of false prophets or the deceits of the devil, but by the temporary influence of the gospel, and by many spiritual attainments which attend the preaching of the gospel, but do not accompany salvation. But when any come under a ministry where The Gospel is not presented, but only some frothy, thin, watered-down imitation, it is even more likely there be deceived souls. These sad counterfeits are widely found, even aside from those the devil himself produces. Nevertheless, he does come as "an angel of light" and blinds the minds of many who judge only on the basis of so called results. Every promoter and subordinate of a work can be assured it is of God only when they adapt themselves to the test of truth (I John 3:19-21; 4:1). That must not be credited as a work of God which is bankrupt of the proof of truth. No one is a Christian because he thought he was ten years ago. They are not converts to Christ merely because a movement acclaims them as such, or because the world is attracted to their youthful enthusiasm, or because Christendom has accepted them. Many are thrilled with the novelty of new religious impressions, but it would be tragic to tell them that these are evidences of their having been born again. No gain is it to the church when her fields are sown with tares or traitors. Vain to advertise that to be a work of God which none can know to bear His approval. No credit to the church is it if out of the unbelieving world Mr. Obstinacy gets converted into Mr. Carnal-security. Such ecclesiastical accumulations cheat the church with chaff and dishonor God with attributions of that which is not His.



## The Strength of Youth

# The Right of Dissent

Rev. J. Kortering

Dissent!

It is as old as the earth.

Its form is as variegated as life itself.

The whine of a bullet silences an eloquent voice of the civil rights movement. Four young people strip themselves and dance in the altogether before the United Nations building, a protest. An old man pens a letter to the editor, his palsied script an expression of disagreement. Justice Douglas, buried beneath an avalanche of mail, the result of the '62 *Engel v. Vitale* decision of the Supreme Court declaring as illegal the sanctioned prayer of the New York State School Board. Students mob the Low Memorial Library at Columbia University. Four hundred worshippers exit during Mass at the St. Matthews Cathedral in Washington, dissatisfied with Cardinal O'Boyle's defense of the Papal Encyclical on birth control. Bearded activists hurl rocks and 4-letter words at the Chicago police. Young rebels tear up the American flag in Los Angeles screaming, "Liberty and Justice." H. Rap Brown entones, "Violence is as American as cherry pie." The local 282 parades in front of the Bell Telephone office. The phone lines burn with the blistering attack of an irate caller in the local telethon.

This is in the name of dissent.

Young people play a leading role.

It's time that we make a sane appraisal of all this.

In doing so we must be careful to retain a proper mental balance. It is so easy for us to become the victims of our own stereotypes. We're inclined to throw all dissenters into the classification of rebels. The temptation to do this arises out of the fact that the most vocal and outspoken dissenters are indeed rebels. Enflamed and passionate appeals are directed to the victims of discrimination, calling them to arise and take hold of their civil rights. This tirade of hate is broadcast throughout the land. The inevitable consequences — riots, arson, murder, looting are in turn made the "front page" for the day. Bloodied bodies, smoldering ruins, pot-bellied looters lugging merchandise under the permissive gaze of the troopers all make indelible impressions upon our troubled minds. All this is in the name of dissent.

Yet, we know so well there is more to dissent than this. All dissention is not rebellion. Public debate between those who take opposite positions on basic issues is still a cherished right in our land. The public forum elicits an opportunity to exchange ideas and to work toward understanding. The handing out of hand-

bills which expostulate one's convictions is still an important means of airing one's dissent. All public marches do not violate local ordinances and excite public riot.

In surveying this situation, we often wrestle with a sense of guilt. I'm convinced that many covenant young people wrestle sincerely with the question, where am I supposed to be in all of this? Some ask the question, *may* we co-operate with others in trying to secure justice for our fellow citizens? Still others are still more emphatic and pose the question, *must* we not become involved in these issues which are so pertinent to our times? Must we not express our dissent to things we believe are wrong?

When these questions are raised, I am heartened. True, not all covenant young people raise them. Some don't even care, some are quite convinced they have the answer and therefore can't tolerate consideration of any other view, others are scared that if they raise the question for discussion their "orthodoxy" will be questioned. For our serious-minded youth however, the question of the right of dissent becomes a burning issue of conscience.

This is particularly true for *youth*. One realizes that the issue of dissent must properly belong to all of us. Age doesn't dissolve one of the responsibility to give account for his acts. Marriage is not a retreat from the reality of everyday living. Financial success may not be a barricade to separate us from our fellow man. Everyone must give account of his whole life in all its relationships. This necessitates interest in all issues including the right to raise our voices in dissent.

Still, in a special sense the question is of special interest to youth, covenant youth as well. The fact that youth are *young* must go a long way in explaining this. There are certain things outstandingly characteristic of youth that accounts for their innate desire to express disagreement.

First, young people are often idealists. Their make-up allows them to form certain judgments, more often than not reduced to a very simplistic form. As they diagnose the world's ills they latch upon one certain thing that if corrected will certainly evaporate the clouds and allow the warmth of the sunshine to revitalize our storm-swept society. They envision their ideal within their grasp; it's there for the taking. To some young adults it only takes a date, suddenly their dark world becomes peachy lovely. To others it takes a certain candidate for president; if only he's elected the world will reach its



utopia. Others firmly believe that if the United States would only get out of Vietnam the era of human brotherhood would surely follow. Youth can be persuaded to follow almost any cause, it just depends on how one goes about getting their support. Their spontaneous and oftentimes superficial judgment brings them to criticize the present situation and clamor for the perfect world just around the corner.

Secondly, youth stands at the door of his own individualism. Nurtured for years within the sphere of the home, school, church he now becomes a man and puts away childish things. Suddenly he has to appraise all that he was taught, he has to form a judgment on whether it is true or not. No longer is he satisfied to say this is true because my dad said so or because my teacher or preacher said so, he must know it to be true for himself. He recognizes his involvement, he is not just a passive receiver, but a co-participant in the action. He knows that maturity demands responsible judgment.

Thirdly, with this awareness youth rises up to act. He comes to a conclusion that something is wrong and he has the answer. He cannot sit indifferently by, he is responsible, he is one of the molders of the world and the controllers of human destiny. In conjunction with other youth they work together to fulfill their ideals, they must correct the ills and further the cause of justice and goodness. There are countless number of young people that are conscientiously working on what they consider desperately serious. All dissent on the part of youth must not be swept under the carpet of youthful insolence or attention getting. Many youth are marching on a crusade; they're willing to take the front ranks.

Finally, youth are innately impatient. They are the "now" generation. The 40% of our population which is under 21 years of age are very vocal about this. The "war babies" are now in the university and their impatient voices are heard daily. As pioneers of a "righteous" cause they threaten to plunge our nation into anarchy rather than be subjects in a country that does not match their ideal. Unrest, violence, ghastly public displays are but the beginnings of change, a change that must come now.

You may say that these are not very nice things to say about young people. I'm only too glad that I don't have to confront just any kind of young people. These are written for covenant young people who have the grace to understand. There is no simplistic ideal in a sin cursed world. Often times we lose sight of the fact that an ideal without the enlightenment of Scripture is actually foolishness. The idealism of youth must be sanctified by the Spirit. Even though we recognize that youth born within the covenant are sanctified by grace, yet their nature is the same. The difference is that covenant youth *struggle* against sin, also their sinful nature. The 4 things listed above surely apply to covenant youth as well. This accounts for much tension

in our homes, schools, churches, and government. Dissent is natural.

The question we must ask is what is a correct form of dissent for covenant youth. That there is a place for dissent goes without saying. We expect our children to grow up and begin to think for themselves. As young adults they begin to express their ideas, some of which are bound to involve a clash, there is a measure of protest in every sphere. This dissent must be expressed responsibly, as those who must give account before God for all we do and say. Even our dissent must be to the glory of God or God will turn it against us and it will bring our own destruction.

In order that we may consider this somewhat in detail, we propose to look at this subject from three points of view.

First, what goal are we seeking to achieve? Dissent is purely negative. It means that we reject something because we object to it. Responsible dissent involves more than telling someone he is wrong; he must also be shown the right way. If we are to reject something, a way of life or a certain action, we must become convinced that there is a better way of life to replace it.

To narrow this down a bit, we have to ask ourselves what goal do we as covenant youth have. What are we striving to attain here in this world? What is our calling and purpose here in relationship to our neighbors around us? In order to see the uniqueness of this position we have to consider it over against the social goal of Humanism as well as the perverted goal of the corrupted church.

Secondly, we have to consider the proper means of dissent. This involves an examination of methodology used by the draft card burners, the proponents of violence as well as the advocates of non-violent demonstrations. We must ask, to what extent may and must the church become involved in these forms of dissent? Must we distinguish between the involvement of the church institute (office bearers and ecclesiastical bodies) from that of her members who are also citizens of America? We must wrestle with such problems as whether it is correct that if we consider a law to be immoral we may use illegal means to overthrow it. Is there a place for peaceful demonstrations? Should we become more involved in speaking out for what we believe to be the Scriptural answer to man's miseries?

Thirdly, we should also consider the question of co-operation with others in the cause of dissent. To illustrate the problem, can and should christians co-operate with non-christians in the common cause of civil-rights and justice for all citizens? Is it not true that any attempt by christians to eradicate poverty or correct social evils as a separate force will be inconsequential and meaningless? Would a joint effort by all men everywhere no matter what color, race, or creed be a denial of our christian position?

We have laid bare the issues, we trust that in future articles we will be able to take a close look at them.



## *From Our Mission Committee*

# **A Progress Report**

*Rev. J. Kortering*

Yes, progress is being made.

Encouraging reports have been received from both at home and abroad that indicate that the Word of God is being received with gratitude. The white horse of Rev. 6:13 is riding victoriously, also in our midst. Some of those who receive the Word are believers who desire to grow in the truth, others are brought into contact with the glorious gospel for the first time. Bringing the Word of God to such is indeed progress in the name of Christ and for the sake of the glory of God through the salvation of His people. Such a Word never returns void.

Undoubtedly, most of you have heard some details of the progress in Jamaica. Our emissaries, Rev. and Mrs. Heys and Mr. and Mrs. Thys Feenstra, are perhaps the best testimony. Their enthusiasm for the work cannot help but rub off on the rest of us who are not so personally involved. Rev. Heys has already written two articles in the Standard Bearer concerning some aspects of the work done in Jamaica this summer. Besides this, he has lectured for the Office Bearers Conference at Hope Church, presenting in clear focus the problems and potentials of the Jamaican field. The Mission Committee invited him to prepare a program containing details of the work being done in Jamaica and to be presented D.V. on the evening of Thanksgiving Day at First Church, Grand Rapids. This will consist of colored slides, tape recordings, and narrative of the work. Perhaps opportunity will arise for him to present this program in other congregations throughout the denomination.

In view of this, one hesitates to take it upon himself to present details through another article in the Standard Bearer. Yet, we feel that since our churches requested that such reports be given periodically this should also be done now. Under the signature of both emissaries a detailed report was presented to our Committee at the meeting of Oct. 16. This 10 page single spaced report was a thorough account of the work accomplished this past summer. From this material we will glean a few pertinent facts and share them with you.

The first deals with progress made in teaching and preaching. Our emissaries informed the committee that they were able to attend 32 services, Rev. Heys being asked to preach at most of them. These were scattered among some 20 different congregations at different points on the island. These places were not always located at the most convenient spot, as e.g. Buff Bay. Rev. Heys describes their experience, "We left Port

Maria at 8:30 a.m. to pick up Rev. Elliott in Islington and then drove to Buff Bay. Here we left the highway and pavement to climb up the Blue Mountains. The whole distance from Port Maria to Mahoe was only a matter of some 60 miles, but we arrived around 11 A.M. It was a steep, long and rough climb with the car. But the view of the valleys when once we got up to where we had to part was spectacular, beauty no tourists ever get to see. We still had to walk at least half a mile up and down hills before we descended into a depression where the bamboo church stood. It was a hot, close, sticky, stuffy position and was crude and roughly constructed. We enjoyed the Sunday there however." This particular congregation is considering a new church building, having already purchased land on a higher elevation for the price of \$40.00.

The brethren used Psalm 23 as the basis for informal discussions with the members of the churches. This proved highly successful and was repeated on Sunday afternoons as well as during certain week-night meetings when they did not have preaching services. It stimulated congregational involvement, the spiritual lambs of Christ could also express their faith in the Good Shepherd. It has become evident that they need the milk of the Word for which there is an earnest spiritual thirsting.

That the word was well received became evident time and again when the people would beg Rev. Heys to stay longer or make a return visit, but 8 weeks did not allow many return visits. This was compensated in part by the efforts of some of the people to follow Rev. Heys when he traveled to the different churches. Reference was made to this in the report, "How else shall we explain that here at Porters Mountain where we have no church, but Rev. Ruddock lives, his people from Mt. Lebanon appeared for the service? They began to walk up the mountain from Mt. Lebanon and even from Fort William at 4 P.M. and arrived at 7 P.M. a three hour walk up, which means another 3 hour walk back home after the service! They did not come that night for shillings or material goods. The same was true our last Sunday there on the island. The people from the Hope Hill congregation came by truck way across the island for the farewell Sunday. We gave them no money for travel, gave no one any money for travel with the exception of the ministers when we sent them on an errand. We gave no money for group travel or to individuals to travel. We gave them the Word."

Opportunity also presented itself to reach people who were not members of the congregations mentioned



above. In the first place, this was true in the Sunday School, often times children from the surrounding hills would come out when they heard the singing of the Sunday School children. At other times adults would join the worship services, even after they were in progress. In the second place, public programs were presented during which Rev. Heys showed pictures of Holland and the annual Tulip Time. This served as an excellent opportunity to speak of the 5 points of Calvinism each of which begins with a letter of T-U-L-I-P. Rev. Heys refers to the program at Islington, "That night we showed the Islington congregation our pictures in a Baptist church that had electricity. It was open to the public and several Baptist people said that they enjoyed the "message." They must have meant the explanation of the Five Points of Calvinism in connection with the pictures of the tulips." At Reading a public school was used for the public program, but as it was reported, "We had a near riot because of this, certain young men molesting by turning the lights on during the pictures and off when we gave up and needed light to pack up our equipment. The sermon was before the pictures, and there was respect and quietness. We left to prevent a riot when certain elements became boisterous. The white man is not well received all over, and we were booed and ridiculed often." Also in Jamaica the witness of the gospel draws a two-fold response. In the third place, contact was established with other ministers from different churches who showed interest in becoming affiliated with the Prot. Ref. Churches of Jamaica. The report refers to 3 such instances. A Rev. Hezekiah Moore of Buff Bay discussed the possibility of taking his two churches into the group. Rev. Heys preached in one of his churches and left the question of affiliation to be resolved by the churches concerned. Another Rev. Drummond, who lost his congregation through no fault of his own was placed as Pastor of the Northhampton congregation. This was one of the many congregations served by Rev. Elliott who travels about a great deal. The third minister was Rev. Brown of Kingston, St. Andrews. "Rev. Brown seemed very sincere and desirous of affiliating with us. We promised to send him some literature so that he might know more of us and of our doctrinal stand." All this indicates that there is much work that must be done, not only in building up the present congregations, but also in reaching out into new areas.

There is not much more to report concerning the construction of church buildings. The problem has been pretty much narrowed to securing the land on which these buildings are to be constructed. The idea of consolidating all the churches into 3 larger congregations has been abandoned, since it is not practical and would deny the worship services to the children. The need for securing the property has been pointed out in the case of the church at Islington where one member of the church owned one third of the land on which the

church was located and having been confronted with the Scriptural truth of a woman's place in the church (I Tim. 2:11, 12) caused division and made it impossible for the group faithful with Rev. Elliott to meet in that church. In such instances as this the faith of the infant church is tested as if by fire. The need for building improvement has also increased as the pressure of government demands increases with the improvement in the general economic conditions of the island. The time is not far off when the government will be in a position to enforce the law of building standards.

Works of mercy were also performed. Money (\$1500.00) was deposited in the Barclays Bank D.C.O. in Lucea to which another \$1500.00 was added later on. Some of this was spent on the needy this summer. One woman needed an eye operation and will have to have the other eye corrected in about 6 months. This was done for the total cost of \$25.00 plus medical prescriptions. In other instances medical examinations were needed. Also the ministers that travel need more money than they can receive from the churches they serve. Because of poverty, they often do not get travel expenses paid and must somehow live off the people. Recommendations providing for the material needs are being considered by our Jamaica sub-committee in conjunction with the deacons of Hudsonville who have been requested to handle this aspect of the work.

The clothing collected by the deacons of our churches and packed by the deacons of Southeast congregation arrived on the island just a week before our emissaries were to leave for home. Since the shipment went to Kingston, it had to be transferred by train to Montego Bay and then in turn delivered by truck to the various congregations. Patience was the rule of the day to arrange for all the details. The cost of duty was only \$27.00, and that for 3,015 pounds of clothing. Under the direction of God the clothing was cleared just in time, for on the very evening that the clothing had been shipped away by truck a fire destroyed the Customs Office building in Montego Bay which contained all the signed papers.

In view of this heartening report, the committee is working on ways to implement the Synodical decisions taken last June. By our next report we may be able to give some concrete details on this.

Just before the close of our last meeting, Rev. H. Veldman reported on the work he was able to do in Pella between Sept. 22 and Oct. 13. Under the direction of our faithful God, Rev. Veldman, a former pastor of Pella was present when the little flock was saddened by the death of Mrs. Vander Molen. His presence served as a means of comfort and strength to carry them through the hour of grief. Lectures were given on the three Thursday evenings and dealt with the end of the world and the signs of the times. These were well received by the thirty or forty people in attendance. Visits were made during the week and the Sunday services were



conducted. Appreciation was expressed for the clear preaching of the Word. Advice was given, and this confirmed the former advice of Rev. M. Schipper, that the committee continue to work in Pella and to make some arrangements for regular preaching and instruction. This entire matter was placed in the hands of the New Policy committee to formulate concrete proposals that may be considered.

Gratitude must be expressed to the brethren who

faithfully performed these labors and to the congregations who have released their ministers so that they could further the cause of church extension and missions. Even in this difficult work the true blessings are not measured in external success, but in the spiritual bond of faith between ourselves and those who gladly receive the Word.

May our prayers ascend to God for His continued blessing upon this work.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Prof. H. Hanko*

*THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER AND THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.* by Michael Green; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968; 192 pp., \$3.95.

This work is Volume 18 of the Tyndale series of Bible Commentaries of which R.V.G. Tasker is the general editor. It is advertised as a "concise, workable tool for laymen, teachers and ministers". In many respects this is true. Probably the strength of this volume is the rather elaborate introduction to each of these two epistles. In the introduction the author treats extensively the questions of date, authorship and dependence. Much of the material found in these introductions is of considerable value to an understanding of the two books.

As far as the commentary itself is concerned, while it is written by a conservative scholar, the exegesis is not always sharp and pointed, nor is it based upon the Greek. The result is some very irrelevant exegesis which is little help in understanding the epistles. Nevertheless, for a short and concise explanation of the two books, this commentary has a place in the libraries of Churches, Schools and homes.

I cannot agree entirely with the author's insistence that Jude included in his book quotations from Apocryphal writings such as the Book of Enoch. And so, this commentary, as is true of all commentaries, must be used with care and the study of it must not be a substitute for the study of Scripture itself.

*HYMNS AND THE FAITH,* by Erik Routley; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968; 311 pp., \$4.95.

Forty-nine hymns of the Church are discussed in this

volume. Some of the hymns are old favorites; some are not very well known. All are hymns written before our present century. The author treats briefly, where possible, the history of a hymn; but he is mainly concerned in giving a commentary on the hymn showing how it is based on Scripture, demonstrating why it has found a place in the hymnology of the Church, explaining obscure passages in the hymns and attempting to relate the hymns to the confession and walk of the believer. The commentaries are not pedantic and stilted; they are written in such a way that the music and flavor of the hymn is communicated through the remarks made. In some respects the commentaries are interesting and beautiful.

Such hymns as "My God how wonderful Thou art", "O God, our help in ages past", "Lead, kindly light", and "The Church's one foundation" are treated. The book would be of special value to those who make a study of hymnology and to those who are looking for good hymns to be used in singing. The commentaries offered are often helpful in determining the meaning of the author of a hymn. Sometimes these explanations are quite different from what we would expect.

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### ANNOUNCEMENT

Do you have a serviceman who would like to listen to a Protestant Reformed sermon every week? We will send the sermons if you will purchase a small, cartridge tape play or tape recorder. They start as low as \$25.00. Write to:

Lynden Prot. Ref. Church  
8541 Depot Road  
Lynden, Washington 98264



## News From Our Churches

Oct 31, 1968

Our church at South Holland, Ill. has named a new trio which includes the Revs. M. Schipper, H. Veldman and B. Woudenberg, from which Rev. H. Veldman was chosen. Hull's congregation received a letter from Rev. C. Hanko in which he declined their call to come over and help them.

\* \* \*

The Annual Reformation Day Rally was held in First Church of Grand Rapids featuring a lecture by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema on, "The Heart-beat of the Reformation." Rev. G. Lubbers, chairman of the evening, led in opening devotions. Mrs. C. Lubbers, the organist of our Radio Choir, gave three numbers on the new Wicks Organ, ably demonstrating the versatility of the instrument, and accompanied the singing of the audience. An offering was received to defray the expenses incurred in this project. The speaker's theme carried the figure of a man whose heartbeat was felt throughout his whole body, and served to give life and energy to all his vital organs and to the farthest extremities of his body. This figure was carried out by the speaker as he likened this throbbing, pulsating beat to the truth of Sovereign Election which is the heart-beat of the whole body of truth, giving life and energy to each vital part thereof. Further, that Divine, Sovereign Predestination is the heart-beat that must be felt in all the doctrines of the church; that if it is absent, there will be clear evidence of heart trouble and its accompanying diseases of Universal Atonement, Universal Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man, Common Grace, the Well-meant offer of Salvation, Arminianism, and Post- and Pre-Millennialism. The lecture was climaxed with the clarion call to return to the Reformation Truth on a personal basis for every child of the Reformation, with the attending comforting conviction that when sensing the heart-beat of the Reformation we sense the heart of God. The presence of a very fine representation of young people—from grade school to college—was a healthy sign that the heritage of the Reformation has been handed down to children's children, delighting the older generation which anxiously feels the pulse of their children to be assured of their spiritual well-being. The program was brought to a fitting close with the singing of the Doxology, and by prayer led by Rev. R.C. Harbach of Kalamazoo.

\* \* \*

Other Reformation Day commemorations listed in the bulletins included an after-recess presentation by two members of Hull's Ladies Society; a Program in their church Sunday evening, Oct. 27, with Rev. J.A. Heys as speaker; and a speech by Rev. Engelsma in a visit to their school in Loveland.

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Rev. Heys was scheduled to give his illustrated lecture on Jamaica in the Community Hall in Rock Rapids, Iowa on Oct. 30, and in Loveland, Colo. Oct. 31.

The Fall Mass Meeting of the Men's Society League was held in First Church with Rev. M. Schipper giving a paper on "The Racial Unrest of our Times," in which he found a manifestation of the Beast of Revelations 13 in its attempt to heal the deadly wound it suffered at Babel. The speaker warned the men to be alert to the signs of the times and to evaluate them in the light of the Scriptures, that they may be ready for the Day of Anti-Christ when the deadly wound shall be healed for a season, introducing a period of extreme persecution for the Church.

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While on a preaching engagement in Pella, Iowa for four weeks, Rev. H. Veldman gave a series of Thursday evening lectures in three successive weeks. The topics were, "The Merger of Churches a Sign of the Times"; "The Signs of the Times in Our Daily Lives"; and, "Our Specific Antithetical Calling."

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Because of the success of the Spring Retreat, the young people of Michigan are planning a Fall Retreat which will feature the theme "Thanksgiving." The date of this event has been set for Nov. 8 and 9.

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Lynden's Annual Congregational Meeting will be held Oct. 28, an early date so that plans for new church furnishings may be considered, beside the usual adoption of the next year's budget and election of office bearers.

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The Redlands Young People are already busily engaged in making plans for the '69 Convention. They have scheduled a program featuring the Redlands Quartette and the showing of slides depicting the Island of Jamaica to create a Fund for the convention. They realize that many more such projects will have to be sponsored in the coming months. In a note from California Rev. Hanko laments that it is difficult for the church to survive in the atmosphere that pervades in that State of all kinds of isms and heresies—the latest being the prediction, received in a vision by some crack-pot, of an earthquake that will destroy the whole State. Indeed, the "they shall see visions and dream dreams" is not limited to the children of the church; the children of this world are being used in that capacity by the Father of lies, to try to deceive the children of light.

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We call your attention to an announcement elsewhere in this issue suggesting the idea of a worthwhile Christmas present to your serviceman. Rev. Woudenberg will furnish the taped sermons if you will only furnish the tape recorder. How about it? Though it may be too late for a Christmas gift, it is never too late for a love-gift.

... see you in church

J.M.F.