

# The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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*Meditation***The Revealed Things**

*Rev. M. Schipper*

*"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."*

*Deuteronomy 29:29.*

Not the secret things!  
But the revealed things!  
These belong unto us and our children forever!  
This is the principle which the Lord through Moses  
sets before His covenant people to keep them in the way

of obedience as they were governed by the law of the blessing and the curse.

Do not misappropriate and misapply these words!  
This is often done in our day. This text is easily quoted  
in the attempt to silence the ardent preacher who in his



utterances defends the doctrine of sovereign predestination and who believes in delivering to his congregation the full counsel of God. Or, it is used against anyone who is old-fashioned enough to insist that the doctrines of election and reprobation are cardinal concepts of the Christian faith. These supercilious objectors love to remind you that on the basis of a few texts of Scripture God loves the whole world (John 3:16), that He will have all men to be saved (I Timothy 2:4), and that anyone can accept freely the water of life (Revelation 22:17). And they do not hesitate to tell you that we have nothing to do with the matters of election and reprobation; and that, on the apparent ground of our text, these matters belong to the secrets of God. They confuse the revealed with secret things. They call that which is openly manifest a hidden counsel.

But what then are these secret things which belong to the Lord our God?

That is secret which He has not revealed! There are such things either concerning Himself or His plan which are hidden in Himself and for reasons He only knows. They are the things which are not necessary for us to know and concerning which we are not to curiously try to discover. They belong to God Himself Who is an infinite Deep. They are the things which spring up out of His unfathomable Being. They may or may not be sometime revealed. Some of them we may never know. Some things must yet be revealed, either in this life or that to come. But since they belong to *our* God, we may rest assured that nothing secret will work for our disadvantage. He is Jehovah, our covenant God. Infinitely great in wisdom and glory and power is He, but unchangeably the same in respect to Himself and His people. As *our* God, He will work even His secrets for our advantage. If you or I held secrets, they might be for the advantage or, as is often the case, for the disadvantage of those in respect to whom we hold them. But this can never be the case with our covenant, unchangeable God.

That God holds secrets, it should be very evident. He has secrets in respect to His own Being and manifestations. Take, for instance, the mode of His subsistence — there are three Persons in the one Godhead. This is indeed a profound mystery. Or, to mention another, think of the union of the two natures, divine and human, in the Person of the Son of God. We can stammer a few words about it on the basis of revelation; but to comprehend it, we cannot.

Then, too, there are many secrets of God in nature which men by searching cannot find out. It is a secret of God how a child is formed in the womb of its mother. Scientifically we may be able to say much about it, but the wise man expressed the profundity of it when he said, "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works

of God who maketh all." (Eccles. 11:5). Or, why a child is born blind or ignorant; or why a beautiful flower should grow in the uninhabited desert waste. We say in respect to the former, this is one of the results of sin; and in respect to the latter, God sees the flower and is glorified; but in the final analysis these things belong to the secrets of God.

God also has secrets in respect to his rational-moral creatures. He knows, for example, the number and the particular persons whom He has chosen to eternal life or reprobated to eternal damnation. We judge them on the basis of their outward walk, but we can be terribly mistaken in our judgment. God only knows with finality who they are. Or again, think of the salvation or condemnation of infants who die in their infancy. Much speculation is done in respect to this question, even to the point that it is maintained that all children of believers who die in infancy are saved, for which theory no ground can be found in Scripture. We do well to leave it to God Himself as belonging to His secrets, while we try to find our comfort in the death of our little ones in the truth of His covenant connected with which is His promise to raise up His children out of the children of the believers. Moreover, there is also the day of our death, which we cannot know. It is God's secret.

So, God also had secrets in respect to the people of Israel. In the context God had declared that the people would be scattered by captivity after they had forsaken His law. But when and how this should take place was His secret. It was none of Israel's business to curiously inquire about this. Rather, Moses instructs them that the secrets belong to God.

Israel's calling is to be concerned about the things which are revealed!

What is revelation? And what is the content of the things revealed?

Revelation presupposes that something has been hidden, under cover, and therefore a secret and unknown. However, when it is revealed the cover is lifted, or the veil is parted, leaving the concealed object in view in such a way that the unknown is clearly seen and understood. Moreover, it should also be explained that the revelation here spoken of is not merely an external disclosure of mere perception, something to be observed only with the sense of sight. Rather, it is an internal disclosure. It implies that the thing revealed is thoroughly understood.

Revelation takes place as a divine act either in the realm of nature and in the acts of divine providence, or more particularly through the Word of God, oral or written, spoken directly by God or indirectly through the prophets or apostles, and in the written law of God. Undoubtedly the revealed things of our text have immediate reference to the latter.

In general, as far as the contents of revelation is concerned, we may say that the revealed things are all that God has spoken concerning Himself and His



counsel. Repeatedly God speaks concerning Himself, declaring to us Who He is and how He is, explaining and unfolding His glorious attributes. That He is God and there is no other is the gist of all divine revelation. A God of truth is He, just and good, full of wisdom, justice and mercy. Nor is He silent concerning His purposes as they are revealed and realized in the creation and government of all things, and particularly in relation to the rational-moral creatures whom He has distinguished for the fulfillment of His own purpose. Hence, the counsel of sovereign predestination, distinguished in the election of some and in the reprobation of others. It is no secret, but rather the very heart of the revelation that Christ Jesus is God's Elect in Whom and through Whom God is pleased to redeem a certain people whom He has also chosen. And just as eternally and sovereignly God has determined upon reprobation of others who must for a time serve as scaffolding in the building of the house of His covenant. In one word, God purposed to reveal Himself in His Son become incarnate as the God of salvation to His people whom He has chosen. This is the heart of revelation, and the very essence of the gospel!

In particular, however, the revealed things refer to the law of God with its commands, threats, and promises. This revelation declares to us our covenant obligations. God has not only declared that He will raise up a covenant people to Himself, but He has also revealed how that covenant people must act toward Him in that covenant. These obligations are found in the revelation of His law. They are the rule of life. They who live by them are blessed. They who do not heed them are cursed.

This revelation comes to a people who is conceived and born in sin, and therefore wholly incapable of fulfilling their obligations. Consequently this law becomes a schoolmaster driving them to the Christ Who through His perfect sacrifice on the cross pays the penalty of our guilt, while He perfectly fulfills the obligations of that law for us. So perfectly did He accomplish this for His people that they are accounted righteous before God. So perfectly righteous are they that they appear before God as if they had never committed one sin and had fulfilled all righteousness.

Now that law is revealed to them no longer as the rod that beats them down into the dust, but the staff whereby they walk in the midst of the world of sin and death. It is not abrogated, as some contend, but it is still in the category of "the revealed things." It is still for us and our children. It is the lamp for our feet and the light upon our pathway.

It is in this light that we must understand the last part of our text. God revealed things to Israel which He never declared to any other nation. And that revelation develops with the organic development of His covenant. To the line of succeeding generations, to us and our children, God reveals the things of His covenant.

Not only must the fathers of Israel know them and keep them themselves, but they must see to it that their children also receive them!

This instruction in the revealed things though quite naturally beginning in the home and in the church, does not stop there. It must also come to them in the school. That school must not be simply a school with the Bible, but it must be prepared to give instruction that is thoroughly permeated with the Word of God.

The revealed things are for us and our children forever!

They may never let them slip, but must keep them as frontlets before their eyes!

That we may do all the words of this law!

Covenant instruction is not intended to make of our children better citizens, though that they will become; nor is it intended to give them a certain polish and finesse that will equip them to become professionals in this world, though like Daniel they may rise to high places. Rather, it must serve to prepare them as citizens of the kingdom of heaven to walk in this world as obedient children who love and serve their God out of gratitude for the great redemption He has wrought and out of sovereign grace committed unto them.

Thus with the apostle we can boast: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

## Editorials

### ***More About The School-Aid Issue***

*Prof. H.C. Hoeksema*

Earlier this year the *Standard Bearer* reported and commented on a campaign to obtain financial aid for Christian schools from the state coffers in Michigan. At

that time we went on record as being opposed on a principle basis to this proposal because it would involve a denial of the very idea of parental education of



covenant children, and because it would involve a denial of the underlying Scriptural and Reformed character of the subject-material taught in our schools.

In the State of Michigan this is by no means a dead issue as yet. In the first place, the proponents of state aid vowed to continue the fight and have promised to have their proposal before the state legislature again. We may expect, therefore, that this will take place when the state legislature reconvenes. We may expect, too, that supporters of Christian education will again be flooded with propaganda urging them to pressure the governor and their state senators and representatives to work for passage of "parochiaid" legislation. In the second place, although no state aid bill was passed, there has been a legislative committee which has been holding public hearings on this issue throughout the state, apparently with a view to possible future legislation. Reports of these hearings have been appearing in the newspapers from time to time, and a *Grand Rapids Press* report of the fifth and last hearing, held August 29 and reported August 30, is the occasion of this editorial. At this hearing various supporters and opponents of state aid made known their views, on which the *Standard Bearer* wishes to reflect.

Meanwhile, let the reader keep in mind that this issue is not merely a Michigan issue. There are many proposals for such state aid being made throughout the country, and even proposals for federal aid are in the offing. It is well within the realm of possibility that Christian schools everywhere will soon be required to take a stand. This will include our Protestant Reformed schools also. Besides, the very principles of covenantal education are involved here. Our Reformed world-and-life view, our antithetical position as the people of God in the midst of a world that is in darkness, — this is the issue. Hence, even apart from the concrete question of government aid, we do well to refresh our minds as to these matters and to understand clearly what is involved principally in covenant schools.

#### *Not A Financial Issue*

Repeatedly in the debate about government aid the proponents of such aid employ an argument which is purely pragmatic and utilitarian, an argument based on financial needs. This argument is used as a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it is used to gain support among Christian school people. This is the scare tactic in part, and the appeal-to-covetousness tactic in part. The argument is that it is becoming increasingly expensive to establish and to operate Christian schools. If we do not obtain financial aid from the state, we will be priced right out of the market; it will simply be financially impossible to meet the expenses involved in Christian education. On the other hand, this argument is used in the attempt to get support from public school people, legislators included. Then the argument runs this way. If the state does not grant aid to private schools (whether Christian, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, or Jewish), then

these private schools will be compelled to close their doors. This will involve a tremendous additional pupil-load for the public schools, and will thus involve additional state expenditures for public schools and increased taxes. Hence, it is better to give the private schools partial support than to expend large sums of money for expanding public schools.

As might be expected, Roman Catholic educators employ this weapon. According to the newspaper article referred to, the superintendent of Catholic schools of the Grand Rapids Diocese "brought the committee back from abstracts to cold, hard statistics," and warned them that already the Roman Catholic schools in 29 counties are at "the crisis stage."

But the same argument is used by would-be supporters of the Christian school movement. The director of the National Union of Christian Schools, John Vander Ark, testified that pupil population in Michigan Christian schools is headed for a decline and that a major reason is the "economic situation." He pointed out that school operating costs have nearly doubled in the last eight years, and is quoted as pointing out that "still Christian school salaries are at least two years behind public school salaries." Further, he turned the sword as follows: "Obvious implication for the state, he said, is a possible migration of Christian school students to the public schools."

The same argument was employed by Calvin College Dean Dr. John Vanden Berg. The *Press* quotes him as saying: "What is happening right now is that non-public schools are closing, and the Legislature is well aware of the fiscal implications of this." One state senator apparently saw the obvious logical implication of the position of the proponents of state aid, namely, 100 per cent state support, although Dr. Vanden Berg denied that this was the aim, calling this a "totally unlikely eventuality."

On this I have the following comments:

1. This is a purely utilitarian method of argumentation. It is a reduction of the existence of Christian schools to a matter of mere *money*. It is motivated by the *love of money*. And it appeals to that love of money in the attempt to gain the favor of public school men and Christian school parents. It ought to be below the Christian dignity of any Christian educator and any true supporter of Christian education to use or to listen to such an argument. If this is the point, then I say we should go "whole hog" and press for 100 per cent government support. Think of the additional hundreds of dollars we could all spend for big vacation trips, new boats, and new cars every year! But then I say too: if this is all that Christian education means to us, then let us close the Christian schools from kindergarten through college, donate or sell the property to the public school system, and all send our children to the public schools.

2. This fiscal argument ignores the principle of Christian education completely. In the first place, it



ignores the *parental* principle: not the state is responsible for the education of my children, but I, the *parent*, am responsible. This is Reformed, and this is Biblical. In the second place, it ignores the principle that in our Christian schools the instruction properly is *not* instruction *plus* the Bible, but instruction *based upon* God's Word and permeated by the truth of that Word of God throughout. There is no such thing as *secular*, non-religious, instruction in a covenant school that is worthy of the name "Christian." Either these proponents of state aid must *lie* when they sign a statement that the instruction for which they receive state money is "non-religious," or they must actually make that instruction "non-religious." The former is obviously wicked; the latter is also wicked because it would be a denial of the very character of Christian education. I am afraid, however, that the latter has already become too much a reality in many Christian schools, and that this accounts for the very possibility that leaders in the movement can press for state aid such as is being proposed here in Michigan. The world with its philosophy has infiltrated the Christian school movement, and that too, as a direct result of the error of common grace. The result is that the lines of demarcation, as far as principles are concerned, have been largely erased. But I say again: if that is the case, let us be honest and close the Christian schools. Or let us at least be honest enough to say that we are interested not in *Christian* schools, but in *private* schools.

3. Christian school supporters ought to be ashamed to make common cause with Roman Catholics in this matter. This should be obvious to all. Let it be remembered that Roman Catholic schools are *church* schools, not *parental* schools. To press for state aid for non-public schools is to press for state aid to the Roman Catholic Church. Does not the very thought of this offend the spiritual senses of every son or daughter of the Reformation? Frankly, I care not one whit whether the Roman Catholics are able to keep their schools open or not. Let them take care of their own schools if they wish to have them. My concern and yours, as Reformed parents, is the education of our own children according to the requirements of the covenant and in harmony with the Word of God. But it seems as though in this ecumenical age anything goes, especially when it involves status and recognition in the world and money. Beware!

### *The Principle Is The Antithesis*

According to the news report mentioned earlier in this article there were two men who drew the lines of battle rather clearly, though from different viewpoints. One was the Rev. Gerald Postma, pastor of Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in Holland. About his appearance before the legislative committee the *Grand Rapids Press* reports as follows:

Parochiaid was dealt an effective blow by the Rev.

Gerald Postma, pastor of Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in Holland.

"I am opposed to nonpublic aid to education out of fear and faith," he said.

"I am afraid that to get money we would have to say that our courses were of a secular nature, when according to the faith, all our courses are permeated with a religious character and are not secular.

"This is the heart and core of Christian education."

He said he could not "go through the back door" and "sign a statement that our courses were of a secular nature. I do not believe in signing on false pretense."

On the matter of faith, he said, "I still believe that God will provide what is necessary, that He will take care of us. Let us close the schools if our faith has dwindled."

This is correct, although I believe that the Christian school movement as a whole has largely forsaken this position in its actual instruction and that this instruction is no longer Reformed and antithetical.

It is this last, the antithesis, that lies at the heart and core of this whole debate. That God's people are a peculiar and covenant people, in the world but not of the world, lights in the midst of darkness, standing for the cause of Christ over against the cause of Belial, — this is the issue.

Strange as it may seem, it was an enemy of the Christian school and a friend of the world's schools who made this very clear at the legislative hearing, though he stated this, of course, from his point of view, not ours. This was the vice chairman of Citizens to Advance Public Education (CAPE). He is reported as testifying as follows at the legislative hearing:

"We of CAPE are opposed to the appropriation of any tax moneys for the aid of nonpublic schools because we believe such aid is in violation of our state and federal Constitutions.

"In very simple, honest language, back of all the smoke screen is the bald fact that the parochial schools are fighting for the very existence of their way of life in a society which is alien to their mores.

"The answer of CAPE to your real dilemma is that you have the right to your way of life — which is more than education — if you are willing to pay for it."

That is exactly the case.

We, as Reformed Christians, have a way of life that is alien to the society in the midst of which we live. We are pilgrims and strangers in the world. The world hates us. It stands opposed to us also in the realm of education. It is a question of our being lights in the midst of darkness and of standing for the light over against the darkness which strives to quench the light. To expect the world which stands diametrically opposed to us to support our schools is folly. The world loves its own; and the world will pay for its own. If you want the world's money, you can only get that on the world's basis, a basis which involves the denial of your antithetical Christian position.



It seems to me that the proponents of state aid from the Christian school movement ought to have been a little ashamed that they had to hear this from a public school man.

From all this let us who love the principles of

Reformed Christian education, and who value our own schools from principle (and I refer especially now to our Protestant Reformed schools), learn a lesson. And let us be prepared to stand fast, and to be "willing to pay for" our stand.

## The Erring Views of Dr. H.M. Kuitert (4)

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

### *Evaluation of Kuitert's View of Scripture*

Before I criticize the position of Dr. Kuitert with respect to Scripture, I wish to make some introductory remarks.

The first is that Dr. Kuitert did not really present in any orderly fashion a view of Scripture, not even in brief. It is rather difficult, therefore, to criticize in detail and concretely. Any critic of the remarks Dr. Kuitert made in this part of his lecture is compelled to draw conclusions and inferences from the few remarks which Kuitert made. At the same time, I think Dr. Kuitert made his fundamental position rather clear, especially to anyone who is acquainted with the current discussion and debate about Scripture which is taking place in the Netherlands. Besides, one is quite able to draw conclusions about Kuitert's view of Scripture not only from the second section of his lecture but also from the manner in which he allegedly interpreted Genesis and described its origin in the first part of his lecture.

My second remark is that this second part of Kuitert's lecture is by far the most important part. The reader should readily grasp the fact that it is this view of Scripture which is the fundamental question here. Actually Kuitert should have lectured on this subject and then talked about the implications of his view of Scripture for the interpretation of Genesis. For I assure you that it is his view of Scripture which underlies and makes possible his errant views of Genesis. Perhaps historically Kuitert abandoned the proper view of Scripture because he did not want the proper view of Genesis; I know not. But this I know: if Dr. Kuitert held to a proper view of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, he could not possibly give utterance to his wildly anti-Scriptural and anti-Reformed views concerning creation and the fall, and he could not possibly maintain his evolutionistic position. The deepest issue is that of Scripture.

This has serious implications for the whole structure of the truth, we must remember. It concerns not merely the doctrine of creation; it concerns any and every other doctrine set forth in the Scriptures. This has been denied. It has been claimed that one could hold, for example, to a theistic evolution (contrary to Genesis) and yet not deny other doctrines, such as the incarna-

tion, the virgin birth, the real resurrection of Jesus Christ, the miracles, etc. Now it may be true historically that the *individual* may be able to occupy a certain stance with respect to the creation-evolution issue and a certain position with respect to Scripture's inspiration and authority without immediately and in his individual doctrinal beliefs coming to the denial of other teachings of Scripture which would be the logical consequences of his position. I say: that *may* be possible. But, in the first place, even this is highly unlikely. A case in point is the views of Dr. Kuitert himself. Let no one deceive himself that what Dr. Kuitert teaches concerns only Genesis and creation. He made it very plain in the third part of his lecture that it concerns the whole structure of dogmatics, the entire structure of the Reformed truth. He stated plainly that the historical order of creation, the fall, and redemption must be abandoned. All of dogmatics must be reconstrued. In the second place, this is necessary exactly because the issue of Scripture is a principal one. One's view of Scripture is fundamental to all his other views. If he errs on the former, he will necessarily err in the latter. *Beginselen werken door*. Principles work through. And remember: if they do not work through in the case of one individual and in the course of one generation, they will nevertheless work through. Besides, in our times they work through so rapidly that it is difficult to keep pace. It is well known, for example, that these same errant views of Scripture are affecting New Testament interpretation also. The teachings of Dr. Berkouwer are rapidly being carried to their logical consequences by his disciples, to the destruction of the Reformed faith in the *Gereformeerde Kerken*.

This brings me to my third remark, namely, that these matters *may not* be controversial in any Reformed church. I say this because both in the Netherlands and in the Christian Reformed Church in this country they are allowed to be controversial and admitted to be controversial *within the church communion*. I am not saying that the church must not have controversy; on the contrary, there should be such a controversy that heretics like Dr. Kuitert, together with their heretical views, are driven out of the church. This is quite different from allowing these matters to be controver-



sial. In the former case, you have controversy, but it is controversy that is conducted at the institutional level of the church, at consistory and classis and synod. You have an ecclesiastical trial at which the orthodoxy or heterodoxy of certain views and certain teachers is determined, and discipline is exercised as a result. In the latter case, i.e., when matters are allowed to be controversial, discussion and debate rages in the ecclesiastical and theological journals; but everyone goes on holding his own views and making propaganda for those views within the churches. The result is that the church takes no stand; or really, by default it does take a stand. Heretics are tolerated, and they are allowed to propagandize the churches. And the end is that the entire church is corrupted, frequently from the seminary down, until finally liberalism has won the field.

What I have described above has only too often been realized in history, both here and in the Netherlands.

This, therefore, is the serious aspect of what we are now discussing.

What does Dr. Kuitert do with Scripture?

My answer is, in the first place, *that he denies Scripture*. He denies its inspiration. He denies its authority. Principally, Kuitert has no Bible left. Let us not be deceived on this score. In the first place, there is no such thing as a half-way station on these matters. Principally, the doctrine of Scripture is an either-or matter. You hold to Scripture, or you do not. You hold to Scripture *in toto*, or you hold to it not at all. You may speak of different theories of inspiration and different theories of the authority of Scripture. Kuitert does this too. Berkouwer does also. But when it comes down to the simple issue, the question is whether the Bible from beginning to end is the inspired Word of God or not, and whether the Bible from beginning to end is authoritative and trustworthy, dependable, able to be believed or not. And especially in the light of the fact that Scripture is an organism, it is of the utmost importance to see this. No amount of philosophy about associating the message and the authority, about distinguishing between the form and the material, or the *kerugma* and the manner in which that proclamation is conveyed, will ever change this. The matter is exactly as

simple as that.

If you wish to have it put in the terminology so commonly used today, *the kerugma (proclamation, message, gospel), the contents of the Bible from Genesis 1 through Revelation 22, and the authority thereof, — these three are co-extensive.*

You ask for my proof that Kuitert denies this?

Here it is.

1. He insists that what must be emphasized in Scripture is not its inspiredness apart from its content (as if anyone does this!), but its content. But then, mind you, he proceeds to distill that content out of the whole of Scriptures, let alone that it was a very vague and ill-defined content at that.

2. He plainly said that we must listen to the scientists in interpreting Genesis. This is a plain exaltation of the authority of the scientists above the authority of Scripture and a denial of the principle that Scripture is its own and solely authoritative interpreter.

3. He plainly taught that Genesis had its origin in the myths of Israel's heathen neighbors. This is a simple denial of its inspiration. Kuitert may attempt to cover this up by devious means, and he may try to explain that Israel adapted these myths to their faith in Jehovah. The simple fact is that Genesis is then heathen-breathed, not God-breathed. It is a conglomeration of heathen lies, not the truth of God. It is heathen lies with the name of God substituted for the names of heathen idols. To me this is worse than a simple lie. This is a lie with a form of godliness. It is blasphemous.

4. He mocked and caricatured the orthodox view of inspiration, suggesting that it taught that inspiration means that something drops out of the blue. This no Reformed theologian should ever do.

5. He denied the entire faith of the church built upon the Scriptures when he stated openly that the creation-fall-redemption order must be abandoned. Let it be noted that Kuitert here parts company with the church of all ages; this he can only do because he does not stand with the church on the basis of an infallible, inspired, authoritative Scripture.

I have more points of criticism; but these must wait until the next issue.

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That wonder of grace is realized in us through the Spirit which He hath given us, and through Whom we receive the beginning of salvation even now. By the wonder of grace we are regenerated, translated from death unto life; by the wonder of grace we are called, translated from darkness to light; by the wonder of grace we are justified, sanctified, and preserved even unto the end in the midst of this world of sin and death. But it is also by the wonder of grace that presently, when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, our spirit shall be glorified and perfected to be with Christ in God's house. It is by the wonder of grace, that our bodies shall sleep in the dust of the earth till the day of the resurrection, and that in that day they shall be raised, so that this corruptible shall put on incorruption, this mortal shall put on immortality, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. By the wonder of grace the image of the earthy which we now bear shall be transformed into the image of the heavenly, that we may be like Christ.

— H. Hoeksema, "The Wonder of Grace," pp. 128, 129



## *All Around Us*

# The Reformed Ecumenical Synod

*Prof. H. Hanko*

The Reformed Ecumenical Synod, meeting at Lunteren, the Netherlands, has finished its sessions. Because our Churches have been interested in the affairs of the R.E.S., we give here a summary of some of the more important decisions.

Synod adopted a statement on race relations — a subject which has been a difficult one for the R.E.S. especially because of the membership of the South African denominations. The complete statement reads:

1. God's commands to men that they display love and practice righteousness are not contradictory but harmonious norms for man's personal and group attitudes and conduct, and are the guiding norms for race relations.

2. True love among men requires that we accept our neighbor, regardless of his race or culture, as created in the image of God, respect him in his person as God's creature, and be willing to put ourselves in his place in order thus to understand how we should behave toward him in personal and social relations.

3. Since men inherently seek their own interests rather than the welfare of their fellows, the church should stress the duty of men individually and collectively, to practice self-sacrifice for the welfare of others. Self-sacrifice for the sake of Christ is the highest form of self-preservation, for self-preservation is only the concomitant with obedience to the second great commandment when it is qualified and limited by the biblical demands of love and righteousness, so that it does not interfere with the inalienable rights of other people.

4. For a true understanding of the rights, equality, and dignity of man, we should see all men not only as creatures of God, made in his image, but also as those who have sinned, and need redemption. Therefore in our relation to fellow believers we should recognize the new unity which all Christians, regardless of race, have by virtue of their being redeemed by Christ.

5. Christians should be urged to acknowledge their common involvement in guilt with a world torn by sinful divisions and attitudes. They should be called upon to repent of their own sin in this respect and to make restitution by following Christ in the way of love.

6. In the proclamation of the Word, the church, to whom has been entrusted the message of Christ's kingdom, should speak courageously and relevantly on the issues of the day, both for the edification and correction of her members and, where necessary, in criticism of the activities and policies of governments and organizations.

7. Believers should be equipped by the church through teaching and discipline to serve God, in all spheres of society, individually, and where possible,

corporately. Believers must also proclaim the commandment of love in race relations and make it applicable to the affairs of civil government and the structures of society.

8. Christians in general and the church in particular bear a responsibility towards members of all races who suffer from poverty, under-development, and political oppression. Believers should be willing to bend every effort to alleviate the suffering of such peoples.

9. In her pastoral ministry the church should strive to eradicate attitudes of racial superiority and racial prejudice by leading her members into full Christian maturity in race relations. This should be done urgently, persistently and patiently.

10. In obedience to the mission mandate of Christ, the church must bring the Gospel to all nations regardless of race. The principle of love for the neighbour requires that this mission respect the character and culture of the recipients of the Gospel so that new churches may come to self-expression in harmony with Scripture.

11. The unity of the Body of Christ should come to expression in common worship, including Holy Communion, among Christians regardless of race. It may be that linguistic or cultural differences made the formation of separate congregations, often with their own type of preaching and worship, advisable; in these cases it is wise not to force an outward and therefore artificial form of unity but to recognise the differentiation within the circle of God's people. However, the worshipping together of people of different races, is a sign of the deepest unity of the church, and can be an example for the life of society as a whole.

12. Holy Scripture does not give a judgement about racially mixed marriages; contracting a marriage is primarily a personal and family concern. Church and state should refrain from prohibiting racially mixed marriages, because they have no right to limit the free choice of a marriage partner.

13. Each racial group should have the right to prefer a measure of distinct development, but never at the expense of a racially distinct group in the same country. While the manner of such development may vary from place to place, it is a requirement of the Christian ethic that love and justice be exercised, and that all groups avoid isolation and promote a relation of mutual helpfulness.

14. With a view to the great tensions in the sphere of race relations in the world today, Synod strongly urges the member-churches to test conditions in their churches and countries by the norms as set forth in these resolutions, and to report back to the next Synod.

15. Recognizing that the real problem of race



relations in member-churches of the RES lies not so much in the area of the acceptance but in that of the application of the above principles, Synod urges its member-churches:

- a. To put forth renewed efforts to live wholly in accord with biblical norms;
- b. To reject every form of racial discrimination and racism;
- c. To reject every attempt to maintain racial superiority by military, economic, or any other means;
- d. To reject the subtle forms of racial discrimination found in many countries today with respect to housing, employment, education, law enforcement, etc.;
- e. To pray for themselves and for one another that God may give wisdom and faithfulness in every circumstance.

In a very interesting decision the Reformed Ecumenical Synod rejected the recommendation of a study committee appointed five years ago and, according to the *RES Newsletter*, declared that "it is the plain and obvious teaching of Scripture that women are excluded from the office of ruling and preaching elders." The delegates of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands were not happy with the decision and formally declared to the Synod:

Considering that the General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, after ample consideration and study by various committees and successive Synods, in principle has decided to admit women to the ecclesiastical offices, but has postponed putting this into effect awaiting further principal arguments that might be put forward by the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, regret that the RES, in deviation from the recommendation, both of the study and advisory committee, namely to leave the matter open for further study, now has decided that on clearly and undoubtedly Scriptural grounds women should not be admitted to ecclesiastical office in the full sense of the word.

With respect to the permissibility of women in the office of deacons the Synod noted that its committee did not answer the question of the God-given place of women in relation to men, and that therefore member churches should be cautious in permitting women in the diaconal office. A further committee was appointed, to report to next year's Synod on the whole question of the office in the New Dispensation and on the question of whether an elder may pronounce a blessing upon the congregation in the worship services.

An important decision was also taken concerning membership in the World Council of Churches. The committee advising Synod on the matter was split. The Synod rejected advice to urge the member churches to proceed cautiously in joining this organization and instead reaffirmed its decision taken in 1963 which advised member Churches not to join the World Council of Churches "in the present situation."

One of the grounds given was that:

The World Council claims to represent the given

unity in Christ, but this is an illegitimate claim, because the World Council does not unequivocally reject that which is contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, nor does it warn its members against the false gospel that has a recognized place in many of these churches; therefore it does not unitedly and unconditionally acknowledge the authority of Christ, the Head of the Church, as He speaks in the infallible Word.

The Synod also commented on the Basis of the WCC.

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

We shall not enter into a detailed evaluation of these decisions. Perhaps our "Ecumenical Editor," Rev. G. Van Baren, will have opportunity to discuss them in his rubric in the future.

For the present we only note that the decision on race relations is by far the weakest. The chief objection against this statement on race relations is the main basis on which the conclusions of Synod rest. This basis is the presence in every man of the image of God. In any sense in which the term "image of God" has been used in Reformed theology this cannot possibly be correct. Reformed theology has always insisted that the image of God in man, at least in the "material" sense was lost completely through the fall. To base conclusions on a theological error of this nature (an error commonly enough made today) is to render the whole decision suspect. The way is paved for a "social" reconciliation of the races. Far better it would have been to discuss the question of race relations within the context of salvation for the elect in Christ from every nation and the removal of racial barriers through the blood of the cross for the Church. The decision leaves much to be desired.

We are not only in accord with the other decisions which were taken, but appreciate deeply the stand of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod on these matters. The issues of women officebearers and membership in the WCC are critical issues within the Reformed Church World. The unequivocal stand of the RES is praiseworthy.

Seven new Churches were accepted into the membership of the RES. These include the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa, The Presbyterian Church of Korea (Hapdong), the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Kosin), the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico, The Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (Bantu), The Christian Church of Mamasa (Sulewesi, Indonesia), and the Nkhoma Synod Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian (Malawi). The total membership of the RES is now nearing five million. At this writing it is not known what the RES did with the request of our Synod addressed to it last June.



## *In His Fear*

# **As The Twig Is Bent**

*Rev. John A. Heys*

As the twig is bent, the tree will grow.

The Scriptures present the matter in a more profound and spiritual way when Solomon declares in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way that he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." But the above title will serve to indicate that at the moment we wish to stress the extreme importance of early instruction of our children in the truths of God's Word and of training them in their calling before God.

Proverbs 22:6, by the way, is not a general rule. Solomon does not therein stipulate that which happens so often that you can figure that almost without exception it is going to happen. As the twig is bent, the tree will grow is a general rule. And it happens so often before our eyes that we are surprised when it works out otherwise. It is a humanly invented proverb that has its exceptions. But Solomon's proverb is God's proverb. It is the infallible Word of God which never lies or presents any falsehood as though it were the truth. When God says that our children will walk in His way, if we train up our children in the way that they should go, we can be absolutely sure that every time we train a child that way, he is going to remain in it all the days of his life, even more than the twig is going to remain in the position wherein it has been tied. In this twenty-second chapter of the Book of Proverbs, verse one, Solomon also declares, and not as a general rule, but as a hard and fast rule that changes not, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver." That is not the case most of the time but every time. He also says in verse 8, "He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity; and the rod of his anger shall fail." And so we could continue with every verse in the chapter and every proverb in the book. These are not matters that happen most of the time and fail so seldom that you can just figure on them as a general rule. God's Word is sure and steadfast and unchangeable.

Perhaps you are ready to quote instance after instance where God-fearing parents did train their children from early infancy in the way that they should go, and one or more have not remained in that way even from early adolescence. You have concrete examples and definite cases in mind. Did not Cain and Abel have the same training? And Esau and Jacob, did they not have the same set of circumstances under which they were trained at the same time by the same parents and same lessons? Yet Esau departed, while Jacob remained in the

way.

Quite true. And what is equally true is that we have no promise from God that each and every one of our children who are born in the covenant sphere is going to be a believer and will walk in God's way. Esau's portion, Isaac is told will be — according to the Hebrew reading of Genesis 27:39 — "*away from the fatness of the earth . . .*" Isaac had no promise of spiritual blessedness for Esau from God. He had no promise and assurance from God that Esau would hate the seed of the serpent and the serpent himself. And what is true of Adam and Eve and their children, of Abraham and his children, of Isaac and his sons, of David and his descendants is likewise true of us. We have no such promise that all the children given to us, all the children we teach the things of God's kingdom, all the descendants for whom we sacrifice in order that they may obtain a good Christian education are going to become men and women who walk in God's way till He takes them to glory.

Therefore the truth of the matter is that we are not able to train all of our children at all times and in every instance. If God has not regenerated them and is not pleased to cause them to be born again, all of our instruction will fail to produce anything more than a Cain, an Esau, an unbeliever. This does not mean that reflection is cast upon us; and such parents must not ask, "Where did we fail this child of ours?" Adam and Eve did not ask themselves that question in regard to Cain. Abraham did not do so with Ishmael, and Isaac did not do so with Esau. Neither did David with Absalom. All these desired to see these wayward sons walk in God's precepts; and the walk of their other children reveals that they were faithful in their calling, and that God was pleased to use their instruction to train these children in His way. But the simple fact is that a child who does not walk in the way in which he should go simply has not been trained. His parents may have been ever so faithful in trying to train him. They may have tried by instruction of mouth and the rod to bend this twig in that way. But the twig was of that kind of material that the minute the restraining hand of the parent was removed, it snapped back to its former position. Instruction was given. The rod was applied, but the Spirit was not there in the heart to bend the will and to apply the instruction. We do not know which children will be trained; and we have a calling to strive to train them all. But it does please God now and then



to give to God-fearing parents, devout saints of God, a child that is not going to bend and believe and go in the way that he should go.

The rule stands, however, that when we train up a child in the way that he should go, he will not depart from it when he is old. It is a rather striking and wonderful thing to behold even that in the twilight of the saint's earthly life, he reverts to those days and sings the songs of salvation and praise that he was taught as a child and begins to manifest the childlike faith of his earlier days that for a time seemed covered by the sophistication of intellectually and physically more prosperous days.

And now that a new school year has begun and our children have also returned to their classes wherein the church will instruct them in the doctrines and truths of God's Word, let us remember that God uses us to train them and that we have a calling to send them where they will receive the very best training in the truth and in the doctrines of God's Word that we possibly can. It is a very serious matter. Especially in the tender days of their early childhood it pleases God to begin to train His elect children through us and those whom we hire.

This truth was brought so forcefully to our attention this summer while labouring among the saints of God on the island of Jamaica. We attended a Sunday School class. This is no reflection on the spirituality or sincerity of the elder who taught that morning. We do have deep respect for men who, though they themselves have not been privileged to receive but the barest of a formal education and can hardly read or write themselves, will still do their duty to instruct the youth who cannot read yet at all. But the method there is that of repeating and repeating a verse, a truth, and the place where the text is found, until it is fixed in the minds of these little ones who cannot read, and is stored away for recall when desired. He, therefore, over and over stated, for them to repeat after him, "Our golden text is found . . ." When that was established, the rest could be stated and repeated, "Our golden text is found in first Peter fort, verse seven." And that is exactly the way it came out. The group together and each child individually said it exactly that way, "First Peter fort . . . So they were trained to say it; and they knew no better. This also explains, no doubt, why in another church the record book of the Sunday School is labeled as that of the Fourth Willams rather than of the Fort Williams church. Thus it has been in generations, for as the twig is bent, the tree will grow.

Now these are harmless errors. And it makes no difference whether you count, one-two-three-fort or one-two-three-four, first-second-third-fourth or first-second-third-fourth, and whether you call a fort a fort or a fourth. It has nothing to do with your salvation or God's glory. It has no ethical content in it. Many a saint has gone to glory who misspelled and mispronounced words. And you could never make a case of suspending

from office an elder who taught your child to mispronounce a word which he in days gone by had been taught to mispronounce. Yet about these matters we are quick to object while we do not bother ourselves about the ethical and spiritual errors which others may be teaching to our children. That which presents no spiritual danger to them concerns us, but that which is spiritual poison hardly causes us to raise an eyebrow.

Why is it that we are quite sure of our political position and will fight vigorously for our part and its candidate and platform but will not trouble ourselves about heresies? Why is it that we will sweep doctrinal differences under the rug and make a big cry about intellectual standards in our schools? Why is it that we can see that we need a new and better building, but have no time even to talk about keeping the doctrine pure and demanding of the teachers that they be faithful to the Word of God and the confessions? Indeed, train up a child in the way that he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. But in what way are we training our children? You can bend a twig so that the tree grows in a very grotesque fashion. You can train up a child in the way in which he ought not to go. The way he should go is the way of God's Word, the way of truth and of righteousness, the way of God's commandments and of His covenant. The way he should go is the way of the fear of the Lord.

And that means not simply to instruct and send only where the best instruction is given, but it also means to teach with the rod. Do we have our race of beatniks, our riots and lawlessness because we have bent a generation in that way by our philosophies in schools and colleges and spared the rod to spoil the child? When the tree is bent in that direction (these directions) today, is it not a clear evidence that the generations gone by have bent the twigs in that way? Let us consider the awfulness of the other side of the picture that when we train up our children in the way that they would go, in the way of the flesh, in the way of the natural man, in the way of Satan and of the world, when they are old they will not depart from it. And when we willingly give them over to the world to be trained, we may be sure that they are not going to be bent in the way that they should go. If we send them to those who believe the lie and have another world and life view than we do, we may be sure that they will not be trained in the way that they should go but in the way that these instructors would like to have them go.

If you have no choice in the matter and there is no Christian school for them to attend, if you must send them to those who differ from you doctrinally, then it still is your calling in the home to double your effort of training them in the way that they *should* go. In His fear you should train them in His fear. And only by walking in His fear ourselves can we expect them to be bent in the way of His fear and can we pray for a blessing upon our labours of instructing and training.



## *The Lord Gave The Word*

### **The History of Missions: In the O.T.**

*by Rev. R.D. Decker*

Missions is the official task of the Church to preach the gospel to all nations in obedience to the injunction of Christ given immediately before His ascension into heaven: "standing on the mount Jesus said to His disciples and thus to His Church: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:19,20). It is the purpose of this and succeeding articles to examine the history of the Church's carrying out of this task. In this issue, as the title indicates, we will study missions in the old dispensation.

One might object by claiming that mission work really did not begin until after Christ's commission and the outpouring of His Spirit into the Church in the new dispensation. Indeed, at first glance, it appears that missions was non-existent in the age of the shadows. It certainly appears as if the Old Testament was not adapted to mission work. It was the age of the shadows and the typical. And, as such, it was the period of preparation for the gospel. The promise given immediately after the fall (Gen. 3:15) and reiterated all through the old dispensation always referred to the future as to its fulfillment. Christ had not yet come. The Kingdom of heaven — though there were the beginnings and the principles of the kingdom in the hearts of God's people — had not been realized and the Kingdom was still to come. There was the type of the Kingdom in the nation of Israel dwelling in the land of Canaan with the tabernacle, the altars, sacrifices, feasts, and typical priesthood; but the Kingdom did not come until the pouring out of the Spirit and the dawn of the new day. Salvation was particularistic not only with reference to the elect, but also as far as certain generations, tribes, and nations were concerned. Salvation belonged exclusively to the nation of Israel.

In view of all this it would appear as if we would look in vain to find the beginning of the history of missions in the Old Testament. It is simply a fact that the gospel could not be preached to all nations for the obvious reason that the Holy Spirit had not yet been poured out upon all flesh. Nevertheless, while all this is true, missions did begin already long before Pentecost and the church of the new dispensation.

This is evident from the earliest days of the history of God's Covenant in the Old Testament. God did not leave Himself without witness to all the world. There is

the fact that Enoch preached to the world of his day about the coming of salvation through judgment. One does not read much of Enoch in the Scriptures, but what we do find is so very significant. We learn from Genesis 5:24 that Enoch walked with God and was not, for God took him. This walking with God was not some mystical communion that Enoch enjoyed with the Almighty. Enoch was busy. He was a prophet, in fact, who preached. Jude speaks of this in verses 14 and 15 of his letter: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed . . ." Now it is true that this is not exactly the positive aspect of the gospel. Nevertheless this passage indicates that Enoch preached to all the world of the final redemption and salvation of the church. He spoke of the coming judgment of the ungodly who rise against the church and persecute God's people. For three hundred years Enoch spoke to these corrupt men in spite of their threats. He spoke against their ungodly deeds and testified against their wickedness. And he preached about the future when God would come with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment.

This is not the only example. Soon after Enoch there appeared another who preached to the world of his day. Noah also witnessed against the wicked as Enoch had done. II Peter 2:5 identifies this man of God as a "preacher of righteousness," and we learn from Hebrews 11:7 that Noah condemned the world. Noah did not condemn the world by quietly believing the Word and promise of God but by a living and active faith. He preached. And he preached righteousness. He declared to all the world the righteousness of God. He told the world of his day in no uncertain terms that God was righteous and that he would avenge His cause. Noah preached a definite message. The message was that God was terribly displeased with the sin of the wicked, their apostasy and corruption. He told them that the righteous Lord was coming in judgment, for His Spirit would not always strive with man. Noah proclaimed for no less than 120 years the righteousness of God. And we may be sure that he warned the wicked of the coming of the flood.

The salvation of the church in every nation was anticipated already in the early history of the old dispensational church. When Abraham was called out of



Ur of the Chaldees the Covenant of God was restricted to Abraham and his generations. This was the origin of the separate existence of Israel in the midst of the world. God told his servant "And I will make of thee a great nation . . ." (Gen. 12:2). But the Lord also said in verse three of that same chapter, "and in thee shall *all* families of the earth be blessed." This promise was reiterated often to Abraham. He was repeatedly told that his seed would be as the dust of the earth and as the stars of heaven in multitude (cf. Gen. 13:16, 15:5). When God instituted the rite of circumcision He promised Abraham: "And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee." (Gen. 17:6). That same promise is repeated when the Lord changes Abraham and Sarah's names. Of Sarah it was said: "... she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall come out of her." (Gen. 17:16b). In connection with Abraham's trial of offering Isaac his son upon the altar God repeats the promise concerning the multiplying of his seed and emphatically asserts: "And in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen. 22:18). Hence even at the inception of Israel as a separate people God spoke of the day when His church would be gathered from every nation.

A study of the history of Israel shows that there were countless foreigners brought into the church. The sons of Jacob married wives of the Canaanites, there was Zipporah, Moses' wife, many Egyptians (by no means all children of God!) departed from Egypt with the Israelites, Rahab and Ruth may also be mentioned in this connection. The point was, however, in this time that these converts had to lose their national identity. They were not only brought into the church but in the age of shadows they had to become Israelites. In order to become members of God's church they had to become Jews. Thus the Lord makes provision for foreigners coming into the church in the Law as given on Sinai. The stranger that would keep the passover and sojourn with Israel had to be as one born in the land, all his males had to be circumcised. And, said God, "One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you." (Exodus 12:48, 49). The only exceptions to this rule were Naaman, the widow of Zarepath (strikingly enough, Jesus mentions both of these in the sermon He preached in the synagogue at Nazareth, cf. Luke 4:25-27), and there were the citizens of Nineveh to whom Jonah preached. In these instances, however, there is no record in Scripture of salvation in covenant lines of their succeeding generations, while Rahab and Ruth are both found in the genealogies of Jesus recorded in Matthew 1.

The prophets, too, were well aware of the dawning of the new day when salvation would come to all nations. All this was spoken of in the context of Israel's existence, but nevertheless the universal note is

unmistakably heard. In projecting their views of the future the prophets do not hesitate to emphasize the fact of the salvation of the nations. Again and again in the midst of their prophetic judgments of Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt they suddenly break out in joy over the salvation that shall come. In striking language Isaiah mentions that Egypt and Assyria will serve the Lord: "In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria . . . and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." (Is. 19:23-25).

It is remarkable that in Old Testament prophecy this salvation of the nations is always viewed as a spontaneous coming. We read in Psalm 68:31, for example, "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." The nations shall simply come without the agency of Israel. Isaiah in chapter 2:2,3 of his prophecy speaks of this plainly: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth a law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem". This passage teaches that the Church of the new dispensation, "the mountain of the Lord's house," shall be so exalted that all the nations of the earth shall be able to see it. And beholding the church they shall be attracted to it, drawn as though by a magnet, and spontaneously come to it, believing that the Lord will teach them His ways so that they walk in His paths.

This does not mean that the human agency of the Church which preaches the gospel is excluded. These passages emphasize that it is the Lord Who efficaciously calls and saves His church. The conversion of God's people is the Lord's work. Thus we read in Isaiah 55:5: "Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee." Here Israel is presented as the agency that shall call an unknown nation. But even then the emphasis falls on the work of the Lord. Nations that knew not Israel shall simply run unto her and that too "because of the Lord thy God." Many other passages could be cited but let these suffice.

In the Old Testament, therefore, we find the beginnings of Missions. All of this was fulfilled at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ Who after His atoning work, exaltation, and ascension poured out His Spirit upon all flesh, and began the task of gathering His elect church out of every nation, tribe, and tongue.



## Contending for the Faith

# THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

The Second Period— 250-730 A.D.

The Pelagian Controversy

Semi – Pelagianism

Rev. H. Veldman

In our preceding article we began calling attention to the doctrine of Semi-Pelagianism. How true it is that the union of the Pelagian and Augustinian elements never really satisfies either the one interest or the other! Compromises never satisfy. And, as we noted in our preceding article, the view known as Semi-Pelagianism is really more dangerous than outright Pelagianism. Any attempt which takes off the sharp edges constitutes a sinister attack upon the fundamentals of the Word of God. It is well, therefore, that we pay attention to this doctrine known as Semi-Pelagianism and trace its historical development in the church of God. This is important because the enemies of the truth always resort to these tactics to introduce heresy and the lie into the Church of the living God. We are reminded, in this connection, of what we read in Eph. 4: 14-15: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." How unmercifully the apostle here attacks the enemies of the truth. He declares of them that they introduce heresy with cunning craftiness, that they lie in wait to deceive, that all these winds of doctrine are by or "in" the sleight of men, born in, have their origin in this sleight of men, and this "sleight" of men means that these men gamble with the truth.

Calling attention to the main features of the origin and progress of this school, which produced this Semi-Pelagianism, Philip Schaff, in his *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. III, 859, f.f., writes as follows:

The Pelagian system had been vanquished by Augustine, and rejected and condemned as heresy by the church. This result, however, did not in itself necessarily imply the complete approval of the Augustinian system. Many, even opponents of Pelagius recoiled from a position so wide of the older fathers as Augustine's doctrines of the bondage of man and the absolute election of grace, and preferred a middle ground.

Here we wish to make a comment. Schaff remarks that the rejection and condemnation of the Pelagian heresy by the church did not in itself necessarily imply the complete approval of the Augustinian system. How

true! And how characteristic of the struggle for the truth within the Church throughout the ages! The Church of God does not stand very long upon the pinnacle of the truth of the Word of God. The forces of heresy always continue to operate within the Church of the Lord. This also applies to the Augustinian system of sin and grace and its emphasis upon the sovereign character of Divine predestination.

Of this development Schaff continues and writes as follows:

First the monks of the convent of Adrumetum in North Africa differed among themselves over the doctrine of predestination; some perverting it to carnal security, others plunging from it into anguish and desperation, and yet others feeling compelled to lay more stress than Augustine upon human freedom and responsibility (this opposition to Divine predestination as expressed in emphasizing human freedom and responsibility we also encounter in our present day — H.V.). Augustine endeavored to allay the scruples of these monks by writing two treatises, *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, and *De correptione et gratia*. The abbot Valentinus answered these in the name of the monks in a reverent and submissive tone.

But simultaneously a more dangerous opposition to the doctrine of predestination arose in Southern Gaul, in the form of a regular theological school within the Catholic church (we must bear in mind that the "Catholic Church" here does not refer to the present Roman Catholic Church, but to the Church of God in those days which was truly Catholic or universal — H.V.). The members of this school were first called "remnants of the Pelagians," but commonly Massilians, from Massilia (Marseilles), their chief centre, and afterwards Semi-Pelagians. Augustine received an account of this from two learned and pious lay friends, Prosper, and Hilarius, who begged that he himself would take the pen against it. This was the occasion of his two works, *De Praedestinatione sanctorum*, and *De dogmate perseverantiae*, with which he worthily closed his labors as an author. He deals with these disputants more gently than with the Pelagians, and addresses them as brethren. After his death (430) the discussion was continued principally in Gaul; for then North Africa was disquieted by the victorious invasion of the Vandals, which for several decades shut it out from the circle of theological and ecclesiastical activity.



At the head of the Semi-Pelagian party stood John Cassian, the founder and abbot of the monastery of Massilia, a man of thorough cultivation, rich experience, and unquestioned orthodoxy. He was a grateful disciple of Chrysostom, who ordained him deacon, and apparently also presbyter. He is treated thoroughly and at length by Wiggers. He has been mistakenly supposed a Scythian. His name and his fluent Latinity indicate an occidental origin. Yet he was in part educated at Bethlehem and in Constantinople, and spent seven years among the anchorites in Egypt. He mentioned John Chrysostom even in the evening of his life with grateful veneration. His Greek training and his predilection for monasticism were a favorable soil for his Semi-Pelagian theory. He labored awhile in Rome with Pelagius, and afterwards in Southern France, in the cause of monastic piety, which he efficiently promoted by exhortation and example. Monasticism sought in cloistered retreats a protection against the allurements of sin, the desolating incursions of the barbarians, and the wretchedness of an age of tumult and confusion. But the enthusiasm for the monastic life tended strongly to over-value external sects and ascetic discipline, and resisted the free evangelical bent of the Augustinian theology. Cassian wrote twelve books, in which he first describes the outward life of the monks, and then their inward conflicts and victories over the eight capital vices: intemperance, unchastity, avarice, anger, sadness, dulness, ambition, and pride. More important are his fourteen treatises, conversations which Cassian and his friend Germanus had had with the most experienced ascetics in Egypt, during a seven years' sojourn there.

I believe it is striking that a man as Cassian should be at the head of the Semi-Pelagian party. He was the founder and abbot of the monastery of the monastery of Massilia. Now it is true that Augustine also advocated monasticism. But the defence of monasticism and an ascetic life does go hand in hand with Semi-Pelagianism. To conceive of the conflict of the Christian as over against the eight capital vices mentioned in the above quotation, instead of as over against the inner power of sin and corruption surely can lead to the theory that man can of himself fight these vices, and this can understandably to a semi-pelagian conception of sin and grace.

In this work, especially in the thirteenth Colloquy, he rejects decidedly the errors of Pelagius and affirms the universal sinfulness of men, the introduction of it by the fall of Adam, and the necessity of divine grace to every individual act. But, with evident reference to Augustine, though without naming him, he combats the doctrines of election and of the irresistible and particular operation of grace, which were in conflict with the church tradition, especially with the Oriental theology, and with his own earnest ascetic legalism.

Cassian, the head of the Semi-Pelagian party, although rejecting the errors of Pelagius, nevertheless opposed the Augustinian doctrines of Divine election and the irresistible and particular character of God's

grace. In the following quotation, we note how Cassian opposed these Augustinian doctrines:

In opposition to both systems he taught that the divine image and human freedom were not annihilated, but only weakened by the fall; in other words, that man is sick, but not dead, that he cannot indeed help himself, but that he can desire the help of a physician, and either accept or refuse it when offered, and that he must co-operate with the grace of God in his salvation. The question, which of the two factors has the initiative, he answers, altogether empirically, to this effect: that sometimes, and indeed usually, the human will, as in the cases of the Prodigal Son, Zacchaeus, the Penitent Thief, and Cornelius, determines itself to conversion; sometimes grace anticipates it, and, as with Matthew and Paul, draws the resisting will — yet, even in this case, without constraint — to God. Here, therefore, the *gratia praeveniens* (preceding grace — H.V.) is manifestly overlooked.

These are essentially Semi-Pelagian principles, though capable of various modifications and applications. The church, even the Roman church, has rightly emphasized the necessity of prevenient grace, but has not impeached Cassian, who is properly the father of the Semi-Pelagian theory (of course, as we know, the Roman Catholic Church of today has certainly adopted the pelagian conception of grace and stands opposed to the Augustinian doctrine of Divine sovereign election and reprobation, even simply denying the latter — H.V.). Leo the Great even commissioned him to write a work against Nestorianism, in which he found an excellent opportunity to establish his orthodoxy, and to clear himself of all connection with the kindred heresies of Pelagianism and Nestorianism (the latter denies that Christ is one person — H.V.) which were condemned together at Ephesus in 431. He died after 432, at an advanced age, and though not formally canonized, is honored as a saint by some dioceses. His works are very extensively read for practical edification.

However, these sentiments of Cassian did not go unchallenged. Concerning this, Schaff writes as follows:

Against the thirteenth Colloquy of Cassian, Prosper Aquitanus, an Augustinian divine and poet, who, probably on account of the desolations of the Vandals, had left his native Aquitania for the South of Gaul, and found comfort and repose in the doctrines of election amid the wars of his age, wrote a book upon grace and freedom, about 432, in which he criticizes twelve propositions of Cassian, and declares them all heretical, except the first. He also composed a long poem in defense of Augustine and his system, and refuted the "Gallic slanders and Vincentian imputations," which placed the doctrine of predestination in the most odious light.

However, the Semi-Pelagian doctrine was the more popular, and made great progress in France. This, of course, need not surprise us. The Augustinian and Scriptural doctrine of sin and grace is never popular. But, to this we call attention, the Lord willing, in our following article.



## From Holy Writ

# The Book of Hebrews

Rev. G. Lubbers

### GOD CONFIRMS THE PROMISE BY OATH TO ABRAHAM (cont.) – Hebrews 6:13-15

To understand the import of the strong consolation which God afforded Abraham when he confirmed the promise by oath it is necessary to clearly understand just what this “promise” is of which the writer here speaks. We read that “thus being long-suffering he (Abraham) obtained *the promise*.”

What is the idea of “promise” in the Scriptures? It is necessary to attempt an answer to this question, and at the same time to notice that the writer speaks of *the* promise, the well-known and revealed promise of God in all of the Old Testament Scriptures.

First of all then: what is the idea of promise? The English term promise is derived from the Latin: *promissum* from *promittere* to send forth. It is a declaration that one will do or refrain from doing something specified. It is a declaration that gives the person to whom it is made a right to expect or to claim the performance or the forbearance of a specified act. (Webster) When we turn to the Old Testament Scriptures we find that in the Hebrew language the term for promise is a word which means: to speak. The term is *dabar*. However, the term *to promise* in the Hebrew is *dabar* in the intensive or in the Piel form. This form indicates that the speaking is intensive in nature on the part of the speaker. It therefore means: to speak often, to speak much, to speak for a long time. It is even used in the causative sense: what God will surely cause to come to pass. Writes A.B. Davidson in his *Introductory Hebrew Grammar* “Since eagerness may show itself in urging others to similar action, the Piel frequently has a *causative force*.” When this is applied to the idea of promise it means that God will cause what he has promised to come to pass. Such is the repeated declaration of God himself in Holy Scriptures. One has but to refer to any reputable Concordance to see that such is indeed the case with God’s often, repeated and emphatic speaking concerning what he will surely bring to pass for the heirs of the promise. When once God has spoken this promise to Abraham, all His future speaking and dealing are based upon what He has promised.

Exodus 12:25; Deuteronomy 1:11; 6:3; 9:28; 10:9; Joshua 22:4; Jeremiah 33:14. Many more passages and references could be given, but this is sufficient for our purpose to show that God’s promise is ever the one central promise which He will cause to come to pass. All God’s promises are yea in Christ, and in him Amen, to the glory of God, the Father.

As to the idea of the promise the term in the Greek language of the New Testament Scriptures is very instructive. The substantive is *epaggelia*. Perhaps the thought of this term is: a message directed toward the recipient, the heir of the promise. The promise is basically a message from God. It is the sure message of the gospel, what *God spells* out. That is the good message, the *euaggelia*. The Gospel message is the fulfillment to the children of what which was *promised* to the fathers. Acts 13:32,33.

As for the verb in the Greek translated “promised” it ought to be noticed that the verb is in the *middle voice*. It is a peculiarity of the Greek language that it does not only have an active and a passive voice, but it also has a middle voice. Concerning this voice A.T. Robertson writes in part as follows:

“... In the middle voice the subject is acting with reference to himself... *How* the subject acts with reference to himself, the middle voice does not tell. That has to be determined by the meaning of the verb and the context. He may be represented as doing a certain thing of himself, by himself, on himself, for himself, etc. . . .”

We may further notice concerning the *middle voice* in Greek that it is either reflexive, intensive or reciprocal. We have noticed the intensive use of the Hebrew Piel. This use is in Greek in the Middle Voice in the Greek verb. The term *epaggelomai* means: I myself promise. God makes the promise and there is none besides him. God speaks what he will emphatically do. He will bring it to pass. He will save His people from their sins. This is indicated in the phrase “I am Jehovah.” Thus we read in Isaiah 43:11-13 “I, even I, am the LORD; and besides me there is no saviour. I have declared and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the



Lord, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am He; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who will let it?"

This term to promise in the Greek is ever emphatically what God promises in relationship to himself, as to what he will perform to the heirs of the promise, Acts 7:5; Romans 4:21; Galatians 3:19; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:13; 10:23; 11:11; 12:26; James 1:12; 2:5; I John 2:25.

This promise of God is not dependent for its being given, nor for its fulfillment in man; it is solely the work of the Lord. It is not contingent for its fulfillment upon the will or act of man in any sense. God writes his law in our hearts and we are saved. Such is the better promise. Hebrews 8:6-12. (Jer. 31:31-34)

This promise belongs according to Hebrews 6:18 to the things which are rooted in the immutability of God's eternal counsel. God's counsel shall stand and He will do all his good-pleasure. (Isaiah 46:10) The Lord works all things according to the counsel of his will. (Ephesians 1:11.) That counsel of God is the standard of all his works. What God has decreed he shall perform, and what he has decreed concerning the heirs of election he administers to the heirs by way of the promised Word. Hence this counsel and the promises to the heirs are immutable. They are without repentance. In the book of Hebrews certain matters are mutable; they are subject to change. Such is the case with the work of God concerning the priesthood of Aaron. "For the priesthood being changed there is made of necessity also a change also of the law." (Hebrews 7:12) That institution was changeable. Not so the promise of God. There is nothing that can make the promise of God null and void. The promise of God stands. Heaven and earth may pass away, but the promise of God is unchangeable. Every jot and tittle shall be fulfilled. Matthew 5:17,18.

However, we must have strong consolation that this is true. It must be a mighty hope in our hearts. It must be a strong courage that all is well. And to energize that strong comfort in our hearts, particularly in the heart of Abraham and in the heart of all the spiritual seed, God came between Abraham and his sure promise with an *oath*. There had been *one* immutable thing, but now there are *two* immutable things. (*dia duo pragmatoon ametathetoon*) It is the testimony of two things. Now from the viewpoint of God the promise cannot be less sure than his oath. God cannot lie. He cannot lie in the oath, neither can he lie in his promise. In both of these it was impossible for God to lie. That is the force of the "*en ois*." "In which" refers to the "two immutable things," that is the *promise* and the *oath*. The question is therefore: if the promise is so sure, why must the oath be added! Both rest in the unchangeable counsel of God? The answer must be: for the benefit of the heirs of the promise; that we should have strong consolation. The oath of God is to make the promise sure in our consciousness by faith. It was to bolster our faith and

hope in God's promise. This is, indeed, a means of grace for the strengthening of Abraham's faith. And thus in faith Abraham saw it in the mount of the Lord. He saw it in strong consolation. He saw Christ's day from afar and rejoiced. (John 8:56)

#### *THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTENT OF THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM FULFILLED —*

*Hebrews 6: 18-20*

The New Testament saints have fled for refuge for take hold, to seize the hope which is set before us. Really the text speaks of us "who *are taking* refuge." We are constantly taking refuge to seize the hope set before us in the midst of our sin, misery, corruption and death. Apart from this fleeing for refuge we are filled with the fear of death all our life long. Often our faith is weak and we are like Peter, who, looking at the waves and billows, cried out: Lord I perish. It is then that our tempest-tossed soul needs the assurance of the hope set before us. This "hope" is the objective salvation in Christ which he has merited and the atonement which is ours in the holiest of all within the veil of the sanctuary. This hope is set before us and beckons us on. This hope is the "anchor of the soul." And this anchor is not down in the depths of the sea, but it reaches upward to heaven before God's throne. All our hope is riveted upon the forerunner of our faith and hope. He has gone before us. He is the way and the truth and the life. His name is JESUS. He came to save his people from their sins. God's promise is fulfilled in him. The oath of God is all in Him to the glory of God the Father.

To understand this we must see the greatness of his priesthood. It is a priesthood after the order of Melchisedec. He is made a priest not by the intervention of Moses, but he is appointed directly by God Himself. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent: thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. Now we do not have a priest who merely entered into that which is behind the veil once a year on the great day of atonement. Nay, we now have a hope which *constantly* enters into that which is behind the veil. That is the force of the present participle *eiserchomenee*. Heaven is opened to us, and the angels of God ascend and descend! Such is the new and living way which is ours into the holiest of God — into the holiest of heaven itself. Such is our strong consolation in him in whom both promise and oath are fulfilled according to the firm decree of God.

Well may we then walk in the full assurance of faith and be imitators of those who through faith and longsuffering inherited the promises. God's promise to Abraham on Moriah's hill-top and Calvary are connected not merely by geography, but they are connected by God's counsel which is immutable, as promise-oath and fulfillment!

Jehovah-jireh! On the mount of the Lord it was shown!



## *A Cloud of Witnesses*

### **David in War and Peace**

*Rev. B. Woudenberg*

*And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went.  
And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed  
judgment and justice unto all his people.*

*II Samuel 8:14, 15*

David was a great and fierce warrior; but he also was a gentle man, a poet and a musician. David was a man who could be bold and unflinching in battle; but he could also be kind and tender as a shepherd. David was a stern judge demanding swift justice in the presence of sin; but he could also be kind and forgiving when the occasion allowed for it. David was a man whose emotions ran the full scope of human feeling, but underneath there was always a directing factor, a basic principle which guided him and determined his reactions; it was his faith, the deep confidence in and respect which he held for Israel's great and almighty God.

The record of David's warfare which we have in Scripture is rather brief, a quick survey of all that he did; but it is sufficient to give to us a true indication of the approach which David used over against all of the heathen. It is also sufficient to be very disconcerting to all those who would try to measure the ethics of David according to modern philosophical standards. And this is especially true when the actions of David are taken in light of the many Davidic Psalms which express the feelings which David held toward his enemies. There is through all of the life of David a tone of absolute antithesis which modern attitudes simply cannot comprehend.

In the accounts of the campaigns of David, we find several instances of what would appear to us as being extreme and unnecessary cruelty. We have one such instance in the account of David's campaign against Moab. Here we are told that David "smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And so the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts." What happened here, evidently, was that David captured the whole of the Moabite army quite intact. David, however, took this army and made all of the men lie flat on the ground in three rows. Two of these rows of men he killed and the third he allowed to remain alive. Thus he took away the strength of the Moabites without destroying the nation completely.

Again in the next campaign, this one against Hadadezer the Syrian, the result was that "David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David

houghed all the chariot horses, but reserved of them for an hundred chariots." The very thought of these hundreds of horses hobbling helplessly about with the tendons of their legs cut would seem to us to reflect a cruelty such as we can hardly imagine. Surely it would seem to us to have been much more humane to have put them immediately to death: but this was not done.

Finally we have one more account of a similar atrocity at the end of David's campaign against Ammon, particularly when he finished his siege of the city of Rabbah. There we read, "And he brought out the people that were in it, and cut them with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes. Even so dealt David with all the cities of the children of Ammon."

All of this goes together quite well with a number of statements in the Psalms that seem to speak the same language. An example of this we find in Psalm 18:36ff, "Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip. I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me. They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the LORD, but he answered them not. Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets. Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; and thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me . . ." It would almost seem from this all that there was a certain sadistic streak in David which rejoiced in the sufferings of others, particularly of his enemies. In fact this is usually conceded and is only excused inasmuch as this was characteristic of the day and David could not have been expected to escape it completely.

Yet this is evidently not the whole story. There are other actions of David that indicate that this was not the kind of person he was. An example of this we have with Toi king of Hamath. About him we read, "Then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: for Hadadezer had wars



with Toi. And Joram brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass: which also king David did dedicate unto the LORD, with the silver and gold that he dedicated of all nations which he subdued." The point here is that David was more than willing to receive in peace those who came to him in peace. He had no desire to destroy unnecessarily.

The same was even more evidently true in David's original actions over against the people of Ammon. It all began at the time that the king of Ammon died and his son Hanun inherited his throne. Prior to that time, David had been treated kindly by Hanun's father, and accordingly David sent his condolences to Hanun by means of some messengers. As it was, however, there were a number of princes in Ammon who were anxious to prove themselves over against David, believing evidently that they could overcome him when so many others had failed. Thus they advised the young king, "Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David rather sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?" It was foolish advice, but the young king, jealous as he was of his newly obtained power and inexperienced in such dealings with other nations, was ready to believe them. Accordingly, instead of receiving the emissaries of David with appreciation, he very purposely gave to them the most pointed rebuff that he could imagine. What Hanun did was to have the men shaved so that one half of their beards, the universal sign of manhood in that day, was gone and half remained. And then in addition, he had their garments cut off half way at the buttocks, and sent them on their way. Coming in shame to Jericho, the men stopped there and sent a messenger on to David recounting how they had been received. It was an open affront that could not be ignored, and there followed one of the most vicious and extended wars of David's rule ending, as we have noted, in the final defeat and punishment of the nation of Ammon. But the point is that David had not wanted it that way; his first move and his first intention had been to live at peace with Ammon.

By far the most telling of all in the history of David was to be found in his actions over against the family of king Saul. All normal reasoning would have dictated that he would have either moved swiftly to destroy the family completely from the land, or at least he should have ignored them and allowed them to disappear into oblivion. But not David. While Saul himself was yet king, David had refused to make one move against him because he was the anointed of the Lord; and, when Ishbosheth had tried to carry on the reign of his father, David had refused to move directly against him. But God had been with David and had directed all things in such a way that David should receive the final rule. But still David was not satisfied. Throughout the years he remembered the friendship which he had always had

with Jonathan as long as he had lived; and he remembered also the parting request of Jonathan to him when he had said, "The LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father. And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: but also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth." To David this was simply something that could not be forgotten, regardless of political expediency. Accordingly, as soon as the opportunity availed itself, he began to search for members of Jonathan's family with whom this covenant might be realized. After considerable effort he did find one of Jonathan's descendants also, a young man who had become lame at the time of his father's death and was hiding in fear in the home of a man named Machir. Immediately David sent to him and not only assured him that he had nothing to fear but he gave all that remained of the estate of Saul and invited him to live with him in the palace and to eat at the king's table. It was truly a strange sight, the only remaining descendant of Saul, who had treated him so badly, received to a position of greatest honor in the very home of David; but such was the nature of the king.

The question that remains, of course, through all of these extremes in David's actions is, what was the motivation which through this all impelled David? And to this question there is but one answer, David as king of Israel saw himself as the representative of the truth and justice of God upon this earth. In fact, in a very real, prophetic sense he saw himself to be the forebearer of the ultimate representative of God upon this earth, the promised seed who was yet to come. It was an almost unconscious projection of himself into the role of this coming ruler and redeemer under whom Israel would some day live forever. David saw his responsibility as that of one who was to prepare the way for him, as one who had to make the kingdom and the people ready, so that when this redeemer and Lord would come he would be recognized and acknowledged. This was very really his one and only duty in the position which God had given to him. It is in this light that we must understand all of the actions of king David and all of his prophetic utterances. They were forms of Messianic projections as David saw himself filling the position which was given him merely as a means of preparation for the promised seed that God had promised to give to their nation.

It was in light of this consideration and anticipation that David acted toward all of the other nations. The land of Canaan proper had to be prepared and sanctified as much as was possible to be a fit kingdom of God. Accordingly all heathen peoples and all heathen practices had to be driven out of it. Of this there was no question. In turn his attitude toward those nations surrounding Canaan proper was different. With them he



was quite willing to live at peace as long as they did not oppose the kingdom of Israel and its throne in outright hatred; but when such hatred was evidenced, he felt compelled to make it clear that such opposition to the kingdom of Israel was an opposition to God, and those who engaged in such did so to their own destruction. David in his life as king was simply bringing into realization a type, a picture and a figure of the justice and judgment of God which judges all things by only one standard, the moral relationship which men hold over against Him and His rule. In this light we must

judge David, his actions, his songs and his prophecies. They were a figurative representation of the Gospel, even a reflection of that justice which will be brought to fulfillment finally and forever in that final judgment in which Christ will measure the lives of all men. To those who are His in love, there will be mercy and redemption leading to perfect and eternal peace; but to those who have hated and opposed Him, there will be punishment, suffering and eternal perdition. It is the same judgment set forth in principle by David as he was moved by the Spirit of God.

## *What Others Think*

### **A Review from *The Banner***

The following review of "Reformed Dogmatics" is reprinted by permission from *The Banner* of June 28, 1968.

REFORMED DOGMATICS by Herman Hoeksema. Reformed Free Publishing Association, Grand Rapids, Mich. 917 pages. Price, \$14.95.

This is indeed the "major work" produced by the author in "his many-sided and busy ministry of almost fifty years," and it is an excellent contribution to the "Reformed exposition of the faith once delivered to the saints."

Those who are enthusiastically Reformed will applaud the author's insistence that "dogmatics must be faithful to the Scriptures, and therefore thoroughly exegetical; . . . must be theologically construed, and must therefore be theocentric; . . . and must be faithful to the Reformed Creeds and to the dogma of the church."

One finds in this volume much traditional theology. This is its strength, not its weakness. Prominence is given to authors who have attained stature, and to views which have stood the test of time. The emphasis is not on that which is *new*, but on that which is *true*. Unswerving loyalty to the infallible Word of God and deep appreciation for the views developed by a Spirit-guided church, are the diapason of this theological music. Because of this, the annoying and even disastrous relativism in much current theological discussion is blessedly absent. Certainty, clarity, precise formulation, and thorough organization are, as they have always been, the author's stock-in-trade.

Let no one think that this book is only a repetition of

all that has been said before. There is an eloquent presentation of positions often developed and long defended, but new and challenging insights are not lacking. Inspiring stimulation is to be found in the more traditional views found in the discussion on creation and eschatology in general; and definite challenge in the author's more distinctive views on divine decrees, the image of God, the covenant and baptism, the attributes of God, and God's relationship to man and his attitude toward man in a world of sin.

No one can be expected to agree with all the author's views or statements. The supralapsarian position is vigorously defended; his indictment of the biblical-theological method is, in my estimation, too severe; the position on natural revelation is not wholly consistent; common grace is denied; and the love of God is defined or described in such a way that it quite naturally leads to a conclusion which, in this reviewer's opinion, does not do full justice to the biblical givens.

Those who are at all acquainted with the author's other writings will know that he has been very insistent on the importance of the covenant. This is good, and also very necessary. The discussion is enlightening, to say the least. One does wonder though if it would not have been even more beneficial if less concern had been expressed about the question of whether or not the covenant is "conditional" and more emphasis had been placed on the divine "claim" in the covenant.

To acquire this volume requires a considerable financial investment, but those who are eager to refresh and enrich their knowledge of the Reformed faith will do well to give preference to this volume, and will be eminently rewarded if they spend many hours in perusal and study of it.

George Gritter.



# Pages From The Past

## Believers and Their Seed

Rev. Herman Hoeksema

### Chapter II

#### Arminianism Injected Into The Covenant

(continued from September 15 issue)

But in the way in which Prof. Heyns wants to explain this part of the Baptism Form a very strange conception is distilled from it. However, it is very plain that this conception of Prof. Heyns is forced upon the Baptism Form. This Form certainly furnishes no basis for the professor's conception of the covenant. How would the professor, on the same ground and with the same conception in mind, nevertheless be able to take the language of the Thanksgiving Prayer of this same Form upon his lips? There we find this language: "Almighty God and merciful Father, we thank and praise Thee, that Thou hast forgiven us, and our children, all our sins, through the blood of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, *and received us through thy Holy Spirit as members of thine only begotten Son, and adopted us to be thy children*, and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by holy baptism." This language certainly does not allow for a two-fold interpretation. The church here does not give thanks for something which the Holy Spirit *will* do, but for an accomplished fact. God has through His Spirit received us as members of His Son and has adopted us to be His children. Here there is mention not of a right to the application of salvation, nor of a conditional promise; but here is a work which the Holy Spirit actually performs and applies to us. No, neither in the confessions nor in the liturgical forms can the professor find any support for his conception of the covenant of grace.

But also in Scripture this presentation finds no ground. According to Professor Heyns, the essence of the covenant is the promise. According to his conception, moreover, all the children of the covenant in the outward sense of the word, head for head, have a part in this promise. God bestows upon them all the promise of the covenant. Hence, too, they are all really children of the promise, according to this presentation; and as children of the promise they all very really have a part in the covenant of grace. Now this is precisely not the presentation of Holy Writ. In fact, the Word of God literally contradicts this. This is the plain teaching of Romans 9. In this chapter the apostle does not speak in general about election and reprobation, but about election and reprobation as these cut directly across the line of the historical manifestation of the covenant and make separation. The subject is Israel of the old dispensation. It seemed as though God had cast away the people whom He had once chosen as His heritage. For what had become of by far the largest part of

Israel? As nation they were rejected and had served out their time. And the great majority of them also did not enter into the salvation of the new dispensation. The question therefore arose whether God had abandoned His people, whether the Word of God was fallen out, vs. 6. Was it thus, that God had promised something which He did not fulfill? Was His Word become of none effect? This would exactly be the case if the matter of God's covenant were as Prof. Heyns wants to present it. Then all would have obtained the promise; then all would have been children of the promise who were called the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. And then, surely, the Word of God would have become of none effect, seeing that all did not obtain the fulfillment of the promise.

But the apostle instructs us altogether differently. He says that the Word of God has not fallen out, and that, too, for the simple reason that all who had the promise also very really attained to the fulfillment of the promise. It was not all Israel which was of Israel. They are not all children because they are called the seed of Abraham. No, the children of the flesh are not counted for the seed, but the children of the promise, vss. 7, 8. The apostle therefore makes a distinction between the seed of the flesh and the seed of the promise. Not all are children of the promise. But the children of the promise have indeed very really received all the blessings of salvation. Hence, it is evident that Scripture here literally contradicts Professor Heyns. The professor teaches that all the children of the covenant in the external - historical sense are also children of the promise; Scripture says literally that this is not the case, but that distinction must be made between the children of the flesh and the children of the promise.

On the basis of Scripture and also on the basis of the Reformed line of thought, especially as the latter is set forth in our Baptism Form, we may, therefore, first of all, come to the negative conclusion that the presentation of Professor Heyns is to be rejected. The essence of the covenant does not consist in a promise in the sense of a general offer. All the children of the flesh, or rather, all the outward children of the covenant, all "covenant members" ("*bondelingen*") do not receive a certain life. God does not promise salvation in Christ to every child of believers. No more than there is a general offer in the preaching to everyone who hears, no more is there such a general promise in God's covenant. This presentation must be totally rooted out. It lies wholly in the line of Pelagius and Arminius.



## BOOK REVIEWS

*A SYMPOSIUM ON CREATION*, by Henry M. Morris and others; Baker Book House, 1968; \$1.95, 156 pp. (paper)

This book contains several papers delivered at the annual conference on Christian Schooling in Houston, Texas under the auspices of the Association for Christian Schools. The Conference is usually held in St. Thomas Episcopal School of which T. Robert Ingram is Rector.

The book contains the following papers: Science versus Scientism, by Henry M. Morris; Creationist Viewpoints, by John W. Klotz; Can We Accept Theistic Evolution?, by Paul A. Zimmerman; The Origins of Civilization, by R. Clyde McCone; The Noachian Flood and Mountain Uplifts, by Donald W. Patten; The Ice Epoch, by Donald W. Patten; Evolutionary Time: A Moral Issue, by R. Clyde McCone.

All these men are "creationists" believing in a creation in six days of twenty-four hours. They all hold to a universal flood. They all repudiate evolution in any form including so-called "theistic evolution". The book is an attempt to explain certain scientific phenomena within the context of Scripture while at the same time showing the manifest absurdity of evolutionary hypotheses. It is a very good book, a worthwhile addition to the growing library of scientific literature written by "creationists". It is not too technical to be read by one not versed in the jargon of science. It can be read profitably by anyone including those who have only a theological rather than a scientific interest in the subject.

The most interesting articles were those by Morris and Zimmerman on "Science vs. Scientism" and "Can We Accept Theistic Evolution?" Morris, as in his other works, writes clearly and convincingly of the errors of scientism. Zimmerman shows the absurdity and impossibility of any attempts to preserve Scripture through some sort of theistic evolution.

There are indeed sections with which it is difficult to agree. The authors themselves are not claiming to speak

the last word on many issues. E.G., Patten explains the ice age in terms of ice which fell upon the earth shortly after the flood and which came from other bodies within our solar system. I find this theory and his argumentation for it unconvincing. Nevertheless, the explanation for scientific problems from a scientific viewpoint offered in the book within the context of Scripture are surely as possible (and in many cases more probable) as anything evolutionism has to offer.

The book is heartily recommended and deserves a place in the libraries of our schools and in our homes. H.H.

*NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS*, by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, 1968; 260 pp., \$6.95.

Dr. William Hendriksen has completed another of his commentaries in his New Testament series. Anyone looking for a good commentary for society use and for Bible study in the home is urged to consider carefully these commentaries by Hendriksen. He is a conservative theologian who works with deep reverence for and submission to the authority of God's infallible Scriptures. This volume on the important book of Galatians has all the strengths of his other volumes. The commentary takes time to develop important concepts, as, e.g., the concept of justification; it includes a helpful summary of the discussion at the end of each chapter; it includes thorough discussions of disputed points; it is written clearly and understandably.

While the book is especially adapted to lay use, it is also helpful for ministers inasmuch as it includes lengthy discussion of technical points in the copious footnotes.

Although this commentary is highly recommended to our readers it must always be remembered: 1) that there are points in it with which we cannot agree where Hendriksen lets his theology color his exegesis; 2) it is a commentary and ought never to be a substitute for the study of the Word of God itself. It must be used as a help, nothing more. Yet we hope that Dr. Hendriksen will be able to complete his entire series. H.H.

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church extends heartfelt sympathy with Mr. Jay Boone, a fellow - elder, in the recent death of his mother,

MRS. RENA BOONE.

May he and his family be comforted in the hope of the blessed resurrection.

Rev. G. Lubbers, Pres.  
Elder Herman Kuiper, Vice-Sec'y.

### ATTENTION LADIES

The date for the Fall Meeting of our Eastern Ladies League is Thursday, October 10, 1968 at 8:00 P.M. We look forward to seeing you at Southwest Protestant Reformed Church for an evening of Christian fellowship. Rev. G. Lubbers will speak on the topic "Sanctified Attention."

Elsie Kuiper, Vice Sec'y.



## News From Our Churches

Sept. 14, 1968

Rev. G. Van Baren, of First Church in Grand Rapids, has declined the call he had from his home church, South Holland, Ill.

\* \* \*

The societies of some of our churches have begun meeting right after Labor Day. Doon's bulletin announcement speaks for all of our churches when it says, "Once again our societies begin their weekly meetings. You are urged to take part in this wonderful privilege from week to week. Our prayer is that through the discussion of God's Word, God will draw us closer to Himself and to each other in the bond of faith." Did you notice that the "we urge you" was not an *invitation*, and the "wonderful privilege" was not an *obligation*? And, that the prayed-for result was not some sort of sociability but a "closer *bond of faith*"? If all of us were agreed to the principle underlying this announcement our societies would be better attended and appreciated.

\* \* \*

Candidate Richard Moore and family arrived in Isabel, South Dakota Aug. 20, very anxious to see their new home and congregation. Several ladies of the church were at hand to make the parsonage ready for occupancy, but it needed little cleaning because it was new. The parsonage is a mobile home measuring 12 by 68 feet. The men of the congregation are going to build an addition of 10 by 44 feet to provide a study, utility room, and playroom with extra storage space. Even without this addition, Mrs. Moore writes, "Our new home is more spacious than one could believe possible, and is very comfortable." The moving van was held up three days in Mayor Daley's city, but finally arrived at 4 on Saturday afternoon, and the Moore family were again ensconced amid familiar surroundings. Candidate Moore did not have much time to rest, however, for his examination before Classis was to take place Sept. 4, and the matter of his Ordination and Installation also added to the excitement of those days. The Classical Examination was passed successfully, and the Ordination was scheduled for Friday, Sept. 6. After an organ prelude by Carol Collmann, Rev. B. Woudenberg, of Lynden, Wash., led in opening devotions with prayer, and the reading of Scripture as recorded in Acts 20. Rev. C. Hanko, of Redlands, Calif., preached the sermon which was based on the 28th verse of that chapter, pointing out in a practical way the joys and responsibilities of a minister as an under-shepherd of the flock of Christ. Rev. G. Lanting, of Edgerton, Minn., conducted the ordination rites which were finalized with the "laying on of hands" and a prayer of thanksgiving. Thereupon Rev. Moore closed the service with an official pronouncement of the benediction. After the services those present were invited to the Isabel community building for a delicious lunch and hot coffee prepared by the ladies. On Sunday, Sept. 8, Rev. Moore

preached his inaugural sermon, beginning a busy life of service in Isabel, with catechism classes and other meetings in the offing. It is reported that the gladness in the hearts of the people and in that of the new pastor was clearly evidenced. The readers of the Standard Bearer wish you well under the blessing of our Covenant God!

\* \* \*

The Prot. Ref. Chr. School in Doon opened its doors this Fall with an enrollment of forty-five pupils. Mrs. Robert Decker has been appointed to teach the lower grades having twenty-five children under her tutelage. Mr. Fred Hanko, principal, administers the affairs of the school and teaches the twenty older children.

\* \* \*

Adams St. School and our new Covenant High School have also opened their doors, but we have not yet received particulars attending these occasions. A special report of the High School opening (with pictures) may be expected in the next issue of our paper. A report from our Theological School Committee is scheduled to appear in an October issue of the Standard Bearer regarding the opening of our Seminary with an increased enrollment. So, "bide-a-wee" and ye shall know all.

\* \* \*

In the monthly letter sent out by the church extension committee, Rev. Van Baren wrote about the Young Peoples' Convention that his societies hosted. The pastor used the convention theme as a basis for his letter, treating it in an expository way, setting forth the truth of God's greatness in His creation, and in the re-creation of His people; he also found therein a condemnation of the emphasis currently placed upon the "social gospel" which stresses an earthly utopia without God. The pastor ended his missive with this exultation, "Thanks be to God in these days of hippies and yippies, of open rebellion of youth against all authority, God still has covenant youth who can sing out in spiritual fervor, 'How Great Thou Art'. To God be the glory."

\* \* \*

Hope School has begun its twenty second academic year under new management. Mr. John Buiters, one of their regular teachers, has been appointed administrator in the place of Miss A. Lubbers, who is now teaching in the High School. In the August issue of the "Highlights" the new principal wrote, "I hope, by the grace of God, to continue to serve you faithfully in the new responsibility you have entrusted to me. I will endeavor to continue the fine history of administration that our school has enjoyed for many years. To continue this fine reputation I desire your suggestions, your help, your co-operation, and, above all, your prayers." Indeed, this school is off to a fine start!

... see you in church

J.M.F.