

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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About His Father's Business

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Youth for WHO?

(see: Studies in Depth)

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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Meditation

About His Father's Business

Rev. M. Schipper

"And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

Luke 2:49

How mistaken we would be to conclude that the passion of Christ began in the so-called Passion Week and ended in His crucifixion!

O, indeed, quite naturally His passion must lead to His crucifixion and death. But to conclude that He suffered only at the end of His earthly life, and that that suffering describes His passion in its entire sub-

stance would not do justice to the Scriptural concept that He is the suffering Servant of Jehovah even from the moment of His conception and birth. Let the modernist, if he will, believe and teach that Jesus led a quiet and subdued life, and that when He began to exert Himself at the end of His life that then He was made to suffer as a good Man for His principles. The

believing student of Scripture, on the other hand, understands His passion as the very business for which He was sent into our world, and the thing the Father gave Him to do. And this is not simply an experience He endured at the end of His life upon earth, but it was in His messianic consciousness from a very early age. This is the truth which our Lord expressed at the age of twelve as He sat in the midst of the doctors of the law in the temple, where He heard them and asked them hard questions, and where His parents found Him after a three-day search.

With these thoughts in mind, most beautiful is the contents of the second chapter of the Gospel according to Luke, from which our text is taken. The chapter contains especially two great Gospel truths. The first of these is given to us in the majority of the chapter in which the truth is related that the Son of God is born of a woman. We have described for us almost in detail His lowly birth in the cattle stall, the revelation to shepherds by the angels of the excellency of His Person, and the observation of the humiliation to which He was subjected, and the testimony of Spirit-filled saints who were in anticipation of His coming. But the second truth, expressed in the latter portion of the chapter, is as important and glorious as the first; the truth, namely, that the Son of God is become now the Son of Man — become under the law. It is that first truth that receives the emphasis, it seems, while the second is almost wholly neglected. This is not as it ought to be!

Indeed, that He is to be our Saviour is very important! The truth that God came in the flesh is precisely for our salvation. It is well, therefore, to sing with the angels: Peace on earth to men of His good pleasure. But that He is the obedient Son is just as important! If Christ came not under the law, we are not saved. If Christ in obedience to the Divine law did not fulfil it, we are still under condemnation. It is precisely this latter idea that was dinned into His consciousness when He heard His mother's rebuke.

Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us?

Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing!

Thy father?

It was this question that struck deeply into His soul, and which moved Him to reply as He did.

How is it that ye sought Me?

Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?

This gentle rebuke must not be interpreted as a rejection of the parental authority of a foster parent. For we have only to read two verses beyond our text to discern that: "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." Rather, at the moment He must make it clear that He recognizes His only Father in Whose things He must be busy.

How is it that ye of all people sought Me?

Was it not you, my mother, who told Me when first I could begin to understand, that I had an unusual, yea, a miraculous conception and birth? Have you forgotten how dramatically you described to Me the facts concerning the annunciation, how the angel Gabriel came to you to inform you of My birth which must take place without the will of man? Was it not you, my mother, who informed Me of the strange but wonderful happenings that accompanied My birth — how the angels from heaven came down to reveal to lowly shepherds on the Judean hills the good tidings that a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord had been born and that He could be found lying in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes? Did you not tell Me that these shepherds were the very first of earthly eye-witnesses to behold My coming into the world? And did not My being thrill with joy when you recounted for Me the events that accompanied My presentation in the temple — how the aged Simeon lifted Me up in his arms, exclaiming that he could not die until he had seen the Lord's salvation? — how the aged prophetess Anna declared to all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem concerning that redemption as it would be wrought through Me? And have you forgotten, Mother, how attentively I listened when you told Me of those strange men of the Gentiles who came from a far country to worship before Me while they presented to Me gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh? And how wicked Herod sought to take My life, and you were commanded of God to take Me into Egypt until Herod was dead? And have you not noticed how under this instruction I have grown up, waxed strong in wisdom and in the grace of God which is upon Me? How is it then that you ask: Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? And how is it now that you say: behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing?

Thy father, you say?

But is it not so, that I have but one Father, My Father which is in heaven?

Thou knowest that I have but one Father!

Wist ye not that it is in His things that I must be busy?

How is it that you have failed to remember that Jehovah thy God is My Father? That I came forth from Him, not only as the Son, but also as the Servant in Whom He is pleased to realize all His good pleasure concerning your redemption and the salvation of all His people?

About the things of My Father I must be busy!

And knowest thou not, My mother, that among those things of My Father which I must do is the raising up of the whole house of His Covenant, that covenant of friendship which exists so perfectly within the Divine family, of the Trinity, of the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit? That friendship relation which He is pleased to realize also outside

of Himself with the creature — that covenant relation which will embrace the entire cosmos, heaven and earth, which constitutes the world which He loved and for which He gave Me, His Only-Begotten Son! That covenant is the thing about which I must be busy, for it is THE THING My Father gave Me to realize to which all other things I must do are related. For you must not forget, My mother, that My Father purposed to realize that covenant through the way of sin and grace, and therefore through the fall of man, and through the atonement which could bring redemption, which in turn would exalt that covenant — not in the earthly which must pass away — but in the heavenly and eternal where righteousness shall dwell.

Wist ye not that I must be busy in these things?

Do you not understand that it is exactly because of this that I so miraculously came into the world, was born of you, in the generations of David, born under the law and therefore under the wrath of God, in order that I might redeem them who were under that law and under that wrath? And do you not now understand how precisely for that reason I should be here now in the midst of the doctors of the law to learn exactly the meaning of the sacrifices and the significance of the blood of atonement? That I must learn with a believing heart and understanding that the blood of bulls and goats cannot satisfy for sin, but that a body God prepared for Me of flesh and blood, in order that in it I may lay down My life for the sins of My people?

O, indeed, I am also thy son, and I will rise up now to go with thee and be in complete subjection unto thee. For in love to My Father I must keep all the law, also the law of the fifth commandment. For He who would transgress in one must be guilty of all. But in the keeping of that law, I must also be busy in all that My Father gave Me to do.

In His messianic consciousness this was His Divine obligation!

It was a Divine MUST!

Nothing, not even the sorrow and concern of His parents may entice Him to leave the path of obedience!

What He later was to teach His disciples concerning their relation to Him, must also be indicative of His relation to the Father. True discipleship, so He taught them at the height of His earthly ministry, consists in this: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me

is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me." This principle of self-abnegation, of complete self-surrender so characteristic of true discipleship, He also applies to Himself as He stands in relation to the Father.

It is this Divine imperative which prompted Him throughout His entire earthly mission. This was the dominant principle that moved Him at the age of thirty, before He began His ministry, to require the baptism of John in the Jordan. "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it behooveth us to fulfil all righteousness." This was it that caused Him to set His face to Jerusalem after He was privileged to bathe in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was in the light of this that at the Last Supper He could command the betrayer to go out and commit his dastardly deed. And even after His resurrection He reminds the Emaus travelers of this Divine imperative when He said to them: "Ought not the Christ to have suffered . . ." So now, at the age of twelve, He is deeply conscious of this Divine must.

Not as a whim of a venturesome youth must this statement of the Lord be interpreted! Of a youth who is carried away with pompous thoughts concerning a great future as impressed on his imagination through the tales constantly told him by his mother or some other influence. God forbid, that He should so be understood!

Nay, much rather, here is the first revealed indication of the deep-seated consciousness He possessed of His relation to the Father, and of His profound understanding of His Divine calling to be the Saviour of His people.

Here is expressed also His profound sense of Mediatorship which can only be accomplished through implicit obedience.

Not like our first father and federal head will He be, who was enticed from the path of obedience, in which disobedience he dragged down with him into death the whole human race. Shall He redeem those of the sons of Adam who are given to Him of the Father in sovereign election to be saved by Him, He must be obedient from the beginning to the end!

Beautiful Saviour!

Perfect Mediator!



Editorials

May We Have A Few Minutes, Please?

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

For what are we asking a few minutes of your time?
For a survey.

Let me explain. Enclosed with this issue of our magazine is a survey designed to provide our editorial staff with a subscriber's-eye view of *The Standard Bearer*. Our Survey Committee has made it as easy as possible for you to cooperate in this survey by providing various categories of evaluation for you to check and by making it possible for you to send your evaluation to us without so much as spending money for postage. Besides, we are not interested in your name; in the interest of frankness and objectivity, we want this survey to be anonymous. Hence, all we ask is that you spend a few minutes to carefully read the survey, check the appropriate blanks, add your comments if you wish, and drop it in the mail.

Do this promptly, please! If you put this aside, you will lose it or forget it. Besides, our Survey Committee would like to have ample time to tabulate the results and to prepare a thorough report prior to our annual staff meeting.

And please accept this as an intrusion on YOUR time! Don't leave it to the other fellow. The success of this survey depends on a large — if possible, one hundred per cent — participation.

Perhaps a few words about the nature and purpose of this survey would be helpful.

First of all, it is not our intention to make any *fundamental* change in our magazine. *The Standard Bearer*, as its name expresses, purposes to be the bearer of the standard. It purposes to hold high the standard, the flag, of the Reformed faith. And it purposes to do so by way of expounding, developing, defending, and applying that Reformed faith, the truth of Scripture and the confessions. And in that respect, *The Standard Bearer* has never intended to be a Casper Milque-toast sort of magazine; it has intended, on the contrary, to be solid and firm. It has intended to serve meat, not water. And the intentions behind the present survey are not to be construed as indicating a

desire for change in this respect. Any changes which might be made as a result of this survey will be within the limitations of the fundamental character and purpose of our magazine as just described.

In the second place, however, the staff is interested in producing the best we possibly can. Annually our staff meets to lay plans and make assignments and exercise some mutual self-criticism. And besides, I think it can be said without boasting that our various writers, all of whom work on a voluntary basis and who must find time for their writing in schedules which are crowded with various other labors, — our writers, with whatever weaknesses they may have, do their best to produce something worthwhile. And the fact that on the whole our people faithfully support and subscribe to *The Standard Bearer* is a good sign of its reception. Nevertheless, we are interested in improvement. And part of that interest is an interest in the question whether we are *communicating*. If our editors write, but if you do not read them with profit, we are not communicating. And to be sure, there is no sense in writing that which is not read. Moreover, while local pastors can perhaps gain some idea of how much and how well you read, and while the undersigned can learn something about these questions from occasional "fan-mail" (Yes, we get fan-mail, most of it favorable!), it is very difficult to get a complete picture. Hence, we are conducting this survey. We are not asking all of you to write us a long, detailed letter. All we are asking is that you check a few categories and fill in a few blanks. We are not asking you to flatter us; we want you to be utterly frank and as objective as possible. And once again, we are making it as easy as possible: we are even paying the postage!

I hope that a month from now I will be able to report that we received almost one hundred per cent response.

Just a few minutes of your time, please!

Today, not tomorrow!

Can We Fight Parochiaid?

Sooner or later, it appears, "parochiaid" (government subsidy of private education) will become a reality in Michigan and other states. In Michigan, both

houses of the legislature (with the governor's blessing) have already approved it on a preliminary basis; it only remains to be seen whether for utilitarian reasons,

mainly the fear of a tax-increase in an election year, the legislature might yet back-track and postpone final approval for this year. It appears likely, however, that eventually, with a strong push from Roman Catholic quarters and — sad to say — from Christian School officials and even legislators from the Reformed community, some degree of parochial aid will be tried in Michigan. In four other states such subsidy is already a matter of law. And in all, parochial aid has become an issue in a total of thirty-three states, according to a recent news report.

Now it is not the purpose of this editorial to discuss anew this entire issue. This has been done; and it is the position of this writer that on the basis of principle it would be wrong for our schools to accept such subsidy. Moreover, I believe that acceptance of such subsidy will ultimately lead to the death of the Christian school as a genuinely Christian school. It will necessarily lead to a de-Christianization, or secularization, of its educational program. And it will lead to a loss both of parental control and parental interest. The final result will be that the schools will be little more than semi-private schools with a Christian name. Personally, therefore, I will never go along with the acceptance of subsidy by our schools.

But from a practical point of view, are there any ways in which we can fight this thing? There seems to be little doubt but that the passage of parochial aid will also result in an increased tax-squeeze and an increased financial load for Christian school supporters. Besides, should we not let our voice, our Christian witness, be heard on this score?

In this regard, I wish to make a few suggestions.

A "Friend of the Court" Brief?

It is freely predicted that should parochial aid become law here in Michigan (and also in other states), it will eventually be brought before the courts, both state and federal, as a constitutional question. There are foes of parochial aid among the public school forces — and also among private school supporters — who hold that government subsidy of private schools is constitutionally illegal. This claim is especially based on the principle of the separation of church and state, as it is popularly known. We must remember that the preponderance of support and drive for government subsidy comes from the Roman Catholics. And Roman Catholic schools, of course, are not only private schools with religious instruction; but they are literally *parochial* schools, schools under the control of the institute of the Roman Catholic Church. Other schools, among them ours, are more generally classed as "religious" or "church-related"; but they are, in fact, parental schools, not parochial schools. Nevertheless, it appears certain that government subsidy in general will become a court issue.

If this happens, then I suggest that one or more of our school boards look into the possibility of filing

what is called an *Amicus Curiae* (Friend of the Court) Brief.

What is that?

It is a device whereby a third party can intervene in a court case. If such a third party is not engaged in the court action, but has a special interest in or special knowledge of the issue(s) involved in that court action, he may intervene during its hearing to give information for the assistance of the court, either upon some fact relevant to the issue or upon a point of law, such as the effect of a local custom, the precedent of some decided case, etc. This is done by way of filing a brief, and it would have to be done, of course, through a qualified attorney. An illustration of this kind of action is the recent case in New York (mentioned recently in *All Around Us*) concerning the taxation of church property. In that case an individual tax-payer sued to force the taxation of church property. But several other parties (both for and against) filed friend of the court briefs in order to protect what they claimed were their rights in the case.

In an eventual court hearing about parochial aid we could file such a brief. I will not venture to suggest the contents of such a brief; that would be for a legal expert to say. In my opinion, to file such a brief is our right under the law of the land; and the only restriction on its contents which I would want to insist upon is that it should not be utilitarian in its argumentation, but consistent with our principles.

The possible advantage of such a brief would be that it would be an anti-parochial aid brief coming from supporters of a Christian school, whereas undoubtedly most of the opposition to parochial aid will be from public school forces. The very unusualness of an anti-parochial aid brief coming from private school supporters might cause a court to take special notice.

The matter is at least worth looking into. And if it is possible and advantageous, thorough preparation should be made.

Use Your Vote

As long as the power of the ballot is granted us, we should make use of it, and should do as Christian school supporters. Especially in communities, such as Grand Rapids, where there are rather large numbers of Christian school supporters, proper use of the power of the vote could have real effect upon school issues.

One such issue could be that of parochial aid itself. It has been suggested by some legislators that the parochial aid issue would be made the subject of a referendum in the State of Michigan, that is, it would be submitted to a popular vote. If this should happen, then I consider it the calling of the Christian citizen to go to the polls and to vote against it, both out of principle and out of the practical desire to get rid of it.

Another area in which the power of the ballot can be used is that of public school taxes. The public school is simply a fact of life in this country, whether

we favor it or not. But especially in view of the fact that one of the arguments used in support of parochial aid is the financial one, i.e., that because of the increasing cost of public education and the resultant increased tax burden it is becoming more difficult to meet the expenses of our Christian schools, I consider it a matter of duty to vote to limit the funds available to the public schools as much as possible. These schools are notorious, both at state and local levels, for their striving to obtain and to spend ever more and more tax dollars. There seems to be no end to their voracious appetite. And they are also notorious for spending money much more extravagantly and inefficiently than our Christian schools do or are able to do. This is true at the operational level (where there is, of course, the added push of the public school teachers' unions and the threat of strikes). It is also true as far as public school building programs are concerned: far from attempting to put up buildings economically, they are always trying to build luxurious educational palaces, complete with large gymnasias and swimming pools and football fields. Always they are requesting higher and higher tax millage. Now I have no illusions that this can always be prevented, or even that it can ultimately be prevented at all. But it is a fact that the voter turnout at such school elections is usually small. It is also a fact that in a community like Grand Rapids there are enough Christian school constituents to defeat a millage proposal in many instances. To me, it is the part of folly to vote more funds for the public schools when we have our own schools to pay for and to operate. And to me, it is double folly when alleged Christian school supporters even campaign for and take an active part in these extravagant public school proposals. Let Christian school supporters rather use their ballot, wherever that is possible, to limit the tax funds available to the public schools. And if, then, the public schools have problems living within the kind of budget that our Christian schools can and do live within, then let them solve their own problems. Let the dead bury their dead!

Good Stewardship

To this writer, it is this area of our stewardship which is the most important.

It is a fact of our life as covenant parents that we are required to lay out large sums of money for our own schools. This has become a way of life for us as Reformed believers. We want covenant education for our children; and God has given us the opportunity and the means to provide it, even in a land where public education is the law of the land. This admittedly involves somewhat of a financial squeeze. In this connection, however, I hasten to add a few comments: 1)The financial squeeze about which parochial aid proponents talk so much is, as a matter of fact, much more of a Roman Catholic squeeze than any-

thing else. 2)Admittedly the costs of our schools (and of our churches, I may add) make it impossible for us to live financially as the world does, to keep up with the world's Joneses. The funds we must spend for our churches and our schools would go far toward the purchase of a fancy boat, or a new car every year, or a more expensive house, or a costly vacation trip. 3)We of today do not yet know what financial problems for our Christian schools are in comparison with the problems which our schools and parents faced in the Great Depression of the thirties. I sometimes think and fear that we are in danger of becoming spiritually soft in this affluent age, and that if we had to face problems like those of the thirties, many a school might fold under the strain. 4)Our people, on the whole, have been able to support and have supported our schools royally.

In this connection, I wish to make two points.

The first is this, that as long as you and I, as good stewards of the earthly goods God has given us, follow the principles of seeking first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, there is no danger for our schools. This, after all, is the secret of the success of our school movement. It has been thus with Christian schools from earliest days. And it still is thus. God has given to each of us his own measure of earthly goods. He has given us those goods not to seek ourselves and the things of this present time, but to serve Him and to seek His kingdom. This is the principle by which we must be guided.

In the second place, we, our boards and our societies, must be good stewards in regard to our schools and their finances. And let me add: normally our boards have worked hard at this and have done good work! The place of the school is to provide the education which the parents themselves cannot provide. And the business of the school is education, — not recreation or any other frills. For this purpose our funds must be spent, and spent wisely and conscientiously, to the end that our children may be both well-educated and distinctively educated. Also in this respect, I believe, we need not and ought not attempt to keep up with the world's Joneses and add the luxuries and the frills, either operationally or plant-wise, which the world seeks. For example, our schools can very well do without big gymnasias and athletic plants. This is neither the need nor the calling of the school. Let us act the part of good stewards, who spend their goods wisely in seeking the kingdom. Then if there is need, our people have always been responsive to such need, according as God has given the means.

But by all means, let our schools face the future without a worldly crutch, dedicated to the seeking of the kingdom of God, and trusting in a faithful covenant God.

All Around Us

General Assembly of the N.C.C. Decline in Church Attendance Roman Catholics, Saints, and Ecumenicity Troubles On The Question of Celibacy Important Church Property Decision Mc Intire in Debate with Atheist

Prof. H. Hanko

Many smaller items of interest accumulate over the weeks garnered from the Church Press. It is time to catch up on some of the more important ones.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE N.C.C.

The triennial General Assembly of the National Council of Christian Churches held in Detroit was a chaotic "happening" which made a mockery of what an ecclesiastical assembly ought to be. The many disturbances which constantly disrupted the proceedings were, on the whole, created by various groups of radicals all of whom wanted the NCC to move in their direction and follow their advice towards a better world. Some samplings:

—During a prayer at the opening worship service a group of hippies rose from their seats and went hollering out of the Cobo Hall arena where the meetings were held.

—A band of "yippies" rushed unexpectedly into the meeting firing toy machine guns and shouting at officials "you're dead, you're dead!"

—This same group snatched a microphone and shouted out a list of demands including freeing the eight members of the Chicago conspiracy, providing no-pay toilets, and legalizing marijuana.

—At the end of the meeting a young beatnik expressed vehemently his displeasure with the Assembly for not accepting a draft card of a student from the Reformed Church of America and poured a can of red paint down the table where the presiding officials sat drenching many of the documents in "blood."

The Council also elected its first woman president, but only after a long and bitter fight. There were various black candidates nominated, including Rev. Albert Cleage, from Detroit, who believes that Jesus was black. The black candidates were defeated, and, in bitterness, Cleage said: "This white, racist institution is not going to live very long."

But probably the most important action of the

Council was a decision to investigate the dissolution of the NCC in favor of a new and broader organization to be called a General Ecumenical Council and to include not only all other Christians outside the present council but also Roman Catholics. This proposal was made by Dr. R. H. Edwin Espy, who is the general secretary of the NCC.

Some quotes from his speech will indicate what he had in mind.

The most comprehensive organ (of such an assembly) might be a Consultative Assembly in which all Christian communions and agencies could regularly gather to share their views on major issues in the life of the church and nation, speaking to their own faithful with a common voice whenever agreement is given to them.

This Consultative Assembly would have two parts to it:

One an official legislative body or parliament, the other a gathering of the people of the church on the order of the Kirchentag in Germany.

Such an organization would serve two purposes:

It would witness in maximum ways to the wholeness of the Church of Christ in the United States and it would enable those that are prepared to do so to move forward in social action, liturgical experimentation or anything else within broad policy guidelines without being held back by those that are disinterested, unable, or even opposed to a particular course of action.

Even as a United Europe may eventually grow out of the functional integration of iron, steel, agriculture and markets, so the shape of a United Church in the United States might gradually arise out of serious, continuous joint-in-action-for-mission, nurtured in the atmosphere of a General Ecumenical Council. Such a United Church would be solidly founded on the experience of an ecumenical movement of united mission by the whole church to the whole society.

A contemplation of the demise of the NCC is an occasion for joy. The thought of yet a new and broader ecumenical organization built by the blueprints of Espy is sickening.

DECLINE IN CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Gallup Poll also polls church members. It has been doing this since 1940. There are apparently some who would like to know how many people go to church on an average Sunday in this country. The latest poll has just been completed. It is not very encouraging to those who hope for a revival in the land.

The drop is steady and increasing in swiftness. The high point was reached in 1955 and 1958 when it was learned that 49% of the population attended church on an average Sunday. Since 1958 7% less of adults come to church. The drop among Roman Catholics was greatest. In 1958 74% went to church; now 63% attend. Among Protestants the drop was from 43% to 37%. The drop was greatest among young adults from 21 to 29 years old. 15% less of this age group go to Church now than did in 1958.

While there is never any valid excuse for not going to Church, it is not surprising that church attendance declines when people receive stones for bread.

ROMAN CATHOLICS, SAINTS, AND ECUMENICITY

It was only last year that the Roman Catholic Church shook the Church to its foundations by knocking out of the list of saints no less than 200 people such as St. Christopher, St. Nicholas and England's patron St. George.

Now the Roman Catholic Church is about to add 40 saints to its list of those canonized, all from England. These forty suffered martyr's deaths by order of Anglican rulers. They were executed between the reign of King Henry VIII and Cromwell. They were executed for high treason because they refused to take an oath accepting the King as supreme head of the Church of England.

The implications are profound for relations between the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church; and many fear that the cause of union will be, at best, set back several years and, at worst, destroyed altogether. It seems that the general feeling is that when the winds of union are blowing it is not the part of discretion to remind all concerned that there was a time when Protestants butchered Roman Catholics. And some feel that if the Roman Catholics want to go about canonizing those who lost their life for their faith they ought to canonize also the Protestant martyrs who were killed during the reign of Bloody Mary.

The pope and those about him are not too concerned about what all this will do to ecumenical relations. They are determined to press ahead with canonization at all costs.

TROUBLES ON THE QUESTION OF CELIBACY

It is generally recognized among Protestants and Catholics that Pope Paul is conservative. In fact, some are convinced that his conservatism is wrecking the Roman Catholic Church. And they are not about to permit this to happen.

The Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands is perhaps the most progressive and aggressive branch of the whole Church. This was demonstrated once again recently when the Dutch Pastoral Council met and decided to endorse a policy statement that "obligatory celibacy as a condition of the priesthood should be abrogated."

There are a couple of very surprising aspects to this decision. In the first place, the Dutch Pastoral Council is a unique organization, the only one of its kind in the world. It is a representative church body consisting of bishops, priests, nuns, seminarians and lay men and women.

In the second place, the vote on this and on related issues was overwhelming. On the statement quoted above, e.g., the vote was 93 to 2.

In the third place, the other recommendations passed were also policy statements which flew in the face of Romish teaching. Statements were passed urging that future priests not be obliged to take the celibacy oath, that priests already married be allowed to remain in the active ministry, that married men be ordained, that women be admitted to all ecclesiastical functions including the priesthood.

In the fourth place, these decisions were taken even though Rome made it very clear that it would tolerate no deviation from official church dogma and even though it would refuse to consider any policy statements made by the Council. The decisions were deliberate defiance of papal authority.

The bishops of Netherlands, including Bernard Jan Cardinal Alfrink, judiciously abstained from the voting although they seem to side with the Council.

Some fear that a break with Rome is imminent. This would not come about, however, unless the church in Netherlands decided to implement its decisions. So far the decisions are only policy statements which will not, for the present, be put into effect.

The issue is, in part, one brought on by a vast and growing shortage of priests. In 1968 alone the Dutch clergy lost 250 priests most of whom left the priesthood because of the oath of celibacy.

A conservative pope and curia cannot hold off change in the Church forever.

IMPORTANT CHURCH PROPERTY DECISION

According to *Christian News*, by refusing to review the case of two former Southern Presbyterian congregations, the Supreme Court opened the way for these congregations to keep their property.

The history of this case is briefly this. The two

congregations originally left the Southern Presbyterian Church because of doctrinal departures by the General Assembly. The denomination filed suit to claim the property on the grounds that the property belonged to the denomination should a congregation secede from the union of churches. The Georgia Supreme Court ruled that the property belonged to the local congregations because indeed the General Assembly had forsaken its historic position. This decision was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court last year, and the highest judicial body in the country sent the case back to the Georgia Supreme Court to reconsider. The U.S. Supreme Court decided that the State Supreme Court had made its decision on erroneous grounds, since no judicial body may enter into the internal affairs of a church group to decide if there is any departure in matters of doctrine and church polity.

Many thought that this decision was a victory for the denomination and that the two congregations which had originally seceded would have to give up their property. But the Georgia Supreme Court immediately decided again in favor of the local congregations. Their ground was that if a judicial body may not interfere in the internal affairs of a denomination, then the "implied trust" doctrine is also invalid. This "implied trust" doctrine gives the property of any seceding congregation to the denomination.

Once again the case was appealed and the U.S. Supreme Court refused to consider the decision of the lower court. Apparently this means that the local congregations will be able to retain their property.

The result of the whole case is that many are wondering if now any group seceding from the denomination can keep its property as long as it constitutes the majority of a congregation. If this is indeed the implication, it will be a serious blow for many who are pushing ecumenicity, for they have used the threat of litigation to persuade many wavering congregations to

remain in the denomination even when these congregations were greatly disturbed by the direction their higher ecclesiastical assemblies were taking them.

McINTIRE IN DEBATE WITH ATHEIST

Carl McIntire has announced that he will face Madalyn Murray O'Hair in a televised debate March 16 in Austin, Texas. Madalyn Murray, as almost everyone knows, is the professional atheist who was instrumental in having Bible reading and prayers eliminated from the Public Schools and who recently protested the reading of Scripture by the astronauts.

It is our firm conviction that Carl McIntire is making a most serious mistake in engaging in public debate with this woman. It seems to us obvious that no believer may ever debate with an unbeliever. The subject of the debate has not yet been announced, but presumably it will be some religious subject. But how is it possible for such a debate to be carried on? McIntire, as a believer, must argue on the basis of Scripture. Madalyn Murray will never do this. If the two cannot argue on the basis of Scripture, how can they debate at all?

McIntire would probably respond by saying that he will seize every opportunity to make his witness publicly and refute the unbelief of people. But he must remember that he is choosing an illegitimate way to witness for the truth, for by his very witness he is giving a woman who is nothing but a blasphemer of God an opportunity to broadcast her views and engage in her blasphemy on a public radio station. McIntire is responsible, in part, for giving her this opportunity.

McIntire ought to reconsider before March 16 and politely refuse the invitation refusing to have any part of the horrible sacrilege of which this godless woman has been guilty. If he persists, he will do the cause of the gospel harm.

Let the minister beware that he be all that is implied in his title: V.D.M., Verbi Divini Minister; that he be nothing less and nothing more, nothing else than just that, a servant of the divine Word. He must be this and only this all the time; he must be this and nothing but this, especially when he stands in the pulpit on Sunday and addresses the Church of Christ. That Word of God is his only theme. He must not be tempted to speak on a topic of his own choice and to develop it according to his own philosophy, for this is offering the flock of the great Shepherd stones for bread. Neither must he be induced by anything whatsoever, by what he sees and hears about him, by the demands of some who have become ticklish of hearing, by opposition of the enemy, by a sinful craving for popularity, by the temptation of a crowded church or by a diminishing audience, in short, by nothing at all, to speak *about* that Word of God. He must not preach *about* the Word, he must preach *the Word*. He must be a minister Verbi Dei by carefully listening to that Word and receiving it in his own mind and heart. Diligently he must search the Scriptures, that he may know the fulness of the riches of Christ; and these riches he must display before the congregation. Let him strive, therefore, with all his might, to be and evermore fully to become a minister of the Word of God!

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Contending for the Faith

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

PROTESTANT DOCTRINE OF SIN THE REFORMED SYMBOLS

Rev. H. Veldman

In our preceding article we had begun to call attention to the doctrine of sin as appearing in our reformed symbols. And we were calling attention, at the close of the article, to Question and Answer 5 of Lord's Day 2 of the Heidelberg Catechism. We noted that this answer is striking. That we are prone to hate God and the neighbor does not mean that we merely have leanings and inclinations in that direction, but that it is the inclination of our entire nature to hate God and the neighbor. And we also called attention to the fact that we either love God and the neighbor or that we hate God and then also the neighbor. Only when we love God can we love the neighbor. But then it also follows that, if we hate God, we also hate the neighbor. However, there is another striking feature about this fifth question and answer that merits attention.

Question 5 reads: "Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?" And the answer is given: "In no wise; for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor." Why this answer? We understand that Question 5 must not be interpreted as implying that we are able to "keep all these things" imperfectly. The thrust of this question is plain. We must keep the law of God perfectly. Had the Catechism asked whether we can keep the law of God, the question would have been the same. Fact is, we must love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. So, this means that we must "keep all these things" perfectly. We ask: why this answer? Why did the Catechism give the answer that we cannot keep all the things of the law perfectly? Because we either keep the law of God perfectly or we hate the Lord and our neighbor. It is either-or. There simply is no other alternative. We cannot love God and Mammon, we cannot hate God and Mammon. We either love God and hate Mammon or we hate God and love Mammon. We either love God and then we also love the neighbor and ourselves, or we hate God and then we also hate the neighbor and also ourselves. The love or hatred of God determines our attitude towards our neighbors and ourselves. If we really love the neighbor and ourselves, then we shall seek the good of the neighbor and also of ourselves, and this means that we shall seek God for him and for ourselves. This is the doctrine of sin as it appears in this Lord's Day of our Heidelberg Catechism; what an indictment this is against the theory of Common Grace! That theory would have us believe that, although the sinner cannot do any saving good, cannot

love God, he is able to love himself and the neighbor.

This same truth is held before us in Lord's Day 3. Question 6 asks: "Did God then create man so wicked and perverse?" Notice: man is so wicked and perverse, and this refers to Question and Answer 5. Very familiar are Question and Answer 8. We read: "Are we then so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness?" And the answer reads: "Indeed we are; except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God." Notice the absolute character of this language of the Catechism. We are *wholly* incapable of doing *any* good, and inclined to *all* wickedness. Indeed, every sinner does not commit all evil. A boy or girl cannot sin as a young man or lady. A young man cannot sin as a father and a poor man does not sin as a rich man. But we are inclined to all wickedness. My nature is such that it is capable of every evil under the sun. Given the opportunity, I will sin in connection with whatever opportunity presents itself. Again we remark: this is the doctrine of sin as taught in our Heidelberg Catechism.

This truth the Catechism repeats in Lord's Day 4. Question 9 reads: "Doth not God then do injustice to man, by requiring from him in His law, that which he cannot perform?" Notice again the emphasis: God demands of man that which he cannot perform. And the reference, of course, is to the Law of God, that we love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength.

We also notice the same emphasis in Lord's Day 24. In answer to the question why our good works cannot be the whole or part of our righteousness before God, we read that the righteousness which can be approved of before the tribunal of God must be absolutely perfect and in all respects conformable to the Divine Law, and also that our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin. So, the righteousness of God demands full and complete conformity with the Law of God, and even the best works of the Christian are all imperfect and defiled with sin. One may ask: if the best works of the child of God are all imperfect and defiled with sin, what must one think of the so-called good of the natural man? To ask this question is to answer it. And the same truth is held before us in Lord's Day 44, Question and Answer 114. Surely, the Heidelberg Catechism maintains the absolute character of the power of sin. The theory of Common Grace cannot derive

any comfort or support from this reformed symbol.

Calling attention to the Belgic Confession, also known as the Thirty Seven Articles, we note that Articles 14 and 15 treat this subject or doctrine of sin. Art. 14, treating the creation and fall of man, and his incapacity to perform what is truly good, reads:

We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after His own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will, agreeable to the will of God. But being in honor, he understood it not, neither knew his excellency, but wilfully subjected himself to sin, and consequently to death, and the curse, giving ear to the words of the devil. For the commandment of life, which he had received, he transgressed; and by sin separated himself from God, Who was his true life, having corrupted his whole nature; whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death. And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he hath lost all his excellent gifts, which he had received from God, and only retained a few remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse; for all the light which is in us is changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us, saying: The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not: where St. John calleth men darkness. Therefore we reject all that is taught repugnant to this, concerning the free will of man, since man is but a slave to sin; and has nothing of himself, unless it is given him from heaven. For who may presume to boast, that he of himself can do any good, since Christ saith, No man can come to Me, except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw him? Who will glory in his own will, who understands, that to be carnally minded is enmity against God? Who can speak of his knowledge, since the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God? In short, who dare suggest any thought, since he knows that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of God? And therefore what the apostle saith ought justly to be held sure and firm, that God worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. For there is no will nor understanding, conformable to the Divine will and understanding, but what Christ hath wrought in man: which He teaches us, when He saith, "Without Me ye can do nothing."

Now it is true that we read in this article that "he hath lost all his excellent gifts, which he had received from God, and only retained a few remains thereof." The Christian Reformed synod of 1924, to substantiate its Three Points, quotes this part of Art. 14, calling attention to the fact that man did retain a few remains of his original excellent gifts. Man, therefore, is not wholly depraved and corrupt. Now, in the first place, what a strange interpretation this is when considered in the light of the rest of the article! We read, for example, that man "lost *all* his excellent gifts (we underscore), that he has become wicked, perverse, and

corrupt in *all* his ways, that all the light which is in us is changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us, saying: The light shineth in darkness (again we underscore). And the fathers continue to declare that they reject all that is taught repugnant to this, concerning the free will of man, since man is but a slave of sin; and that he has nothing of himself, unless it is given him from heaven. And we also read in this article that man has corrupted his whole nature. Throughout this article the fathers maintain the complete and utter depravity of the natural man. But, in the second place, as far as that word "remains" is concerned, that word could have been more appropriately translated by the word "traces." Man did not retain remnants of his original excellent gifts, but only traces, or tracks. Now traces are not remnants but show us where a vehicle has passed but now is gone.

And Art. 15, treating the doctrine of Original Sin, reads as follows:

We believe that, through the disobedience of Adam, original sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature, and an hereditary disease, wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb, and which produceth in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof; and therefore is so vile and abominable in the sight of God, that it is sufficient to condemn all mankind. Nor is it by any means abolished or done away by baptism; since sin always issues forth from this woeful source, as water from a fountain; notwithstanding it is not imputed to the children of God unto condemnation, but by His grace and mercy is forgiven them. Not that they should rest securely in sin, but that a sense of this corruption should make believers often to sigh, desiring to be delivered from this body of death. Wherefore we reject the error of the Pelagians, who assert that sin proceeds only from imitation.

In this article the fathers declare that sin is by no means abolished or done away by baptism. This is taught in the Roman Catholic Church, which maintains that the sacrament of baptism is the washing of regeneration. But we emphasize that this article denies vehemently the error of the Pelagians. Pelagianism denies original guilt and original pollution, separated mankind from Adam, and would maintain that sin proceeds only from imitation. In this article the doctrine of original sin is maintained. Original sin is extended to all mankind. And this sin is a corruption of the whole nature, is an hereditary disease; even the infants are infected with it already in their mother's wombs. So, also in this article the fathers maintain the doctrine of sin in the Scriptural sense of the word, as we read in Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," and in Romans 5:18: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation;

even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." And the fathers maintain the Scriptural truth that "without

faith it is impossible to please God," and that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

From Holy Writ

The Book of Hebrews

Rev. G. Lubbers

THE PERFECT RESPONSE OF THE MESSIAH TO THE DIVINE GOOD-PLEASURE (Hebrews 10:7-9)

The writer to the Hebrews is now laying the final stone in his argument that in Christ Jesus we indeed have the fulfillment of all the promises of God. All things are in Him "Amen" to the glory of God the Father. In this Servant the Father is glorified in all the beauty of His glorious praises. In this Son is the perfect answer to the Father's will.

There is only one acceptable sacrifice before the living God. And that sacrifice is brought by the Christ of God when he says "I come to do thy will, O God."

We are dealing here with the deep things of God. We are dealing here with the "heavenly things" of which Jesus spoke to Nicodemus when the latter came to him by night. It was then, when Nicodemus showed that he did not understand the simple rudiments of the things of God's Kingdom, that Christ said to him: "If you do not understand earthly things, how shall ye believe if I would tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12). These heavenly things are the eternal background, the deepest Divine motif for our salvation in Christ. Only in the light of these heavenly things can we begin to see the greatness of, and the *manner* of our salvation in Christ. We must see the Divine "must" of our salvation and Christ, and the only manner in which it can be accomplished. Only thus will we truly understand that Zion is redeemed in righteousness; so shall we understand that the rejected cornerstone is made the head of the corner.

It ought to be quite obvious that this mystery of which our text speaks here is not merely something which took place in a definite point in our chronological time. In a sense what we have here is a word which comes down to us out of the depths of God's eternal counsel, reaches across our time in the unfolding of this counsel in both the Old Testament and New Testament dispensations, and will be finished in the sitting of Christ at the right hand of God. The force of the particle "then" (*tote* in Greek) is not to a *certain* calendar date. Its reference point is to the speaking of God, in which speech the Lord makes clear his "thoughts," which are higher than our thoughts. And

when those thoughts of God, the embodiment of the Divine good-pleasure in reference to the justice of God were expressed by God, *then* it was that the Son responded and spoke from Messianic joy and obedience! He is the Son in whom all God's good-pleasure is! It is the perfect response of the Messiah to the Divine will, the eternal good-pleasure of God!

First of all, to be sure, this perfect response of the Son was spoken by Him in the counsel of peace. Of this there can be little or no doubt in Scripture. And this is also the clear teaching of the text. I know that the text speaks of Christ "coming into the world" to *say* this. And that is indeed true, as we shall see presently. However, let it not be forgotten that this of which our text speaks suggests something deeper and more profound than what merely happened in the stage of history during the time that Christ suffered and died on earth. This was, as we also saw, the case already in Psalm 40, which speaks of the "thoughts" of God. And, therefore, we hold that this speech of the Son is a reality, first of all, in the counsel of peace. In this counsel of peace Christ is the Head of the church, and not simply the second person in the Trinity. The speaking Christ in this counsel is the one who is the eternal Word, made flesh. He is filled with the great delight to do the will of the Father, the Triune God. And so when in the counsel of God, Christ is to be the one in whom all the fulness should dwell, it is the delight to do the will of God, which is the reason for the Christ to come into this world. This seems to be the force of the Greek infinitive in verse 8. There the Greek text has "I come to do" (*Heekoo tou poiesai to thelema sou*). Now this "to do" expresses more than mere *purpose* in this sentence. It is an *anarthrous* infinitive in the *genitive* case. It is, therefore, basically an infinitive which is a noun. If this be the case, then it follows that the genitive case here, too, must be viewed correctly. It is, no doubt, a genitive of description. It defines the "I Come." It is not merely true, that since Christ came into the world, and now is here, he, too, desires to do the will of God. Of course, that is true of the Christ that, once having come into the world, he delights to do the will of God. But that is not the point here. The simple teaching here is that Christ would not

have come into the world to do the will of God were it not for the nature of this "I delight to do thy will, O God." This desire to do the will of God is antecedent to, and the Messianic motif for, coming into the world. Such are the "heavenly things" here spoken of. Because the Son would give the perfect response to the "will" of God, He comes. Here we sound the depths of the anthem of the angels: Glory to God in the Highest, and peace among men in the Divine good-pleasure.

This also explains why we have here the verb "*heekoo*." The verb is one with the effect of the perfect tense. It is not the present "I come," but it is the perfect "I *am* come, I *am* here present." The Son is come in completed state, as this spans time and eternity. For the use of this verb we refer the interested reader to John 8:42 and I John 5:20. In both of these instances it is clearly the perfected state that is referred to. It is the work of the Son in our flesh, the wonder of grace never to be undone. Now, as far as the Son Himself is concerned, he came with the deep and humble delight to do the will of God. That is the reason for his coming "*in carne*," in the flesh.

He came to do the will of God. However, the text ushers in the Christ as He stands and speaks not simply concerning God, but *addressing* God. It is the Great High Priest who speaks here, uttering the perfect obedience and bringing the perfect sacrifice of obedience through which he will atone for all of our sins. This is language of the Sacrificial priest on the great Day of Atonement. He offers this in the better temple, the heavens itself, as this is begun on the Cross, and through this sacrificial blood of obedience he enters into the Holy place for us, removing all our sins forever.

It is the *will* of God with which this "one coming into the world" is concerned. This will "*theleema*" of God did not delight in sacrifices, offerings, whole burnt-offerings. None of these pleased him; they were not acceptable to the Divine justice as a payment for sin. This is very strong in the Hebrew text in Psalm 40. There the text does not merely speak of what is decided, but rather what was God's delight; what was a sweet savor in His holy nostrils. The picture we have here is of the Son as he must be busy in the things of His Father. We find him in the temple. There he begins his work. It is cleansing of the temple. Only it is such a cleansing which amounts to "removal" of the temple. Break down this temple and I will rebuild it in three days. Christ had great mercy on the people. He saw that God was not pleased with the entire law of the ceremonies. Nay, these meant nothing in themselves. They could not cleanse the conscience from the guilt of sin. And then he sees all his own people, and he came to save them from their sins. Back of all of these shadows stands the Son. It is His shadow of which he is the reality and fulfillment. And in every shadow and type he is coming into the world and saying, Behold, I

come to do thy will, O God. He is the high priest of good things to come; He is the image of the things themselves.

Thus he performed the will of God. For in all of Christ's preaching and teaching he ever speaks of the "will of Him who sent me." Thus we read in John 4:34 "... for my meat (food) is that I may do the will of Him that sent me and perfect His work." And when Christ further enlarges upon this great fulfillment of the will of God in John 5:30 then we read "I am able to do nothing from myself; even as I hear I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me." And, furthermore, we read in John 6:37-39 "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and he that cometh to me I shall in no wise cast out, because I am come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me." And then Christ continues in the meaningful words, "Now this is the will of Him that sent me, that of all that He hath given me there be none that perish, but that I should raise them up in the last day. . . ."

Here we see the great Messianic consciousness of Him who came into this world to save sinners. He is the only sin-bearer. The Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. He has borne the sins of many, once and for all. And he will save to the uttermost. In the last day he will raise all his own from the grave!

Yes, this is all written in the "volume of the book." There may be some difficulty in unraveling the sense of the expression "*head* of the book," but there can be no doubt that the entire expression refers to the canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament. That was the Volume of the Book. And the subject of this entire volume is really Jesus Christ, the Son of God, crucified. He who does not read this in the Old Testament, cannot read it in the New Testament. For all the Scriptures, Law, Psalms and Prophets speak concerning this Christ as He comes to do God's will. And He will so perfectly do this will, that the last jot and tittle will be fulfilled.

Christ read the pages, one by one on earth. And each time he saw all the Scriptures, in their deepest sense. And he fulfilled them all. Yes, he took away the former, the types and shadows, and established the "second," the better, sacrifice of His own body on the Cross.

He did this only once. It is finished in him. It needs no repeating. He does not need to stand daily, but having brought about his sacrifice it is finished. It is the perfect response to the Divine will. Nothing is lacking. Besides, this is also the end of all the types and shadows forever! That which God never desired is removed, in order that the acceptable sacrifice may be brought.

Now the worshippers may come and be perfected in Him.

What the law could not do, in that it was weak through sin, God did in the sending of His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, that sin might be condemned in

the flesh, and that the righteous demand of God might be fulfilled in us.

In His Fear

A WORD TO COVENANT YOUTH

(continued)

Rev. John A. Heys

You, Covenant Youth, are to remember your Creator.

And then the idea is not that you are now and then to think about Him. Solomon in Ecclesiastes 12:1 does not mean that at set times you are to give some thought to the fact that God brought you forth, and that therefore you are obliged to serve Him with all the creatures that He brings your way. Remembering Him is much more than that.

There are two elements in remembering. God gave us that marvelous power of mind whereby we can store in it an amazingly great number of facts. From the early, very early days of our childhood, we have been storing away fact upon fact. As little babes you remembered your parent's voices and looks, long before you could speak to them. And through twelve or more years of schooling you have picked up and filed away in the "gray matter" thousands upon thousands of facts. But God also created us with that mental ability of recalling what we retain. Sometimes it takes only a word to suggest an event of the past, and then we bring it back before our consciousness. The sound of the, "Hello" over the phone, and at once you remember a certain person with that voice. Sometimes what we see at once brings back before our consciousness an event that happened long, long ago. And we have that power even whereby we can just sit down and review the whole day or week, or some experience of last year. It is a wonderful gift; and it is so strong within you in the days of your physical strength. It is at its peak now in the days of your youth. That is why Solomon tells you to remember your Creator in these days of your youth. Now you are most apt to forget God. But now is the time that God gives you the strength of this faculty of retaining and recalling the truth that He is your Creator.

And Solomon has something special in mind when he writes these lines to YOU. Retain the truth concerning God indeed. Recall that truth concerning Him by all means. But the point that Solomon makes here in this text is that you are to *live* in the consciousness of that fact. All that which you do must be the result

of remembering in love that God is your Creator, and that you are His creature that has been brought into being in order that you may serve and glorify Him.

O, I know, you cannot have Him consciously before your minds every moment of your life. While you sleep you cannot be remembering God as your Creator. And if what Solomon meant was that not for one split second might you lose sight of that fact, then Solomon would be admonishing you never to go to sleep. That he does not do. What is more, as creatures of time and space, we can do only one thing at a time and be in only one place at a time. And there are works that require our undivided attention. You have had the experience time and again that as you crammed for an exam, you just had to put out of your mind the Junior-Senior party that is scheduled a few days hence. While talking about a certain matter you have found repeatedly that you had to dismiss thoughts about other matters from your minds. Although it always amazes us how you can do any studying at all with the radio blaring at full blast, or with the record player spinning one platter after another, even you, in the days of your youth, have your limits and limitations. And you have had those moments when the "kids" just had to be silenced and kept out of your room, if you were going to do any worthwhile studying. So it is also with what you and I know about God as our Creator. We cannot while working some intricate algebra or geometry problem, or while trying to memorize some chemistry formula, have consciously before our minds the living God as our Creator.

What Solomon means is that before you set out to do anything, you do so in the consciousness of the fact that God is your Creator, and not only deserves but demands your service in love. It means that when you wake up in the morning, your first thought is to give Him thanks for the sleep of the night and for caring for you while you were asleep. He it is Who kept you breathing and your heart beating. If these depended upon you, I would advise you never to go to sleep. But they do not. Paul says that in Him we live and

move and have our being. And indeed that movement of heart and lungs and of all our vital functions of our earthly life is from Him. It means also that upon awaking you remember that before you is stretched another series of moments in which to use the Creator's creatures, including your own amazing body and soul, as His royal priesthood, and as stewards of His goods. You are to awake with the Creator before your consciousness. We do not. But that is our calling. And this we are to remember and will remember, when we remember our Creator.

That undoubtedly was the experience of Adam and Eve before they fell. In all the creatures they saw the Creator. And if they spent a few days in the state of righteousness before they fell into sin, then the light of day which they saw the moment of waking up reminded them of God. For they saw God in that light. They saw Him in their own bodies. They saw Him in the food that they ate and in the birds and beasts that in beauty and abundance paraded in front of them. At that time all their remembering was remembering their Creator. They could not at that time imagine such a thing as remembering a Redeemer or Saviour. They could, because of God's command to them, conceive of being under wrath and in need of a saviour, but there was nothing yet to indicate that God would ever provide a Saviour. We know that God did because of God's Word; and we can also remember God as our Redeemer, because we who have fallen have had this Redeemer revealed to us. This does not rule out our calling to remember our Creator. The fall has not removed this at all. And salvation once again enables us to remember that God is our Creator and that we live for the glory of His name. It is for that reason that we are to let the truth of our relation to Him, as the creatures of His hands, rule us in all of our thinking, willing and acting.

Before we begin a work there must be that thought before our consciousness that we are God's and not our own. And then in the execution of that work, the truth that we and all of our possessions belong to Him must control us until the work is finished and we begin another in that same consciousness.

You are now either giving some serious thought as to what line of work you are going to pursue, or are already working and earning a salary. If you are in the process of choosing a field of work, or contemplate doing so in the future, you had better remember your Creator and reckon with Him in your thinking. And as you choose, you are to remember that there are fields wherein you will be required to forget your Creator. These, of course, are to be rejected. Likewise there are places of work that must be avoided, because they will demand of you that you forget that you are God's creature with the calling to keep His commandments and honour all who are in authority over you. Of course we mean that you may not unequally yoke

yourself with the unbeliever in a labour organization that demands of you deeds of rebellion against the man to whom you have hired yourself out to serve. If you acknowledge him as the one who hires you, you admit that you are the servant, and then the Word of your Creator comes to you through Peter, as surely as it did in his day to those who were slaves, "Servants be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God (his Creator, then) endure grief, suffering wrongfully." I Peter 2:18, 19.

Your dating will also take on a different character than that of the world. If you remember your Creator, you will remember your calling before Him. Remembering your Creator is remembering to do what He calls you to do. It will therefore also cause you to desist from that which He has forbidden you to do. Marriage is honourable and good; and He as Creator has made you for marriage and all which belongs to it. But He has created you in order that you may live a holy life before Him and so that He may reflect His own holy life in yours. Here then again you cannot be remembering your Creator when you yoke yourself unequally with the unbeliever to spend with that unbeliever the intimate life that He has designed for the married. Dating will take on a new character. It will have a new purpose. But so will also the behaviour on that date. It is because we forget Him that we get out of line. For, getting out of line is leaving the narrow line that He has drawn.

In that same connection remembering your Creator will also prescribe a very definite course for what we call entertainment. It simply is an undeniable fact that you have too much time on your hands. And we do not say this to find fault with you. We as your parents and predecessors have made it that way, because our flesh wants it that way. We have clamored for shorter working hours and more time for sports. We have introduced daylight saving time, long before you could vote it in or out, because we wanted to have it light for a long time after our work day for sports, recreation and the like. And with our modern means of transportation we can go far in a matter of minutes to seek this form of recreation or that, or to seek entertainment of one sort or of another. Not only that, but with our amazing means of communication we can get that entertainment right in our homes.

Let me here again remind you that it is your Creator that you must remember. You know as well as I do, and you have heard the world itself condemn the rot that is available by the flip of the switch of your television set, that you can observe the world in its immorality and evil so much more easily than we could. And talk about the development of sin! How much closer and easier it has all been made for you! Years ago to revel in this filth of the world and to be

entertained by such evils as murder, adultery, theft and the like you had to sneak into the movie building. Then later in the dark you could ride into the drive-in movie without being detected. (Unless some one recognized your car license, or you had a car of some unique color combination.) But now you need but wait for your parents to go away; and in the comfort of your home, Presto, there it is! BUT remember that your Creator is there! What a lot of idolatry there still is in us. How quickly we put man in the place of God. That God sees and hears we can dismiss from our minds so quickly. It is father or mother, the elder or your ministers, who must not know. You have forgotten your Creator Who has demanded of your parents, the elders and minister, that they forbid you this or that

evil. It would be amusing, if it were not so serious, to observe how people will look around to see whether the minister, an elder or some saintly soul is around before they curse or swear or tell their dirty stories. And when they are caught in it, they feel guilty before man rather than before God. "O, I hope," they say, "that so and so did not hear me." There is no thought of confessing it before God.

But you, Covenant Youth, remember your Creator. You cannot escape His eye and ear. You cannot escape calling before Him. Before you speak, before you act, remember that you are to serve Him. Before you plan, before you put into effect a thought or desire, remember that you are the creature who owes the Creator constant love and service with all creatures at all times.

Studies in Depth

Youth For WHO?

Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

You visit me from out of town. Engaging my attention has been a matter of curious interest. To have you share it with me, I request that we go to a place, the identity of which you shall discover when we arrive. We take a fifteen minute drive on a bitterly cold wintry evening, and pull up in front of what you immediately see to be a modern public high school complex. We approach the auditorium building, enter, and from the cloak room grope our way down an aisle of the darkened amphitheatre to our seats. A spotlighted circle on the stage reveals a rather typical, hairy, guitar-playing creature, beside which there slinks a mini-skirted female singer, her (for want of a better term) sex-laden voice filling the room. Sitting together in silence we take in the presentation of a modern folk-song. That's what I'm thinking it to be, at least, although to myself I wonder how it can be contemporaneous and be a folk-song. That which has been developed out of the tradition and background of a race surely is not of modernity. But we continue to listen. At the moment there is a rendition of "California Dreamin'," by the Mamas and the Papas. Now I lean toward you with the whispered query, "Know what (function) this is?" "Quite obviously," you answer, "a high school Hootenanny!"¹ "Wrong!" I answer, amused. "This is *Youth For Christ!*" Not without surprise and some degree of shock, you react with, "Youth for *who?*" For with what is going on here, it is apparent that youth are present, and it is easy to see that they are *for* Peter, Paul and Mary's song, "Leavin' on a Jet Plane," or for Simon and Garfunkel's "Dan-

gling Conversation," a generation-gap song. But it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to see youth for *Christ*. What Christ? we naturally ask ourselves. We are getting quite tired of the leftist, Hippy "christ" of the false ecumenical movement, a "christ" with no anointing whatsoever. But what else is on the evening's maniacal musical menu, besides some off-color humor? There is a song entitled, "Something." It is about "love." But in modern "coffeehouse" jargon, that means "sex," which theme is the hippy's gospel. The song is by the Beatles. I remember that Derek Taylor, the Beatles' press agent, said of them, "It's incredible, absolutely incredible. Here are four boys from Liverpool. They're rude, they're profane, they're vulgar, and they've taken over the world. It's as if they'd founded a new religion. They're completely anti-Christ. I mean, I'm anti-Christ, as well, but they're so anti-Christ they shock me, which isn't an easy thing."² To go on, "April Come, She Will!" is a song of evanescent, evaporated "luv" in frustrative strains. Perhaps the most remarkable spot on the program was a sing-along number where the audience with the performers sang the hymn, "Amazing Grace," to the tune, "House of the Rising Sun," by The Animals! These animals, themselves an insult to the animal kingdom, being much lower, tell us that this house, which everyone can guess what sort it is, "Has been the ruin of many a poor boy! and God! I know I'm one! Mother, tell your child not to do what I have done." Such a song provides the tune by which to sing "Amazing Grace." Amazing *what?*, you ask. Rarely have we run across more amaz-

ing depravity.

The YFC program, generally, is not a "documentary"; it is a "musical." Teen-agers out in the world are not thinkers; they are in fact very anti-intellectual. It is difficult to get them to think, teach them to think, or even to give them something to think about. In order to win the battle for the teen-mind, music and song are employed. It is relatively easy to inject an idea into the mind, to "brain-wash," if it is sung into the mind. That, too, is how Arminianism is spread in some of the Christian schools — it is sung with Arminian songs into the mind. This is also the method used by the Red Chinese indoctrinating their youth troops. Study classes among them require mass singing. Catchy tunes carry the Communist theme, and so Communism is sung into the minds and hearts of the trainees (proletariat slaves), and of prisoners, as well. It is well known that song has power, whether patriotic, religious or folk-song. It grips the mind and the emotions and determines actions more than logical thought does. You can easily check on the fact that youth are quite familiar with the songs already mentioned. That in itself ought to cause you no little concern. "It is surprising how much of the meaning of a song is absorbed by a child while singing it. The message of some contemporary 'folk' songs carries greater weight in song than in plain language. These songs make a deeper and more lasting impression than twenty lectures on the same subject."³

YFC has no theology, no Christ and no Bible. It has no Christ, for the "christ" it occasionally mentions, in trite, shallow, vapid vocabulary, is not the Christ of Scripture, not the Christ who said to the sheep, "I lay down My life for the sheep," nor the Christ who said to the goats, "Ye believe not because ye are not of My sheep." Like the idol-gods of the heathen, their "christ" is helpless and useless. The Christ of the Bible *shall* save His people from their sins; He *shall* see His seed; He *shall* see the travail of His soul and be satisfied (not disappointed or frustrated over them); the pleasure of the Lord *shall* prosper in His hand. This Christ is never heard of at YFC extravaganzas. It has no theology, as though the Bible, the Word of God, contains no doctrine of God, as though the Bible is not, in both Testaments, honeycombed with trinitarianism; as though there is no Creation or purpose to Creation; as though there is no providence and eternal counsel of God according to which He works all things and foreordains whatsoever comes to pass. We say it has no Bible. Quoting an isolated text from the Bible once in a great while, or throwing in a religious phrase along with their coffeehouse jargon, does not give them a Bible. The way the Bible is used, if at all, the Sears, Roebuck catalog would do just as well. Take words out of a book here and there and you can make it say anything you like. A cannibal in the jungle may wear a Bible around his neck like a Talisman. Still, he has no

Bible. Its "no creed, but Christ" (what Christ?) philosophy, which is the philosophy of modernist-liberalism, leaves it, not only with no creed, but with no Bible. For the Bible has something to say. It does not say what Jehovah's Witnesses, so called, say. It does not say what modernists and liberals say. It does not say what Arminians say. For a brief resume of what it does say, consult the Reformed Confessions and Liturgies.

YFC has no gospel, for gospel is good news to dead sinners, the good news of resurrection life in Christ. But YFC does not believe man is so bad a sinner as to be dead in trespasses and sins. He is not "wholly gone from original righteousness," but only "very far gone." He is not dead, spiritually, but rather like the man in the parable of the good Samaritan who fell among thieves, only "half dead." YFC sees no difference in man and his will as created, as fallen, as redeemed and as glorified. Man was created with a free will, which was *posse peccare*, able to sin. By the fall, he, and his now no longer free will, became *non posse non peccare*, not able not to sin, that is, he could do nothing but sin. According to YFC philosophy, man is still able not to sin, if he chooses. By nature dead and darkness, he can still believe as dead and in the dark, in order to come out into the light. He can still repent in death and darkness; he can still enter the kingdom while in death and darkness. The proclamation of the "gospel" then becomes a begging of man's "free will" to turn and choose in God's favor. Strictly, this Arminianism kills off all need for prayer to God for the salvation of men. For God can do nothing about it until the person "accepts Christ." If he will not do that, there is nothing God can do. Prayer, then, is a waste: better not to beg God to save men, but to beg men to save themselves. Far different is the gospel: "Ye will not come unto Me that ye may have life . . . Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power."

The similar organization, *Campus Crusade*, according to the January 1, 1970 issue of the *Christian Beacon*, has adopted the jargon of the university anarchists and revolutionists. It is a fact that politically, socially (socialistically), economically, and religiously, the world is being swept into the barricade and corporation form of communism. Campus Crusade therefore believes it must move the church to the barricade, it must have "Christian revolutionists with a workable strategy," and defines a Christian revolutionist as "one who is unwilling to accept the status quo and who is committed to the need for a social, moral and spiritual awakening." This is the terminology of the National Council of Churches. Crusade singers have taken to the rock'n'roll and folk-rock and the jargon of the New Left. Soon it will be most difficult to tell it from the run-of-the-mill ecumenistic and hippy revolution. Exploited, corrupted, compromised and brain-washed by leftist propaganda, the ridiculous Arminianism of Campus Crusade is fast being bludgeoned beyond recognition.

¹*People's Songs*, now *Sing Out, Inc.*, a leftist publishing company, sponsored Hootenannies on a large scale. The Hootenanny Song Book contains songs by Pete Seeger, identified as a member of the Communist Party. In this book the Virgin birth of Christ is mocked in "The Cherry Tree Carol." (*Rhythm, Riots and*

Revolution, by David A. Noebel, Christian Crusade Publications, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1966, \$1.00, pp. 122, 156-7, 297).

²*ibid.*, p. 95.

³*ibid.*, p. 35.

Contribution

Distorted Perspective

[Editor's Note. This brief article was also sent to the *Reformed Guardian*, official publication of the newly organized Reformed and Presbyterian Fellowship of Australia and New Zealand. It is in protest to an article written by Dr. K Runia of the Theological College of Geelong, entitled "Barth's Place in History," which appeared in the Dec. 5, 1969 issue of *Christianity Today*.]

As we together face another new year and decade it is well for us to review our sights and consider what our objectives are. As Reformed and Presbyterian Christians, devoted to the maintenance of our sacred doctrinal heritage, we must make sure that our defenses are in order, so as to withstand the increasing assaults of the enemies of the faith. Also if there be Achans in the camp, who are more interested in seeking good relations with the enemy than in fighting him, these should be removed from positions in the church where they will do more harm than good. Self-preservation is still the first law of liberty. Let there be no neutrality in this war. There is no such thing as peaceful coexistence with apostasy!

To clear the atmosphere on this question let every pastor, teacher, editor, and layman in position of church authority ask himself whether each decision or pronouncement he makes individually or collectively will strengthen the cause of helping and expanding our Reformed inheritance. As stewards of the household of faith, how are we investing the talents and opportunities God has given us? Martin Luther once said, "If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God, except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are attacking at that moment, then I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Him! Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is merely flight and disgrace, if he flinches at that point." Measured by this criterion there are only too many who are in dire need of reconsidering their perspective, particularly those who value external unity above doctrinal purity and seek peace at any

price, succumbing to the lukewarm spirit of Laodicean compromise. In this day of world-wide falling away from the faith there is altogether too much fraternizing with the enemy and muzzling the voices of those who would "cry aloud and spare not," as Scripture commands. Such tactics are the result of a distorted perspective.

As an example of such an unfortunate point of view, *Christianity Today* (Dec. 5, 1969) contains an article by Dr. Klaas Runia entitled "Barth's Place in History." In his final appraisal Dr. Runia states that in his opinion Barth "is one of the giants in the history of theology . . . on the level with Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin and Schleiermacher . . . and when the period of existential theology is past, Barth will still be with us." What an insult to downgrade Augustine, Luther, and Calvin to the same level as heretics! And what a deferential status is here accorded to this Reformed church renegade, Karl Barth, one of the arch deceivers of our age and the evil genius behind the infamous Presbyterian Confession of 1967 and the subversive ideology of the World Council of Churches, who has done more than any other to lead present day Protestantism away from faith in the infallibility of Scripture! Dr. Runia's silence on this score is deafening and is characteristic of his entire sympathetic approach to the unbelievers of our age. With scholarly detachment he may point out certain of their errors, but not once does he excoriate them for the deadly soul killers they really are. *This is utterly inexcusable!* As an appointed watchman on Zion's walls he is responsible for failing to sound the warning signal. The tragic fact is that Dr. Runia has played around so much with the poisonous infections of heresy that he seems to have become insensible to the frightful dangers they pose to the sheep God has entrusted to his care, even the destruction of their souls for the eternities. And when a pastor loses this perspective, his usefulness is open to serious question. In the Christian warfare God's warriors are commanded to fight the good fight of faith and not be neutralist in their dealings with the enemy!

— William A. De Jonge
Montclair, New Jersey

Pages from the Past

Believers and Their Seed

Chapter VII (continued)
In The Line Of Continued Generations

Rev. Herman Hoeksema

And what is now the peculiarity of that history, also before the period of Abraham and Israel? It is this, that the Lord God always and again establishes His covenant in the line of continued generations, or, if you will, with believers *and their seed*.

This is an undeniable fact. It is simply history.

Already before the Deluge there is always a twofold seed in the spiritual sense: the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. And this twofold people is also found in the line of two distinct generations, that of Seth and that of Cain. It is not thus, that now for a time the Lord establishes His covenant with Seth's generations, in order then to return again to Cain. Nor is it thus, that God always has His children in both generations, and calls them out of both lines. No, the generations of Seth are the generations of God's people, while the generations of Cain are not included in God's covenant. This is so strong that there can be no reasonable doubt but that by the expression "sons of God" the Sethites are meant, while "the daughters of men" refers to children from the generation of Cain.

Before the flood, therefore, the line of God's covenant runs in the continued generations from Seth to Noah. Indeed, even then not all who are out of Seth according to the flesh are God's people. There are indeed many who fall away, and the line is repeatedly pruned and narrowed down until only eight souls can enter into the ark of salvation. But that does not change the fact that the line runs through in the generations of Seth even unto the flood.

After the flood it is no different. The line of Shem is chosen by the Lord. In that line God establishes His covenant. Of course, this may never be understood as if after the flood there was never any child of God except in the line of the generations of Shem. This is no more true than that all the fleshly children of Shem were spiritual children of God. Things always develop organically. Also Japheth is out of Noah. And undoubtedly for a time, next to the covenant generations of Shem there were also other lines of children of God, especially from Japheth. But only in Shem's generations does the line run through. In those generations is the main line. With them God establishes His covenant. Presently, out of Shem comes Abraham; and out of Abraham is Israel as the nation to whom pertaineth the covenants and the giving of the law. Out of Israel is Judah; and out of Judah is David; and out of David's house is the Christ of God, the head of God's cove-

nant. Throughout the Old Testament, therefore, the line of God's covenant runs in generations, the continued generations of believers. From Adam to Christ is one unbroken line. Indeed, that line sometimes almost disappears from view; but it is never broken.

Neither is it true that this historical line is broken at the dawn of the new dispensation, as Baptists of every description like to present it. Indeed, the exalted Savior breaks the bonds of Israel's national existence and gathers His church in the new dispensation out of all tribes and nations and tongues. Nevertheless, it is simply history that also in the days of the New Testament the line of continued generations is drawn through also among the nations. This accounts for it that also the preaching of the gospel follows such a definite line, a line which may be readily traced on a world map. The course of the gospel is from Jerusalem through Samaria to Antioch, presently through Asia Minor to Greece and Rome, from whence it spreads throughout Europe, and in due course crosses the ocean with the generations of God's people to the Western Hemisphere. History is never thus, that here and there a few believers are called, that a few individuals enter into the church of Christ, called out of the darkness of heathendom, in order then to disappear again from those regions. But history is thus, that the church of Christ in the world is established and in various definite places continues to exist in generations. Fact is that even now every particular church in the world establishes itself in the conviction that God will maintain His covenant even to a thousand generations. In that faith believers come together. In that faith they join with one another. In that faith the church is visibly instituted by them, and churches and schools are built by them. After all, they do all these things with an eye to the future. If they were actually of the conviction that the Lord did not establish His covenant with believers and their seed, and that therefore a certain church could simply end with the existing generation, they would not act thus. But now it is different. The Lord establishes His covenant and will perform the work of His grace in the line of the continued generations of believers. Also in the new dispensation the line of the history of God's covenant runs through, even to a thousand generations.

But this is not all.

It is not only thus, that this historical line can be pointed out as continuing in the line of the generations

of God's people, both in the old and in the new dispensation; but Scripture itself explains the continuation of that line for us from the fact that God establishes His covenant with believers and their seed. Therein, according to Holy Scripture itself, lies the deep cause of this historical fact. Fact is that this explanation is contained already in the first word of promise: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," Gen. 3:15. It is true that by "seed" here spiritual seed is meant, and that definite generations are not yet indicated here. This could not be, because the generations of Adam and Eve were not yet born. Yet even here already Scripture speaks of the seed of the woman which in generations shall continue even to Him Who shall finally bruise the head of the serpent; and it may readily be surmised that the generations of Seth, in contrast with those of Cain, *lived* from this word with application to their line.

However, this truth, that God establishes His covenant in the line of continued generations, is more clearly expressed after the Deluge. We have already made it plain that in the covenant with Noah we confront essentially no other covenant than the one covenant of grace which was already announced in general terms in Paradise, which is presently established with Abraham and his seed, and which is maintained in Christ. Noah does not enter into the ark as the representative of the whole world as it is outside of Christ, but as head of the visible church. The church is saved in the ark; the world perishes in the flood. Presently that church comes forth again from the ark; and with that church the Lord God establishes His covenant. The fact that in this connection the covenant of God is revealed as embracing the whole creation does not change matters and is easily understandable in the light of the history of the flood. A covenant of friendship with the wicked world outside of Christ God, the Holy and Righteous One, certainly could not establish. The covenant is essentially always the same. For this reason, also here, therefore, Scripture does not speak of "a covenant," but of "my covenant." That is: My one covenant, which is always the same, and which I establish with My people in Christ Jesus. And when, therefore, the Lord establishes that covenant with Noah, He says: "And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you," Gen. 9:9. Also here, therefore, you have the same idea. When God establishes His covenant in the world, then He does that with believers and their seed.

Still more emphatically is this rule revealed to Abraham. Then it is put in the well-known words: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee," Gen. 17:7. Here it is stated, in the first place, that

the Lord God will establish His covenant with Abraham and his seed, and that too, in the line of continued generations: "between me and thee *and thy seed after thee in their generations.*" In the second place, to this is added that this shall be for an *everlasting covenant*. And he who would nevertheless maintain that this line ceased with the coming of Christ, and that these words therefore have no meaning for the church of the new dispensation, or he who would hold that the Lord will indeed cause this everlasting covenant to stand when in the future He shall deal again with Israel as a nation, such an one certainly does not understand his Bible. The Scripture teaches that this word which was spoken to Abraham finds its richest fulfillment in the New Testament church, that therefore this line of the covenant continues in that church, and that the believers are the seed of Abraham referred to in that word of Genesis 17:7. Thus it is also that Peter cries already on the day of Pentecost to the multitude of Jews and devout men: "To you is the promise and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," Acts 2:39. Were it not that for the new dispensation also it is true that God establishes His covenant with believers and their seed, this word of the apostle would have no sense.

But of much greater significance is what Holy Scripture teaches us through the apostle Paul with respect to Abraham's seed. Especially the Epistle to the Galatians is of great importance here. For there Scripture literally applies what was spoken to Abraham and his seed to the believers of the new dispensation. In Galatians 3:7-9 the apostle writes: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." So strongly is the unity of the old and new dispensations maintained by the apostle that he presents both under the image of one person, formerly a child and now an adult: "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father," Gal. 4:1, 2. The meaning is plain. Israel is the church as the child who is under tutors and governors until the fulness of time. The church of the new dispensation is essentially that same child, but now grown up and freed from his tutors. More strongly it could certainly not be stated. Those who would make separation between the church of the new dispensation and Israel of the old dispensation surely do not know how to do justice to this word of Scripture. If the matter stands thus, therefore, that the believers of the new dispensation are Abraham's seed, through Christ, the great son of Abraham, then it is certainly true that what the Lord spake concerning His everlasting cove-

nant to Abraham is also applicable to the church of the new dispensation: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and *thy seed after thee in their generations*, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." According to the plain teaching of Scripture, therefore, there can be no doubt but that God also in the new dispensation establishes His covenant in the line of continued generations. With thee and with thy seed after thee! That is and remains the rule also for us.

Now here is also the Scriptural basis for the baptism of infants. The ground for infant baptism cannot and may not be sought in the presupposition that those infants are regenerated. For, in the first place, nothing more than a presupposition can rest upon a presupposition. And for infant baptism we must certainly have a firmer basis than a mere presupposition. Besides, we know for a certainty that not all the fleshly children are, or become, regenerated, while nevertheless *all* the children of believers must be baptized. Neither can the ground for infant baptism be found in a promise as the essence of the covenant. Then the certainty of the covenant is removed from God, Who establishes His covenant, to man, who presently consents to the covenant, and to man's free will. Neither does the right and the obligation of infant baptism rest in the faith of the parents, although they must certainly confess their faith if they are to be able to present their children for baptism. But the firm ground for the baptism of the little children of the church lies only herein, that God causes His covenant to run in the line of continued generations. Baptism is a sign and seal of God's covenant, the ensign and banner of those who are in Christ Jesus, who are of God's party in the midst of this world. And since God establishes His covenant with believers and their seed in their generations, therefore it follows that also those generations of believers must receive the sign of God's covenant.

Thus it was in the old dispensation with circumcision. God's people as they existed outwardly in the world, the generations of Abraham, had to receive the sign of circumcision. He who refused to bear that sign violated and desecrated God's covenant. In the new dispensation that sign is replaced by holy baptism, in harmony with the peculiar character of this dispensation. There can therefore be no question about it in the light of Scripture, that baptism is indeed come in the place of circumcision. In the first place, this, too, is simply an historical fact. In the old dispensation circumcision is the sign which God's people bear. When Christ comes, Who is the head of His one people, both of the old and the new dispensation, then He bears both the sign of circumcision and the sign of baptism. In Him the old and the new dispensations are one; and through Him the old passes over into the new, circumcision into baptism. When the Savior presently ascends into heaven and His Spirit is poured out upon all flesh,

then in those circles where circumcision had always been the sign of the covenant, circumcision and baptism wrestled with one another for a time. Circumcision cannot immediately understand that it has served its time and that now it will be forced aside by baptism. But in that struggle baptism has a victory, and circumcision disappears. It is an historic fact that circumcision is replaced by baptism. Thus it is also literally stated in Holy Scripture. Not only does the apostle always warn that now that baptism has come circumcision has no more value; but he also writes literally to the church at Colosse: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead," Col. 2:11, 12. It is plain that the apostle here teaches that baptism in the new dispensation is the very same thing of which circumcision was the sign in the old dispensation, so that he can write to the congregation, "Ye are circumcised . . . being buried with Christ in baptism."

Hence, we come to this conclusion, in harmony with the clear revelation of God's Word:

1) Throughout history, both in the old and in the new dispensation, God establishes His covenant in the line of continued generations. Believers with their seed enter into God's covenant.

2) It is God's will that the generations of the covenant receive the sign of that covenant.

3) The sign of baptism has come in the place of the sign of circumcision in the new dispensation.

4) The generations of believers, and therefore also the little children, ought to receive the sign of baptism and bear it in the midst of the world.

Only when we have seen all this does what we read in Scripture concerning the baptism of entire households also receive meaning. Taken by themselves, apart from the great current thought of Holy Scripture, such proofs for infant baptism have little weight. For the opponent of infant baptism can very easily counter with the assertion that you must still prove that there were also little children in such households. But it becomes altogether different with regard to such passages of Scripture when you first understand that the Lord God *always* establishes His covenant in the line of continued generations. For then you find in the latter fact the basis of and the explanation for the fact that already in the time of the apostles entire households were taken up into the line of God's covenant on earth. Then also what you read in Scripture concerning the children of the church also becomes meaningful: how the Lord blesses them, and how the apostles declare them to be holy and also write to the congregation in a manner which shows that they consider the children of believers as belonging to and included in

the congregation. And then you will no longer say merely that the children of believers *may* be baptized, but you will view infant baptism as a holy obligation of the people of God's covenant.

Naturally, this is not our last word. It follows from this view of infant baptism that also the children of the flesh, who do not belong to those given to Christ by

the Father, receive the sign of baptism in this world according to the will of God. Concerning the difference between the outward, historical covenant and its spiritual nucleus, and concerning the question of the salvation of covenant children who die in infancy, — concerning these questions we must still speak.

BOOK REVIEWS

CONFLICT AND HARMONY IN SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE, by Jack Wood Sears; Baker Book House, 1969; 97 pp., \$1.95 (paper).

It is always encouraging to read good books produced by scholars in the field of science who oppose the theories of evolutionism so widely accepted today even in Reformed circles. Jack Sears is the head of the biology department at Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas. The contents of this book are lectures delivered at the University of Mississippi for the University Christian Student Center.

While the book is not very detailed and exhaustive, it gives a good glimpse of the problem and finds solutions based on the infallible scriptures. There are several good features about the book. It contains a good discussion of the limitations of science. It offers a good criticism of evolutionism on the grounds of evolutionism itself. It emphasizes the total lack of scientific evidence for any transmutation of kinds. It offers an excellent discussion of the trustworthiness of

Scripture. Some knowledge of science is necessary to appreciate the book fully.

A weakness of the book is that, while it speaks of the relation of the Bible to science, it never discusses clearly the importance of Scripture as the rule of faith — also in scientific pursuits.

The book is recommended to all who are interested in this subject and especially to our high school students.

H.H.

THEY DARE TO HOPE, by Fred Pearson; Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969; 103 pp., \$1.95 (paper).

A defense of student protest by a graduate of Wheaton College, who finds that the Church is the only institution able to respond to student demands if only it will radically alter its ways. The book is written from the viewpoint of modern post-millennialism. Its one value is that it can serve as an aid to understand what student protesters are saying — if one is interested in learning this.

H. H.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet on March 4, 1970 at the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois. Classis will convene at the new time of 8:30 A.M. Delegates in need of lodging should notify the clerk of the South Holland consistory.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated
Clerk of Classis West.

NOTICE!

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

The new address of the Stated Clerk of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America is:

Rev. D. H. Kuiper
1314 North Main St.
Pella, Iowa, 50219

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Tony Talsma, in the recent passing of her father

MR. PHILLIP WIERINGA.

May the God of all grace comfort the bereaved family by His Word and Spirit.

Rev. H. Veldman, Pres.
Mrs. G. Holstege, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Aid Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church extends its sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. John Scholten, in the loss of her mother

MRS. AGNES BARENSE

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Rev. 21:44

Rev. J. Kortering, Pres.
Mrs. D. Eerdmans, Sec'y.

News From Our Churches

News about trios and calls and declines is generally "old" before it gets into print; but we'll pass it on anyway. Our Randolph, Wisconsin congregation had a trio consisting of Rev. Kortering, Rev. Van Baren, and Rev. Veldman, from which they have, undoubtedly, already called one. Rev. Veldman has declined the call extended to him from our Doon Church. And the installation of Rev. Kuiper in Pella, Iowa, took place on January 8. Rev. Vanden Berg conducted the installation, and Rev. Engelsma, pastor of Loveland Church, preached the sermon on "The Minister's Calling," using as his text II Timothy 2:15.

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It seems that all of our churches had a January 18 bulletin announcement concerning the departure of Rev. and Mrs. Heys for Jamaica on January 26. The effects of this decision were noticeable already in Holland's January 25 bulletin: "Next week Sunday, D.V., Rev. R. C. Harbach will conduct our services on a classical appointment, and the following Sunday Prof. H. Hanko will in the morning and Prof. H. C. Hoeksema will in the evening. The catechism classes will be well provided for. Seminarian R. Van Overloop will teach the Saturday classes, and Rev. H. Veldman will take care of the evening classes." Obviously, a Consistory decision to release a pastor for a three-month period is not one to be taken lightly.

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A Farewell program for Rev. and Mrs. Heys was given on Sunday, January 25. Rev. Veldman led in opening prayer, Scripture reading, and a few appropriate remarks. Mr. and Mrs. C. Jonker, accompanied by their daughter, Marilyn, sang from two numbers. The "nothing can trouble thee there" (last line of "Trust in the Lord") led beautifully into "Under His Wings" (first line of their last selection). These numbers can only be a great comfort to our emissaries to Jamaica. Rev. Heys also made a few remarks at the program. He said that he is going with mixed emotions. On the one hand, he does not like to leave his work in the Holland congregation. But, on the other hand, he is eager to go, for the fourth time, to work with these people who, he is convinced, are sincere children of God who hunger and thirst for the truth. He asked to be remembered in our prayers. And he also brought to the attention of the audience that the loneliness involved in work of this nature is felt more acutely by the wives. The ministers are more wrapped up in their work. So, in our prayers for the labors in Jamaica, we should remember the wives who, in Rev. Heys' words, "are also valiant warriors who stand at our side and encourage us."

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This bulletin announcement, yet, from Holland's congregation: "The address of our pastor and Mrs.

Heys will be General Delivery, White Sands Post Office, Montego Bay, Jamaica, West Indies. Please use air mail, since surface mail takes three weeks and air mail three to four days. The cost is 15c per half ounce. We will covet your prayers, but also your letters, and wish the congregation God's blessing while we are absent from one another."

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Rev. Schipper, as chairman of the Mission Committee, would have been in charge of the farewell program for Rev. Heys, if it were not for the fact that he had not been feeling well. As of February 1, Rev. Schipper planned to be admitted in mid-March to the hospital to undergo surgery. Gall bladder attacks have caused him very considerable pain for the last weeks, and the doctors believed a cholecystectomy to be the only answer.

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This requested announcement concerning change of officers, from Loveland's consistory: Clerk — Mr. Wm. A. Griess, 600 S. Decatur St., Denver, Colo. 80219; and Treasurer — Mr. M. H. Moore, Route 2, Box 295B, Loveland, Colo. 80537.

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The P.T.A. of our Adams St. School sponsored a program on January 29 featuring Dr. W. Meester, who spoke on "The Christian Approach to Drug Abuse." Those "concerned parents and friends" who attended could only be impressed by the fact that we are strangers in this world — that our calling is to live as children of the light in the midst of a world that is living in darkness; a world that knows not God, and seeks in vain to find satisfaction or meaning in life through the use of drugs; a world that is rushing ever more rapidly to destruction.

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From the bulletin of Hope Church of Grand Rapids we learn of an interesting project of that congregation's Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Society. "A recording committee has been established to record our worship services, and tapes will be available for those who are hospitalized or ill at home. The committee will also provide our servicemen with portable cassette tape players, and periodically send tapes to them."

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Space is shorter than news for this issue. Some will have to wait till next time. But we'll have to get in a couple of "Points to ponder" from the bulletin of Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands:

"The 'narrow way' that leads to Heaven is not found by those who are 'broad-minded' about sin."

"Those who know God will be humble. Those who know themselves cannot be proud."

D.R.D.